

Support for Assembly Bill 1430 (Bennett): County recorders: fees

The Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk provides document recording services under a fee-for-service model. The legally established base fee for document recording and indexing every instrument, paper, or notice required or permitted by law was last adjusted in 2010. The established fee is intended to cover the cost of the recording function, thus avoiding expenses for the county or the need for net county cost funding.

The established recording fees do not take into account inflationary factors or the state’s minimum wage increases. These rapidly rising costs have created significant budgetary challenges, and the established fee no longer covers the cost of the service. The recording function is now being augmented by county general funds, and now competes for funding with other essential public services like public safety, public health, and general county administration.

Absent an adjustment, the ability to provide services, retain an adequate, trained workforce, and maintain standards for timeliness and quality are at risk. Given the current

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financial landscape, we may be facing staffing reductions, decreased hours available for the public counter, and the closure of satellite offices directly resulting from the inadequate funding of the recorder function. These impacts have downstream impacts on the county's economic recovery if real estate transactions are not timely and properly added to the public record.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1430, introduced by Assemblymember Steve Bennett, ensures that essential recording services will remain at the levels necessary to meet the demands of Los Angeles County. This bill provides a much-needed adjustment to ensure the established fees properly fund recording services.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office-Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations to take all appropriate legislative advocacy actions to support Assembly Bill 1430 (Bennett), which would establish document recording fees at the level necessary to adequately fund these services for the years to come, including, but not limited to, sending a five-signature letter in support of the bill to Assemblymember Steve Bennett.

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LH:cc