CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION

AGENDA ATTACHMENT 5

MEETING DATE: Thursday, November 20, 2014
AGENDA ITEM #: 11A
ITEM: STATE LIBRARY FUNDING ISSUES

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Commissioners will address the State Library funding.
CLA Legislative Priorities 2015

The purpose of the California Library Association’s Advocacy and Legislative Committee (CLA/ALC) is to facilitate the monitoring of and action on various proposed and enacted pieces of legislation which impact library services to California residents. To that end, the group works closely with the CLA Board, association members, and CLA’s lobbyists.

Much of the work of the committee is done through advocacy in its many forms. Methods may include working with other library organizations such as the California School Library Association (CSLA) and the California Coalition of County Law Libraries (CCCLL), or developing partnerships with non-library organizations on legislative issues of mutual interest.

Of course, the most effective advocacy comes from a first-hand professional relationship between library staff members; library groups such as Friends of the Library, Library Foundation members, or Library Commissioners; the residents they serve; and the legislators themselves.

The committee supports the “Declaration for the Right to Libraries” (attached below) and the positions therein. The CLA/ALC also supports the rights of all to a free public library with full and open access to information and the confidentiality of library user records as ensured by California State Statutes. Further, it supports the American Library Association’s positions on federal issues and supports National Library Legislative Day, annually sending well-qualified CLA members to represent California interests at that event.

In addition, in the 2015 legislative session, CLA/ALC will concentrate on the following actions:

- The active monitoring of and opposition to legislation that restricts open access to information in any format

- The active monitoring of state taxation policies and procedures so that libraries are fairly and adequately funded, thus ensuring long-term sustainability

- Supporting efforts to ensure flexible and adaptable library facilities (bond issues, needs assessments, etc.), recognizing that libraries of the future may have needs different from current needs; working toward a future library construction bond; and urging support for the inclusion of libraries in any economic stimulus bond packages

- Supporting efforts to lower the voter approval threshold for local library bond measures and special taxes to 55%

- Educating the legislature on the life-changing impact of today’s innovative libraries in California
In the spirit of the United States Declaration of Independence and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we believe that libraries are essential to a democratic society. Every day, in countless communities across our nation and the world, millions of children, students and adults use libraries to learn, grow and achieve their dreams. In addition to a vast array of books, computers and other resources, library users benefit from the expert teaching and guidance of librarians and library staff to help expand their minds and open new worlds. We declare and affirm our right to quality libraries - public, school, academic, and special — and urge you to show your support by signing your name to this Declaration for the Right to Libraries.

LIBRARIES EMPOWER THE INDIVIDUAL. Whether developing skills to succeed in school, looking for a job, exploring possible careers, having a baby, or planning retirement, people of all ages turn to libraries for instruction, support, and access to computers and other resources to help them lead better lives.

LIBRARIES SUPPORT LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING. Many children and adults learn to read at their school and public libraries via story times, research projects, summer reading, tutoring and other opportunities. Others come to the library to learn the technology and information skills that help them answer their questions, discover new interests, and share their ideas with others.

LIBRARIES STRENGTHEN FAMILIES. Families find a comfortable, welcoming space and a wealth of resources to help them learn, grow and play together.

LIBRARIES ARE THE GREAT EQUALIZER. Libraries serve people of every age, education level, income level, ethnicity and physical ability. For many people, libraries provide resources that they could not otherwise afford — resources they need to live, learn, work and govern.

LIBRARIES BUILD COMMUNITIES. Libraries bring people together, both in person and online, to have conversations and to learn from and help each other. Libraries provide support for seniors, immigrants and others with special needs.

LIBRARIES PROTECT OUR RIGHT TO KNOW. Our right to read, seek information, and speak freely must not be taken for granted. Libraries and librarians actively defend this most basic freedom as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

LIBRARIES STRENGTHEN OUR NATION. The economic health and successful governance of our nation depend on people who are literate and informed. School, public, academic, and special libraries support this basic right.

LIBRARIES ADVANCE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP. Knowledge grows from knowledge. Whether doing a school assignment, seeking a cure for cancer, pursuing an academic degree, or developing a more fuel efficient engine, scholars and researchers of all ages depend on the knowledge and expertise that libraries and librarians offer.

LIBRARIES HELP US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER. People from all walks of life come together at libraries to discuss issues of common concern. Libraries provide programs, collections, and meeting spaces to help us share and learn from our differences.

LIBRARIES PRESERVE OUR NATION'S CULTURAL HERITAGE. The past is key to our future. Libraries collect, digitize, and preserve original and unique historical documents that help us to better understand our past, present and future.