

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

The General Government Section includes departments, commissions and offices responsible for oversight of distinct policy areas that are not easily consolidated into other oversight areas such as ensuring peace officer competence, seismic safety, reasonable public utility rates, food and agricultural issues, and services to veterans.

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH

The Budget provides \$2.0 million General Fund to address the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM). This pest has the potential to harm California's natural ecosystem and cause annual economic losses exceeding \$100 million. The LBAM is not native to the continental United States and has no natural enemies to control its population. The Department is working with the United States Department of Agriculture to obtain federal funding.

HIGH-RISK PEST EXCLUSION

The Budget provides \$1.5 million General Fund for County Agricultural Commissioners for additional inspection activities at airports, ports, and public and private parcel facilities to detect and exclude new pests and diseases from California's agriculture and natural environment.

BORDER INSPECTION STATIONS

The Budget provides \$677,000 General Fund and 11.4 positions to inspect additional vehicles and shipments entering California for assurance the vehicles and shipments are pest-free and compliant with plant quarantine regulations.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) regulates the electricity, natural gas, water, telecommunications, and transportation industries, such as railroads and household goods carriers. The 2007 Budget Act contains funding to enable the PUC to implement several new efforts:

- The Budget includes \$2,460,000 Reimbursements and 2.9 positions to implement the California Solar Initiative. These staff will administer required PUC proceedings and assist in developing a pricing structure that provides an incentive to generate solar electricity during peak demand hours. The vast majority of these funds, \$2,166,000, will be used to hire independent consultants to provide program monitoring and evaluation.
- The Budget includes \$950,000 (\$850,000 Public Utilities Commission Utilities Reimbursement Account and \$100,000 Public Utilities Commission Ratepayer Advocate Account) and 10.3 positions to implement the Video Competition Act. These positions will enable the PUC to ensure that video services are non-discriminatory, review applications, and issue state franchises. This proposal includes one position for the Division of Ratepayer Advocates to promote service and quality standards on behalf of ratepayers.
- The Budget includes \$2,043,000 Universal Lifeline Telephone Service Administrative Committee Fund and 31 positions to enable the PUC to address a large increase in appeals affecting the Universal Lifeline Telephone Service program. The appeals have resulted from eligibility denials issued to telephone users who fail to comply with new federal requirements, which require users to re-apply for the program and provide proof of income eligibility.
- The Budget provides \$500,000 Public Utilities Commission Utilities Reimbursement Account to fund critical contracts in support of implementation of the California Global Warming Solutions Act.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS

The Budget includes \$1.8 million General Fund and 22 positions to provide the additional resources needed to meet the increased demand for military funeral honors ceremonies in California. This augmentation will provide an additional 300 funeral honors per month which would include, among other things, California National Guard (CNG) members folding the United States flag and presenting it to the next of kin during the funeral ceremony. Federal

regulations require the CNG to serve as the primary provider of these ceremonies for veterans who request, or whose families request, funeral services in California with military honors.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

BARSTOW 40-BED SKILLED NURSING FACILITY

The Budget provides \$2.3 million (\$2.1 million General Fund and \$245,000 federal funds) and 18 positions to reopen the 40-bed Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) at the Barstow Veterans Home. The opening of the SNF unit will provide a level of care needed by veterans and will allow for greater utilization of the Barstow Home. The activation of the unit will occur over two fiscal years.

GREATER LOS ANGELES AND VENTURA COUNTY VETERANS HOMES CONSTRUCTION

The Budget includes \$621,000 General Fund and 5.2 positions for the initial construction and pre-activation phases of the Greater Los Angeles and Ventura County Veterans Homes project. At completion, the new facilities will bring Adult Day Health Care, assisted living and Skilled Nursing Facility care to veterans in the greater Los Angeles area.

ENTERPRISE WIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Budget provides \$11.4 million General Fund (\$7 million one-time) and 26.4 positions to procure and implement a statewide Veterans Home Information System. This system will be implemented in the veterans homes proposed for construction and in the existing veterans homes over the next seven fiscal years. The new system will be based upon the federal veterans health care information system and will improve health care tracking, improving the continuum of care provided to veterans.

SALARY INCREASES FOR CLASSIFICATIONS AFFECTED BY THE PLATA, COLEMAN, AND PEREZ COURT CASES

The Budget reflects an increase of \$3.5 million General Fund to increase salaries for personnel classifications providing medical, mental health, and dental services for the California Veterans Homes in Yountville, Barstow, and Chula Vista. This augmentation brings salaries to appropriate levels consistent with decisions for non-Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations personnel pursuant to the Plata, Coleman, and Perez court orders. These increases will improve hiring and retention of health service staff at the California Veterans Homes and enhance the level of service provided to veterans.

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