



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS

CALCOG NEWS - FEBRUARY 2004

ELECTRONIC NEWS FOR BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF OF AGENCIES OF REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS

FROM: RUSTY SELIX, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MEMBER AGENCIES

- Association of Bay Area Governments
- Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
- Butte County Association of Governments
- Calaveras Council of Governments
- Contra Costa Transportation Authority
- Council of Fresno County Governments
- Council of San Benito County Governments
- El Dorado County Transportation Commission
- Humboldt County Association of Governments
- Kern Council of Governments
- King County Association of Governments
- Madera County Transportation Commission
- Mendocino Council of Governments
- Merced County Association of Governments
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Los Angeles
- Orange County Council of Governments
- Orange County Transportation Authority
- Placer County Transportation Planning Agency
- Riverside County Transportation Commission
- Sacramento Area Council of Governments
- San Bernardino Associated Governments
- San Diego Association of Governments
- San Joaquin Council of Governments
- San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
- Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
- Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
- Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency
- Southern California Association of Governments
- Stanislaus Area Association of Governments
- Transportation Agency for Monterey County
- Tulare County Association of Governments
- Ventura County Transportation Commission
- Western Riverside Council of Governments
- CONSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS
- California State Association of Counties
- League of California Cities

1. Governor's January Budget - More bad news for transportation and local government

Local government officials were stunned by the \$1.3 billion in new ERAF - property tax transfers from cities and counties to schools to benefit the general fund. This comes on top of the un-funding of Proposition 42 and additional borrowing from other state and federal transportation funds. CALCOG sent a detailed letter to Governor Schwarzenegger outlining our objections to the transportation cuts, which were contained in his so-called mid-year cuts released in December. A copy of that letter is attached.

CALCOG and member agencies have been testifying at a series of Senate Budget and Transportation Committee hearings, bringing attention to these issues and most importantly the significant adverse economic impact associated with the state failing to maintain a commitment to transportation. Not only are there jobs directly lost in construction related activities but it has been highlighted that traffic congestion is one of the main economic challenges for the state and listed by the Wall Street Journal as the #1 reason why people leave California.

CALCOG member agencies are urged to continue to take the lead in their regions in making the case to the public and to the media about the adverse consequences of our lack of transportation investments and to educate their legislators.

2. Reauthorization of Federal Transportation Funding Law

Congratulations to the U.S. Senate and appreciation should be expressed to California's two Senators, Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer - particularly Senator Boxer, who sits on the House Environment and Public Works Committee, and contributed significantly to the passage of a law that reaffirms the federal government's commitment to increase transportation spending, maintains the current structure of federal transportation law, which include primary decision-making by regional agencies, and includes increased funding for regional agencies to carry out their responsibilities.

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At the same time, the House passed a four-month extension of the existing law. The House Transportation Committee leadership and the White House (together with many other House leaders) are \$100 billion apart in terms of the magnitude of the program with the Senate measure right in the middle. Over the coming months there will be continued negotiations and it is unclear whether a compromise will be reached and a bill passed this year or whether Congress will pass another extension that pushes the debate past November's elections - into either President Bush's second term or a new Democratic President.

CALCOG member agencies need to remind members of Congress and the public about the importance of transportation investments to our local, state and national economies and particularly for the federal law the significant contribution to the nation's economy that California is making through serving as the primary ports of entry for foreign manufactured goods.

3. \$15 Billion Bond on March 2nd Ballot - Possibility of Including Transportation

Talks continue with legislators about earmarking a portion of the \$15 billion bond on the March ballot to re-pay some of the transportation loans that have been made to the state general fund. However, thus far the Department of Finance has resisted and indicated that including transportation funds would have an adverse affect on the 04-05 budget since none of the transportation loans are due to be paid back until future years.

4. Jobs/Housing Balance

CALCOG and its members have expressed appreciation for Governor Schwarzenegger's appointment of Sunne Wright McPeak as Secretary for the Business Transportation and Housing Agency. She is a former local official active in regional issues and is well known to many of us.

However, she has wasted no time in reminding everyone of her strong commitment to housing and her interest in linking state policy in selecting transportation projects to producing the housing for the jobs that are created or retained in expanding our transportation systems.

This is an issue that all regional transportation planning agencies will have to address in future plans.

5. Regional Indicators

California Center for Regional Leadership - led by Nick Bollman, former Chair of the Speaker's Committee on Regionalism, has released a report showing a series of regional indicators, both those used by CALCOG member agencies and those developed by private civic organizations, to measure performance in achieving regional public policy objectives. CALCOG will be working with the California Center for Regional Leadership and its members and with state officials to develop a set of universally supported regional indicators that could be utilized to guide state investments - recognizing that the state is a series of economic transportation housing market and social regions.

6. CALCOG Regional Issues Forum - April 15-16, Monterey

CALCOG's Regional Issues Forum will be held on Thursday and Friday, April 15 and 16 at the Monterey Plaza Hotel.

The first day will focus on re-examining state and local government relationships considering the Governor's intention to restructure state agencies, push for regional performance indicators that link between transportation, jobs, housing and land use, promoted by Secretary McPeak and proposals for fiscal reform to stabilize local government finances and decrease the fiscalization of land use.

The second day will focus on the transportation financing crisis and what opportunities there may be for new revenues or revenue-raising authority at the state level and the latest information on federal transportation reauthorization.

7. Election of CALCOG Officers

At the April meeting CALCOG will also elect a new president and two vice-presents. Any city or county elected official who serves on the governing board of any CALCOG member agency is eligible to serve. Interested individuals need to submit a short letter indicating their interest to CALCOG's office no later than April 1st.