

California CLAC Descend to Influence Legislators

Lobbying In Sacramento – Delegates Take Positions

BY PATEE BARTA, EDITOR



On April 17-18, 2005, like swallows descending on Mission San Juan Capistrano each year, San Diego California Legislative Action Committee reps and their California colleagues swarmed the Sacramento Capitol in search of open minds. As Liaison to the Board of Directors for CAI San Diego, my task was to attend the Sunday Delegate Meeting at the Hyatt Regency Hotel where ideas were encouraged in a sea of attorneys. With a powerhouse of legal minds — homeowners, managers, marketing directors and guests — the bills were poured through painstakingly to assure correct positions were cemented for presentation the next day to assembly and senate representatives.

On April 18, CA Homeowner Day at the Capitol began introducing Skip Daum, our lobbyist and Jill Van Zeebroeck, CLAC Chair, who were armed with legislative positions and ready for committee chairs to review the bills with attendees. A packet of assembly and senate position papers were distributed to leave with legislators. As it played out later, many legislators said, “this is the most organized group and we appreciate that.”

Governor Schwarzenegger sent Janet Huston, Director of Governmental Relations and Communications from the Department of Housing and Community Development to speak about his commitment to working with both sides [Senator Ducheny, CAI and other Stakeholders] on issues being addressed relative to the veto on AB 2598, now resurged as SB 137. Huston saw HOAs as “Quasi Cities.” Daum asked her, “What do you know about HOAs?” She retorted, “I was president of my association for three years, does that count?” They were immediately “on the same page.”

Jill Van Zeebroeck read a letter thanking the Governor which read in part, “We commend you for asking us to start over in crafting a Bill [SB 137 Assessment Collection] that benefits all stakeholders.” This was presented to Huston for the Governor.



Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, Patee Barta (left) and Pamela Voit, owner of Voit Management and Yvette Marie Allen, Community Manager.



Brian Hebert, Esq., California Law Revision Committee, spoke about the legislative process and bill review taken prior to making recommendations to the legislators. Gene Mullin, Assembly Housing Committee Chair, provided information on the formation of the ombudsperson office that could be established if AB 770 or SB 551 were to pass. Breaking news as of April 28, in a communiqué from CLAC, the bill is dead this year.

Eight Hot Bills: Positions Taken - Debate Sizzling

Chair/Manager Jill Van Zeebroeck pounded the gavel to quiet the chatter of ideas leaking out - a list is immediately started for organized opinions. Skip Daum gave tips on how to lobby and said “...if there are too many constituents to fit into

their offices, the legislators’ lobby-in-the-lobby.” After the Sunday buzz about bill positions, this was imparted to the legislators at the Capitol:

SB 137 (Ducheny) - Assessment Collection Bill. Support, if amended (Change threshold to \$1,000 or six months, not \$2,500; eliminate the 65% appraisal; disconnect lien process. Leave 1366.3 in “as is” with pre-pay; Owners may request IDR/ADR). This is one answer to last year’s AB 2598.

AB 619 (Leslie) - CACM Assessment Bill - CLAC Approves the bill which is one answer to last year’s AB 2598.

AB 1098 (Jones) - Oppose, too vague. The bill is on books and records.

AB 770 (Mullin) and **AB 551** (Lowenthal) - Support if a two-year bill (\$5.00 per door per year to fund). This is the Ombudsperson bill. Bill dead April 28.

AB 394 (Niello) - Support. Passed Housing and Community Development Committees; awaiting hearing in Appropriation Committee. Would permit recording of “Restrictive Covenant Modification Form,” that would replace the document previously on file.

AB 61 (Battin) - Oppose unless amended. Re: secret ballots. Signature verification burdensome. Secret ballots procedure already has substantial protection of confidentiality via case law.

SB 186 (Battin) - Support if amended. Move the protections of the Corporations Code Sections 7520-7527 into the Davis-Stirling Act. Prohibits use of Association funds to campaign for any elections.

This is only a snapshot of the experience. Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, 36th District Republican Whip, saw us again this year and after our position on AB 137 he replied, “I think Senator Ducheny will work on amendments with you on the bill.” Assemblyman Mark Wyland had his Director note our viewpoints and joined us in a photo as did Assemblywoman Christine Kehoe who bounced out of a meeting. Our group saw Assemblyman Jay La Suer’s Chief of Staff, Valory F. Mitchell from La Mesa’s 77th District. Then the rush to the airport ended our journey! ■