

State budget hits county hard

Cuts show a 'disregard for counties'

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Santa Cruz County will be severely hit by state budget cuts that show "bad public policy, poor financial management" and a "disregard for counties," County Administrative Officer Susan Mauriello told the Board of Supervisors this morning.

Santa Cruz County will take a \$5 million cut, Mauriello said. The losses will be particularly felt in the court system, welfare and funding for special districts.

The biggest hit is a \$1.9 million decrease in revenue for trial-court funding in Santa Cruz, a drop of about 11 percent.

"The governor has decided he

doesn't want courts, so let's not have courts," Supervisor Gary Patton said sarcastically.

"I don't even know (that) we could support our judges" with such a cut, Patton said.

Continuing his sarcasm, Patton called Gov. Pete Wilson "Mr. Tough On Crime," and suggested the cuts be made so Wilson can see what he is doing "to our basic infrastructure of civilization. Unbelievable."

The state budget plan calls for diverting money from redevelopment districts to schools, which Mauriello called 'a so-called one-time shift.'

The state legislation "forces the

county to make a loan" from redevelopment funds," county Redevelopment Agency Director Tom Burns told supervisors.

The transfer totals \$205 million for 1992-93, Mauriello said, but understates the cost by ignoring interest on the loan.

"The Legislature looked at who has money in the bank," Patton said.

Welfare allocations are being cut 4.5 percent on Oct. 1; that figure could go to 5.8 percent on Dec. 1 if the federal government makes certain changes in the rules. There's also a number of medical and social services for the poor and elderly that will be reduced or cut.

Counties have been hit harder than cities by the state budget cuts. That makes it particularly tough on Santa Cruz County, one of a handful of counties in the state with a large portion of residents outside cities.

"Proposition 13 has come home," said Supervisor Ray Belgard, referring to the 1978 measure that limited government spending. "There's a limited amount of funds, and we're going to have to manage with less."

Mauriello did not offer any estimates on how many layoffs will be needed. More hearings on the cuts will be held in October and November.