CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA ATTACHMENT 3

MEETING DATE: Thursday, March 22, 2012
AGENDA ITEM #: 9
ITEM: CORRESPONDENCE

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

• None
The Honorable Edmond G. Brown Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Room 1173
Sacramento CA 95814

Re: Restore Library Funding

Dear Governor Brown,

On behalf of the Contra Costa County library community, I am writing to request that the $15.2 million of library funding in the 2011-12 Budget be restored. These funds were already slashed by 50% from the 2010-11 funding level, and library use across California is up. These funds help support:

- Literacy programs to teach adults how to read. Literate adults become employable and can contribute to California’s economy.
- Resource sharing (books and other material) between libraries. Due to reduced funding, some libraries are now charging out-of-area residents a fee to borrow material. Resource sharing reduces a library’s costs, as its customers can obtain the material they need from another library.
- Operating funds to help maintain open hours, providing a safe place for students to do home work when their school library is closed.

In addition, the elimination of California’s “maintenance of effort” library funding jeopardizes more than $15 million in matching Federal funds, resulting in the closing of the Braille and Talking Book Library in 2013.

A recent Contra Costa Times Article (2/10/12) noted that the largest educational achievement gaps in the USA are no longer between ethnic and racial groups but between high- and low-income students across the board. Libraries are a free and invaluable educational resource for everyone, but especially for students from lower-income families, who visit their libraries for access to computers, study help, books, and periodicals. If you support education, you should support libraries.

More than one million Californians use their libraries daily; please do not deprive us of this vital resource. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn A. Meisch
Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission
and Walnut Creek Commissioner

cc: The Honorable Darrell Steinberg, Senate President pro Tempore
The Honorable Bob Dutton, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable John A Perez, Speaker of the California State Assembly
The Honorable Connie Conway, Assembly Republican Leader
Senator Mark DeSaulnier
Senator Loni Hancock
Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla
Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan
Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner
Mary Piepho, Chair, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
David Twu, Contra Costa County Administrator
Contra Costa County Library Commission