

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Pat Dellin, Acting Executive Director
RE: 2005 Legislative Outlook and Draft 2005 Legislative Agenda

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Approve resubmitting a request for a Federal earmark for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project and making the request for \$12 million; and
 2. Accept the proposed updated Draft 2005 State and Federal Legislative Agenda (Attachments 1 & 2 to the Main Staff Report) and release to the RTC committees for review and comment.
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DISCUSSION

The Draft 2005 Federal and State Legislative Agendas in the attached staff report, continued from the December 2nd meeting, have been updated.

Federal Earmark Request

The RTC's Washington Assistant recommends that the earmark request for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane project be reduced from \$15 million to \$12 million and the target year for increased funding for the Federal Transit Program be extended from 2009 to 2010.

This recommendation is consistent with the need to reintroduce legislation for the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) in the new Congressional session. The federal transportation bill adopted by the House last year, but not acted upon by the full Congress, included a \$3.67 earmark for the Highway 1 project sponsored by Congressman Farr.

Lowering Voter Threshold for Countywide Transportation Taxes

Staff has also amended the Draft 2005 State Legislative Agenda to continue support for lowering the voter threshold from 2/3 to a majority vote (or 55%) for countywide transportation sales or gas taxes. Staff had previously eliminated this provision based on the outcome of the November 2004 elections. Staff subsequently learned that reduction of the voter threshold still has support in some areas, therefore staff recommends this provision be retained in RTC's Legislative Agenda.

The Draft 2005 Federal and State Legislative Agendas attached to the continued staff report have been revised per the discussion above. All other items remain the same.

Summary

Staff has updated the Draft 2005 State and Federal Legislative Agendas in the attached continued item and recommends adoption for circulation to all RTC committees for comment, with final adoption in February 2005.

Attachment:

1. Main Staff Report on the 2005 Legislative Outlook and Draft 2005 Legislative Agenda