

## Ex-Madera County Supervisor Harry Baker suffers stroke, molestation trial delay likely

By Eryn Baldrice-Guy



Harry Baker, center, leans in to hear his attorney Roger Nuttall, right, offer him words of support before being handcuffed by a bailiff and turned over to the jail on Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2014 in Fresno, Calif. ERIC PAUL ZAMORA

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Former Madera County Supervisor Harry Baker, who is facing trial on child molestation charges, suffered a stroke March 11, Baker's attorney Roger Nuttall confirmed Monday night. This new development will likely further delay Baker's trial, which has been delayed repeatedly.

"All I can say is that it is a serious stroke," Nuttall said. Baker's left side has been immobilized by the stroke, Nuttall added.

Baker, 87, has been hospitalized and is no longer in the Fresno County Jail, Nuttall said. Baker had been in jail since Sept. 24 for missing court dates and court-ordered appointments.

Baker has pleaded not guilty to one felony count of molesting a 13-year-old girl in 2007. He contends that he was the

victim of an extortion plot by the girl's family and that the girl tricked him into molesting her while secretly videotaping him. Baker told police he paid \$250,000 to the girl's family members to prevent the tape's release.

A hearing to determine Baker's competency to stand trial was previously scheduled for March 30. Nuttall has twice called his client's competency into question, asserting that Baker suffers from dementia and other illnesses.

Baker's trial has been delayed multiple times since 2009 due to health problems such as open-heart surgery and a tracheotomy. Nuttall expected the stroke to delay the trial further. "We're going to court on Wednesday morning to deal with that," he said.

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