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October 25, 2002

The Honorable Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Supervisor, Third District  
821 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**CONTINUED MOTION TO APPROVE THE REALLOCATION OF  
\$4.947 MILLION FROM THE PROVISIONAL FINANCING USES FUND,  
TO THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S BUDGET**

Dear Supervisor Yaroslavsky:

On November 6, 2002, your Board will consider Supervisor Knabe's motion to reallocate \$4.947 million from the Provisional Financing Uses Fund to the District Attorney's Budget, to restore three vital programs curtailed as a result of the CAO's recommended budget for 2002-2003.

This matter was before you previously on October 1, 2002, and your Board directed that this Department prioritize the three programs, and report back to the Board concerning the community impact of the program curtailments.

As you may recall, this Department has very little flexibility in the use of funding for general operations. A large portion of our budget is funded by earmarked State and Federal sources for specialized vertical prosecution programs. The basic mission of staffing the courts for filings and courtroom litigation is another large portion of the Department's budget.

The remainder is for our investigative staff, and for specialized prosecution which is not offset by earmarked outside funding.

The three programs, which I have reluctantly identified as likely to be curtailed, are all important specialized prosecution services which do not have State or Federal subsidies. I had to identify these programs due to the \$4.947 million shortfall in the CAO's recommended budget, compared to the funding required to maintain a status quo budget for the 2002-2003 period.

The Department is also burdened by an inordinately high salary savings factor of 13.38 percent of salaries. This is an enormous impediment to our ability to effectively manage within our budget allocation, yet we have managed well in the best interests of good government. We hope to repair this longstanding problem over time with careful and deliberate future planning with the CAO.

In the meantime, the flexibility required to respond to unanticipated workload increases, extraordinary events, and personnel absences is sorely lacking in this Department.

The three programs, as prioritized, are as follows:

1. Sex Crimes Division; net County cost \$2,700,000; twenty-one positions.
2. Environmental Crimes Division; net County cost \$1,922,000; thirteen positions.
3. Elder Abuse Section; net County cost \$325,000; three positions

These three programs are centrally organized Divisions of specialist attorneys and staff investigators. They receive cases from throughout the County, as referred directly from police and sheriff's stations, and from various specialized regulatory agencies.

Because of the highly specialized nature of the Sex Crimes, Environmental and Elder Abuse crimes, most of the cases have to be partially or fully reinvestigated by this Department in order to prepare the offense records and case documents for filing and prosecution. Once filed, the conviction rate is very high.

Most law enforcement and regulatory agencies that bring forward cases in these highly specialized crimes have done the best job they can, but lack the special training and expertise to fully prepare cases for filing. That is why the District Attorney's specialized vertical prosecution divisions are so important to protect the community from repeat offenders who challenge the criminal justice system with cases that are very difficult to prove.

Without the continued availability of the Sex Crimes Division, the Environmental Crimes Division, and the Elder Abuse Section, our communities will suffer the fate of less effective control of criminal offenders. The likelihood of convictions in these specialties will decline. Although the cases will still be presented to local

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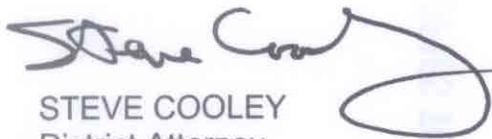
prosecutors for action, the loss of expertise will be very apparent over time. This will be a major setback for this Office and for Los Angeles County residents. However, the loss of expertise is preventable.

Your Board has the opportunity to restore this Department's budget reduction and guarantee continued expert attention to crimes which are a threat to the most vulnerable of our residents – women, children and the elderly.

Our environment will also suffer over time as the ability to monitor and control industrial polluters is diminished.

I earnestly appeal to your Board to avoid this unnecessary setback in law enforcement capability, and to restore the \$4.947 million in curtailed funds on November 6, 2002.

Very truly yours,

  
STEVE COOLEY  
District Attorney

tla

c: David Janssen  
Chief Administrative Officer

Violet Varona-Lukens ✓  
Executive Officer