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FINAL ALAMEDA COUNTY BUDGET FOR FY 2016-17 APPROVED BY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a \$2.97 billion County Budget for FY 2016-17 that closes a \$72.2 million funding gap without significant program reductions or staff layoffs, while allowing the County to pursue new initiatives to expand affordable housing, augment efforts to fight poverty and address other pressing community needs. The Final Budget supports a County workforce of 9,641 full-time employees, provides modest funding increases to community service providers and allows the County to make further investments in upgrading infrastructure and building its financial reserves.

In addition, the Final Budget supports a number of innovative programs and facilities upgrades to expand services to County residents. These include:

- The final phase of the \$668 million upgrade of the Highland Hospital campus in Oakland, the largest construction project in County history. The multi-year project's final phase will include demolition of outdated structures, construction of a new courtyard and exterior restoration of some historic buildings. The project is a vital public investment in the safety net system and community health. It is also the latest project enhancing the County's reputation as a leader in the construction of "green" government buildings.
- Expansion of the County's award-winning Dig Deep Farms and Produce initiative, a joint venture of the Deputy Sheriff's Activities League (DSAL) and the County Social Services Agency. The project continues to provide job training and employment opportunities to youth and low-income residents while making healthy food and produce available to underserved communities. Dig Deep's expanded farming program recently produced its first line of packaged consumer goods, jars of fresh fruit jams and tomato salsas now sold in retail stores throughout Alameda County. The project will launch a new commercial kitchen in San Leandro to create additional employment and training opportunities, and new locally-sourced products.
- Bold new initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and expand sustainable programs and practices. Later this year, the County will be installing a 1.4-megawatt ultra-low emissions fuel cell to provide clean power at the Santa Rita Jail. The fuel cell will be a key component of the jail's "smart grid" energy system, which will allow Santa Rita to continue operating should an emergency cut power from the main power grid. Expanded recycling and composting will soon be available in 60 County-owned buildings, diverting over 50% of the waste stream to compost. The installation of 17 new electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and the launch of the County's first Direct Current (DC) fast-charge station will reduce the County's carbon footprint and expand EV-charging infrastructure in the community.
- An intensified push to leverage technology and innovation to improve County services. New digital tools are being developed to engage residents and expand access to resources. These tools, including a new employee onboarding program and a virtual career center, will add to an already impressive slate of

offerings that include the County's new online Permit Portal. This one-stop shop for obtaining business licenses and permits was created by the County through a special collaboration with tech-giant Google. Other offerings include mobile apps to access voter, property and transportation information, as well as ready.acgov.org, a comprehensive mobile website designed to lead residents through the process of preparing for a major disaster.

- A community process led by the County Social Services and Health Care Services Agencies to develop a coordinated Countywide Plan for seniors. The effort will focus on enhancing services to meet the needs of this growing segment of the County population. At the same time, the County will continue to expand various internship and fellowship programs to bring opportunity to local youth and help the County to attract the next generation of public service employees.

While the County's \$72.2 million funding gap was smaller than those recorded during and just after the Great Recession – when shortfalls routinely topped \$100 million – its size was daunting, given the relatively positive conditions in which growth in the national and local economies is providing some boost to County revenues. County officials said the challenge of keeping County finances in balance is not likely to ease, as the costs of doing business continue to rise and forecasts suggest the economy could fall back into recession in the near future.

In approving the Final Budget, County Supervisors renewed their commitment to assisting residents squeezed by the region's soaring housing costs. While cuts to federal housing programs mean less funding available for the County to meet community needs, the Board of Supervisors has continued to invest over \$100 million annually in housing programs across various agencies and departments. In addition, the Board has committed \$5 million to \$7.5 million per year of limited discretionary funding towards affordable housing programs across the County. On Tuesday, the Board also voted to place a measure on the November ballot asking voters to approve up to \$580 million in General Obligation Bonds to support affordable housing and prevent displacement of vulnerable populations, including low-income residents, seniors and the disabled.

In addition, the Board directed County staff to move forward on several initiatives to address ongoing challenges:

- The Board formally declared a Housing State of Emergency in Alameda County and directed County departments to pursue several strategies to ease the problem of housing displacement and homelessness.
- The Board adopted a policy directing 50 percent of its annual allocation related to State Assembly Bill 109 – a criminal justice reform initiative that made low-level, nonviolent offenders the responsibility of counties rather than the State prison system – go to community-based providers and nonprofits serving individuals re-entering the community from incarceration. The policy will continue a practice initiated by the County last year that makes several million dollars available each year to community-based programs supporting the re-entry population
- The Board directed the County's Department of Human Resource Services to develop and implement the Alameda County Re-entry Hiring Program, through which the County will provide training and employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated residents. The program responds to statistics showing that formerly incarcerated residents face systemic barriers to obtaining gainful employment. The program will encourage other public agencies and local businesses to join on as partners.
- The Board enacted a policy requiring County departments to weigh their programs' success in reducing poverty as well as their cost effectiveness as part of their program evaluation process.