

Interview Notes – Bill Berryhill – Assemblyman, conducted by Bea Lingenfelter and Cate White  
January 20, 2012

Question 1 re State Budget: Berryhill noted that he had worked hard and was successful in maintaining business enterprise zones this past year during the discussion and subsequent legislation to dissolve redevelopment agencies. He sees many problems now for cities who might have to sell properties established by Redevelopment Agencies that cannot be sustained. He foresees a “fire sale” of properties flooding the market. Redevelopment Agencies have asked the state to “mend them, not end them”. Berryhill supports an extension for the Redevelopment Agencies to mid-April to give the state time to introduce legislation for ???????. Redevelopment Agencies are telling the state that they can produce revenue for the state and not to just shut them down.

Mr. Berryhill stated that the frequent turn-over of legislators due to term limits leaves consultants, agencies, staff and lobbyists empowered with the knowledge and experience that legislators lack. This leads to many difficulties including those with a balanced budget.

Mr. Berryhill is supportive of a two-year budget process, but that idea did not fly. The legislature passed a performance-based budget but the Governor vetoed that bill.

Mr. Berryhill is not supportive of the Governor’s Budget Proposition. He stated that California’s economy is growing by 4% but that expenditures have increased by 7%. We must improve the business climate in our state in order to grow the economy and create jobs.

Question 2 regarding the reform of the Initiative/Referendum Process:.. Mr. Berryhill stated that this process and discussion of the process is very politically charged and he does not see any change forthcoming

Question 3 re What do you think are the chances that the legislature will agree to approving building conveyance in the Delta, as Huber's bill proposed, and getting a cost/benefit analysis? This time it almost passed out of committee. The California Water Commission is charged with evaluating public benefits of surface storage (dams), but the water exporters are suggesting that there doesn't need to be a cost/benefit analysis for conveyance because the beneficiaries will be covering the costs.

Mr. Berryhill will be bringing a bill to the Assembly to get a cost analysis of water conveyance to water users in LA and to Central Valley farmers. Water users in Southern CA could have more cost effective water. He stated that the Governor seems totally committed to a Peripheral Canal. In response to a question regarding the sale of water subsidized by government to private buyers at a profit to the sellers. He stated that farmers cannot buy the water at the high prices and make any

money farming. But the farmer can sell the water at a higher price rather than using it and turn a profit. Mr. Berryhill states that his bill AB 627 would require the Department of Water Resources to undertake an expedited evaluation and feasibility study with regard to the implementation of the Delta Corridors Plan. He states that the environmentalists are behind this bill as well as other legislators. He also has brought together two engineers whom, working with each other's ideas, can put together a Delta conveyance and Delta Corridors plan.

Question re other major issues for 2012 Mr. Berryhill states that we must grow our economy and bring in more revenues. He noted that Amazon is planning to build a large distribution center in Patterson, which is part of his district. He noted that he remains concerned about the "underground economy". These are individuals or business that do not follow state law and regulations, do not pay prevailing wage, often do not pay taxes and other fees and can undercut legitimate businesses in prices.

He noted that we need to change our tax structure in the state including broadening the tax base to taxing services. He believes there is bipartisan support for this.

: He shared his legislation AB32 which would have set up 3<sup>rd</sup> party arbitration for environmental conflicts. He stated that it was a good bill with good cosponsors in the Assembly and passed out of the Assembly 77-0. However it was dead on arrival at the Senate. He speculated on the reasons, but was very disappointed that this type of problem-solving legislation could not get support in the Senate.

He believes the Environmental Quality Commission (EQ) has a far left perspective. Regulatory agencies such as the EQ don't take industry experts into the decision-making process. They look at the economics of a regulation and take public comment but do not directly ask for input from the industry experts who will deal with any applied regulations. Mr. Berryhill believes that any mandated technology must be commercially available before putting in a timeline for the mandate in order give the industry time to implement.