

# Fight Shapes Up Against Veto Of <sup>Area</sup> Service Center

By WALLACE WOOD  
Sentinel Staff Writer

The fight is on to override Gov. Ronald Reagan's veto of the \$308,000 in anti-poverty funds for the Santa Cruz County Community Action program.

A federal regional War on Poverty chief hit at the governor's handling of the veto Friday and gave strong support for local control of the program.

This may mean federal support for an override of the veto if Santa Cruz County supervisors ask for it.

H. Rodger Betts, regional director of the Office of Economic

Opportunity (OEO), said in a news announcement he will meet with supervisors "at their earliest convenience to discuss the problems in the funding of their CAA (Community Action Agency) grant." The Regional OEO office covers California, Hawaii, and other far western areas.

A meeting is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 14 in Santa Cruz, Supervisors' Chairman Dan Forbus said Friday.

Betts said he as well as local anti-poverty officials, was surprised at the governor's announcement of his veto Wednesday

night. "As yet, neither my office, nor, to my knowledge, has our national headquarters in Washington, D.C., received an official copy of the governor's letter announcing the veto and detailing allegations against the Santa Cruz Area Service Center, even though the letter was obviously released to the press over 24 hours ago."

"Until I receive that letter," Betts declared, "I obviously can't reply."

Nevertheless, the OEO regional chief hit at Reagan's office for acting before the investigation of the Santa Cruz Area

Service Center is complete. An investigative committee will present its findings on Wednesday. The report largely clears the center of charges.

The Area Service Center was the chief target of the governor's veto. Instead of representing and serving the poor, the governor's office charged the center helped foster revolutionary activities, is involved in a conflict of interest question, and was the site of such "questionable activities" as overnight sleeping parties and marijuana smoking.

When the center is closed,

the veto on the entire Community Action Board (CAB) program will be lifted, the governor promised.

Part of the veto document also criticized the local CAB staff and the board itself for failing to follow regulations and develop effective programs to help the poor.

Santa Cruz CAB Executive Director Dick Brown called the governor's veto and his report "a hanging without a trial."

Brown has said he hopes the OEO regional office will try to override the veto, but will abide by whatever decision is made.

Dennis Albaugh, assistant CAB director, said Friday "they can get themselves a new man man if they close that service center." Albaugh was visiting two county supervisors at the time to talk about the veto.

One reason for the override effort stems from a current conflict between Bett's office and Gov. Reagan's State Office of Economic Opportunity. Several state officials have told the Sentinel that Regional OEO believes the governor is usurping local control.

The governor, for his part, wants to halt use of anti-poverty

programs to promote violent revolution, these officials explain, as well as halt other illegal or questionable activity in the programs.

The only clear legal weapon the governor has is a total veto or total approval of the anti-poverty program in a community.

So serious is the Area Service Center problem here that the governor is willing to risk loss of the whole local program to solve it, a service center investigator said.

Betts, in his announcement,  
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# Fight Seen Over Service Center Veto

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made it clear the decision should be left now to local officials.

"The five men of the Santa Cruz County Board of supervisors are, after all, the legally constituted authority responsible for the operation of the CAA programs," Betts declared.

He added that, "We are confident that they can and will resolve the administrative problems that face them. We have evidenced our faith in them in our refunding of their program."

Betts' OEO office already has given its approval to the \$308,000 funding package for Santa Cruz County. Though county

supervisors wanted to add some conditions to this grant because of the Service Center investigation, the Regional OEO refused. The problems can be handled administratively, without yielding to pressure to pre-condition the grant, the OEO office indicated.

Should county supervisors ask for an override of the governor's

veto, and Betts backs their recommendation, the final decision would be made in the National Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, D.C.

The governor's men already have talked to federal OEO head Donald Rumsfeld in Washington, informing him of Reagan's intended veto.

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