



Budget Conference Committee to Convene Tomorrow

May 20, 2009

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Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) and Assembly Speaker Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles) held a news conference today to announce measures that will help speed up the process to solve a looming \$21 billion state budget deficit and head off a state cash shortage for the state expected in July. Additionally, they announced measures to make the budget process more transparent than in previous years and include more legislators and public input in the process.

The Budget Conference Committee will convene tomorrow, May 21, and will begin with an overview of the budget from the Department of Finance and Legislative Analysts Office. This reflects an accelerated process rather than having the May Revision proposals first vetted in the subcommittee process, they will be heard directly in Conference Committee. In addition, the Budget Conference Committee will be made up of five legislators from both the Assembly and Senate instead of the usual three. Members include: Assembly Members Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa), who will chair the Conference Committee, Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles), Bob Blumenfield (D-Woodland Hills) and Senators Denise Ducheny (D-San Diego), Bob Dutton (R-Rancho Cucamonga) Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach) and Mimi Walters (R-Laguna Hills. Assembly Republican appointments to the Conference Committee have not been announced.

Additional hearings are scheduled as follows:

- May 22: Hear from the State Controller, State Treasurer, DOF, and LAO on the state's cash issues.
- May 25-28: Conference Committee will use its meetings for public testimony. Each day will be a different subject matter, schedule forthcoming. This will give the public a chance to comment on the Governor's May Revision proposals, as well as offer suggestions for how the Legislature and Governor should close the \$21 billion budget gap.
- June 1: Traditional Conference Committee action hearings begin where the Administration's specific proposals are reviewed, as well as a critique by the LAO. Conferees will also consider the suggestions of citizens and groups who provided testimony during the public testimony days (week of May 26).

The goal is to have the Conference Committee finish its work by mid-June including putting proposals to amend the 2009-10 budget package to the floor, and to get those passed and in law prior to the start of the fiscal year.

Stay tuned for more updates as the budget process moves forward.

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