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All the options required to balance budget

'Temporary' pay, hours, cutbacks could continue

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Layoffs, salary reductions and reduced programs will all be needed to balance Santa Cruz County's budget, County Administrative Officer Susan Mauriello told county supervisors this morning.

To make up an estimated deficit of \$8.8 to \$10 million, Mauriello is recommending continuation of the pay and hours cutback imposed on most county workers as a temporary measure two weeks ago.

The county started closing its offices at 1 p.m. on Fridays, cutting the work week to 37 hours, resulting in a 7.5 percent pay cut.

In addition to the pay cut, the county will need to lay off 31 of its 2,175 workers, Mauriello said in presenting her inch-thick proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

"In every area of government service, the public will notice a continued lessened ability to provide the assistance previously available," Mauriello said.

Mauriello cautioned supervisors the projected budget deficit could

easily increase. Gov. Pete Wilson is proposing shifting \$2.6 billion in tax revenue earmarked for local governments to the state. If that happens, she said, the county would face an additional \$4.8 million cut.

As the recession continues, the county's revenues from taxes and fees keeps dropping, Mauriello said.

Mauriello's recommended cuts include:

- A drop in the Planning Department staff from 95 to 85, and a cut in the budget from \$3,861,000 to \$3,782,000. The Planning Department depends on revenue from permit fees, which have been declining as building has slowed during the recession.

- Dropping two assistant district attorneys.

- Abolishing the county's bad-check collection program, which began in September 1991. In a letter to Mauriello before he learned of the budget recommendations, District Attorney Art Danner said he expects the program would be

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self-sufficient by next year if allowed to continue. MAY 25 1993

- Cutting the probation department staff from 65 to 62.

- Holding the sheriff's staff at 133, and cutting the budget from \$7,262,000 to \$7,064,000.

- Continued delay in opening the already-built medium security jail on Harkins Slough Road.

- Reductions in Medi Cruz services for the indigent, elimination of adult dental services and limits on pharmacy services.

- Elimination of health education and prevention services for the elderly.

- Elimination or reduction in various environmental health services.

- Limited increases in the staff dealing with the growing list of welfare recipients.

Wilson has said he will not renew a half-cent sales tax that expires this year, but instead will make counties responsible for seeking the increase at elections in November.

The county will have to decide whether to have an election before it knows what the state budget will be, Santa Cruz County Supervisor Gary Patton said. "The governor is not really going to work with us," he said.

Supervisors will take action on Mauriello's recommendations at budget hearings the last two weeks of June.