



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

For Immediate Release

February 21, 2012

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Alameda County's Economic Challenges Discussed at Budget Forums ***"A Year of Transition," highlights federal and State budget cuts – as well as Governor's "Realignment" Plan – and impacts to County programs and finances***

OAKLAND – Changes in the local economy, the State's hand-off of many programs to the counties, the end of local redevelopment agencies and Alameda County's overall financial picture were topics discussed today at "A Year of Transition," a pair of budget forums hosted by Alameda County in Oakland and Fremont.

The forums, hosted by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and County Administrator Susan S. Muranishi, provided Alameda County leaders the chance to explain how a number of factors will impact local services that have been pared back in recent years due to falling County revenues and increased demand for services. County leaders also took time to explain to local stakeholders about how the planned "realignment" of services – a monumental shift in responsibility for many services from the State to California's counties – will affect safety net programs and the people who rely on them.

The events provided Alameda County the opportunity to unveil a series of new "human impact" reports that articulate in easy-to-understand terms how local residents have been affected by dramatic budget cuts enacted by the State over the past several years - including people who rely on In-Home Support Services, aid for food, childcare and other necessities, and health care through safety net programs.

"While the East Bay economy has shown signs of rebound after an extended period of recession, our challenges are greater than ever as the overall mission of County government expands dramatically and the need for our core services remains exceptionally high," said Susan S. Muranishi, Alameda County Administrator.

At today's forums, participants also discussed the growing gulf between rich and poor throughout California, a dynamic that has not spared Alameda County.

"The truth is that in some of our communities people who have reaped the benefits of the unprecedented technology boom of the past decade have neighbors who have been struggling for years now just to make ends meet," said Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, who chairs the Budget Workgroup. "These dynamics seem only to be increasing rather than abating, and they certainly raise questions about what the priorities of government should be, as well as the priorities of our society as a whole."

County leaders said the financial picture is not all bad. According to Muranishi, there definitely are some welcome signs of a rebound in an East Bay economy that had sputtered for years. But, she said, the economic progress will need to continue for several years for the region's employment picture to bounce back completely and for the demand on the County's safety net programs to decrease in any significant way.

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