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Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

Editorial Note: Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the material in this presentation, the scope of the material covered and the discussions undertaken lends itself to the possibility of minor transcription misinterpretations.

**PRESENTATION BY
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich**

**Topic: The Future of Los Angeles County
January 5, 2006**

Chairman Philibosian introduced Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich and welcomed him to the Commission. The Chairman elaborated upon Supervisor Antonovich's extensive biography, and recognized the contributions that he has made to the residents of Los Angeles County.

Contributions of the Economy and Efficiency Commission

Supervisor Antonovich began his presentation by acknowledging the contribution that the Economy and Efficiency Commission has made and continues to make to the County of Los Angeles. The Supervisor recalled the Commission's efforts toward consolidation of County departments in the early 1980's and described how the UCLA Graduate School of Management helped in the effort. This group had within it a Chinese student that ultimately become head of petroleum and a top government official in China. This is a real example of the influence the Commission has had locally, nationally and internationally.

Supervisor Antonovich recognized the unique nature of the Commission as a partner working with public agencies to address issues of economy and efficiency within the County. He urged the Commission to continue its partnering not only with County government agencies, but also with public and private educational institutions and community organizations.

Available Resources

The Supervisor declared that the County of Los Angeles employs approximately 90,000 persons. About 45,000 are employees supporting those cities who contract with the County to operate their municipal services including law enforcement, public works, land use, and administrative functions. The remaining 45,000 employees provide these types of governmental services to the unincorporated areas of the County, in addition to overall services in health, welfare, voting, etc. for all of the 10.2 million residents of the County.

Supervisor Antonovich stressed the need to develop programs to enhance the productivity of the work force. He pointed out the valuable resources of experience and knowledge to be found in retired personnel. He cited the Retired Police Officer Reserve Corps issue that is being considered by the Commission's as an example. These employees can make a significant contribution to accomplishing the mission of the County, thus creating a better society for everyone.

As part of the retired employee issue the Supervisor recognized the current problem in public safety recruitment. He suggested that retired law enforcement personnel could be utilized as recruiters at community colleges, and at high schools to encourage student participation in such programs as the Explorer Program. Noting how Burbank and other law enforcement agencies are being innovative in addressing the recruitment of personnel by paying a stipend to current officers who recruit new officers, he suggested that the Commission has an opportunity to “step outside the box” when evaluating how a department or agency functions and developing suggestions for improvement.

Supervisor Antonovich remarked that since the County with a population larger than 42 states, it is full of valuable resources which can be utilized by the Commission. He named resources such as Cal Tech, UCLA, colleges such as Occidental and Claremont, and a wide network of community colleges which are filled with persons of all ages with diverse backgrounds and experience.

Helping Our Children

A major problem within Los Angeles County is the large number of children under the control of the Dependency Courts. If these children were in one location their number would equal that of the 66th largest city among the 88 cities of the County. Statistics clearly indicate that children without families are at a disadvantage when they become emancipated. Many end up in jails, on the streets, on drugs, or die prematurely. The Supervisor stressed the need to develop and maintain programs to help these children become adopted into a family unit. He emphasized the need to re-energize faith-based and other local organizations to find permanent homes and mentors for these children. Only then can these children reach their full potential and become productive persons in society. Supervisor Antonovich encouraged everyone to use of the Foster Parent and Adoption Recruitment Hotline at (888) 811-1121.

Supervisor Antonovich encouraged the Commission to devote its efforts to the enhancement of productivity within the County, to the pursuit of public/private partnerships, to the utilization of resources from outside agencies, to the utilization of the skills and experience of available retired persons, and to the creation of life fulfilling opportunities for our dependent children.

Distinctions between the County of Los Angeles and the City of Los Angeles

To address the misperceptions in Washington and east coast bureaucrats which result in the loss of revenues to the County, Supervisor Antonovich explained the potential for confusion by these people as to the role of Los Angeles County relative to the City of Los Angeles. The Supervisor compared the County to New York City in the scope of responsibilities and in the provision of municipal services to a region. The County provides health, welfare, coroner, children’s services, law enforcement, and prosecutes felonies through the District Attorney’s Office. In this respect, the media could do a better job of providing a clearer perspective on both County and City issues. To illustrate his point he pointed to the publicity that the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles was receiving for his proposal to take control of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Supervisor Antonovich praised the approach used in Los Angeles High School for the Arts, a charter school operated at California State University at Los Angeles under a joint powers authority. The school is open to any County student that qualifies. Functioning in this capacity it draws students with diverse backgrounds from many areas. Since the school’s inception in 1985, there has not been one dropout, and grades are in the top 90% statewide. The Supervisor noted that opposed to LAUSD, this school does not have a large bureaucracy

Chairman Philibosian opened the floor to questions.

Questions and Comments

Commissioner Oakes asked the Supervisor’s opinion of the media focus on the controversy in the Sheriff’s Office over budget problems, violence in the jails, and early prisoner release and resulting crimes. Supervisor Antonovich believes that the problem is one of management, and that there is no excuse for

leaving violent criminals unsupervised. The Supervisor referred to the recent murder of an inmate, stating that the department has the responsibility to supervise prisoners. Supervisor Antonovich also suggested reform in how officers are deployed in the jails, observing that the current system of rotation has a negative impact on recruitment.

At this point, Supervisor Antonovich paused to introduce Dr. Lori Howard, his former Chief of Staff and current aide and Professor of Public Administration at the University of Southern California.

Commissioner Parks asked why the Supervisor took the title of Mayor of Los Angeles County. Supervisor Antonovich responded that the change was made in 1986 allowing the title to be used by the Chair of the Board of Supervisors. The Supervisor explained some counties governing boards use the title "commissioners" while others use "supervisor". The title of mayor eliminates confusion in other jurisdictions over the authority possessed, and helps expedite responses from federal agencies. Commissioner Parks followed up by asking if the Mayor of the County was a member of the United States Conference of Mayors, and if there would be an advantage to having all members of the Board of Supervisors take on the title and become members of the Conference. Supervisor Antonovich responded that the request had already been made and was under review.

Commissioner Padilla has observed the bitter partisan rhetoric in the recent special election campaigns, and asked the Supervisor for his comments. Supervisor Antonovich answered that he supported the concept of judicial reapportionment, stating that better representation is achieved at all level of government when local citizens represent the communities they serve. The difficulties of representation and the absurdity of creating districts where constituencies have vastly different issues and needs have become apparent. The Supervisor also stated his support for allowing a budget to be enacted by the Governor if the legislature failed to approve a budget on time, with a two thirds vote to override the Governor's action. He pointed out that budget inaction has caused difficulties for public service agencies in hiring, planning, and management. The Supervisor called on the media to do a better job of explaining the issues to the public, stating that the time devoted to election issues was inadequate.

Commissioner Tortorice inquired as to the problems in the Department of Health Services, and the recent resignation of the Director. Supervisor Antonovich felt that Dr. Bruce Chernof, Acting Director and Chief Medical Officer, would be a productive Director of Health Services. With the exception of King-Drew, hospitals and pharmacies are accredited and operating without restrictions. The Supervisor suggested that administrators from other hospitals and pharmacies could be used to help with problems in the operation of the King-Drew emergency room, hospital and pharmacy. In addition, administrators must be held accountable for any mismanagement. The Supervisor feels that the new hospital manager seems to be very capable and a good manager, but was aware that King-Drew could lose \$200 million in MediCal funding if accreditation is not renewed. Under this scenario the hospital would no longer be able to operate. If this occurs, private entities would be recruited to provide needed services at the facility. He expected the issue to be resolved during the first few months of this year.

The discussion expanded to encompass a consideration of a program initiated by the Supervisor which provides full scholarships to nursing students in return for a period of service to the County. He stated that he is trying to expand the program to include specialization opportunities, longer service periods, and greater outreach to high school and junior high school students.

Commissioner Parks asked if consideration had been given to a true zero-based budgeting process, particularly if done on a periodic and departmental basis. Supervisor Antonovich acknowledged that he was open to the idea. Dr. Lori Howard commented that such an approach would be a drastic departure from current methods used by the County and may be difficult to implement on a County-wide level. She suggested the idea might be tried with a small department.

Supervisor Antonovich closed his presentation by discussing future goals and projects for the County. The Supervisor declared that the County actually has a larger tech sector than Silicon Valley. He pledged to work toward development of a "high tech corridor" along the new Gold Line route. He also announced plans to improve area transportation by developing the regional airports in Palmdale and Ontario, and by taking

advantage of parking space at the County Fairgrounds in Pomona to benefit commuters.

Chairman Philibosian thanked Supervisor Antonovich for his time to make this presentation to the Commission and for the contributions that he has made to improving county government.

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Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 163, 500 West Temple St.,
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone (213) 974-1491 FAX (213) 620-1437 [EMail eecomm@co.la.ca.us](mailto:eecomm@co.la.ca.us)
WEB eec.co.la.ca.us