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# County OKs \$450,000 In Budget Cuts

County budget cuts of \$450,000 from a projected \$63.6 million budget in 1977-78 and an interim freeze on hiring were unanimously approved by supervisors Tuesday.

The cut was proposed by Supervisors Gary Patton and Cecil Smith in a joint-letter to the board in which they charged that the state and federal governments were mostly to blame for local property tax increases.

Patton said that state mandated programs, including MediCal, were responsible for an increase of 4.2 per cent of the projected 9 per cent increase in the coming fiscal year and that the county increases of 4.8 per cent were below the 6.5 per cent rate of inflation.

"We only have control of eight cents on the tax dollar," he told the board and while hitting hard at the state's mandates, said the cuts must be made locally where the board has jurisdiction.

Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat congratulated the board on its support for the cut, and said she expected to see even more trimmed from the

budget. She is scheduled to appear tonight at Seascape Lodge at 7:30 to inform the public of her budget proposals.

Supervisor Phil Baldwin called the proposal "very significant" and said of the letter, "It is so articulate, the entire letter should be published in the press."

He said, "The most frightening thing is that there is no guarantee the state and federal governments will shape up."

Baldwin warned the cuts would mean a "cut in services," something no supervisor wanted.

However, Liddicoat disagreed, indicating she wouldn't mind a cut in services and later told the press she was angry that the state and federal governments are blamed for mandating programs, "because they don't mandate the level of service — that's a county choice."

County Administrator Ted Durkee was given the job of finding where the \$450,000 should be cut from the general fund portion of the budget and told

the board his recommendations would be made the afternoon of June 21, the first day of budget hearings.

The projected tax rate, for the county budget, is about \$2.39 per \$100 assessed valuation based on a tax base increase of 17 per cent for 1977-78.

The \$450,000 cut could drop the rate from two to three cents more, lowering the true tax increase from nine per cent to from seven to eight per cent.

Speaking of the county's 4.8 per cent increase compared to the state-mandated 4.2 per cent increase, Patton said, "In other words, even though our local government has been able to reduce proposed general fund increases to a level significantly below the general cost of living inflation that is felt through the economy, our local taxpayers will still be stuck with an overall nine per cent increase.

"It is incumbent upon us to let the taxpayers know (and) someone ought to tell them that county government is doing a good job in keeping costs down."