



San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council Special Meeting

Friday, April 1, 2022

Time: 9:00 a.m.

ZOOM CONFERENCE MEETING

Meeting ID: 892 1655 6576

Passcode: 280556

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89216556576?pwd=QWtNNGdueCtySW9CN2d4cElZOUZKZz09>

Phone only: (669) 900-9128

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Poythress

Enclosure

B. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. State Budget Allocations; Consider Approving Support Letter for Priority Valley Projects


Gus Khouri





C. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS


D. PUBLIC COMMENT

E. ADJOURN

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Chair
Supervisor Robert Poythress
Madera County

Vice-Chair
Mayor Rudy Mendoza
City of Woodlake

San Joaquin
Council of
Governments

Tulare County
Association of
Governments

Fresno
Council of
Governments

Kern
Council of
Governments

Kings County
Association of
Governments

Madera County
Transportation
Commission

Merced County
Association of
Governments

Stanislaus
Council of
Governments



California Legislature

March 28, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Senate Budget Committee, Chair.
1021 O Street, Suite 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Assembly Budget Committee, Chair
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo
Senate Budget Subcommittee #5, Chair
1021 O Street, Suite 7530
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Bloom
Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3
1021 O Street, Suite 8130
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: \$2.7B Transportation Budget Augmentation Request - Safety, Mobility, and Climate Resiliency

Dear Budget and Budget Subcommittee Chairs:

We are writing to ask for your support in considering a combination of investments, which we believe will help advance the state's interest in accelerating our response to climate change by providing historic investments into multi-modal options such as bus, rail, and bicycle and pedestrian projects, as well as enhancing safety, accommodating goods movement, and disaster response along the state highway system. At least \$55 billion in federal and state resources for transportation investments are possible due to over \$20 billion in unencumbered General fund surplus after obligations to Propositions 2 (Rainy Day Fund) and 98 (education) are made, as well as investments from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which includes \$25.3 billion for federal aid highways \$9.45 billion for public transportation, and \$384 million for electric vehicle charging network. The Governor's FY 2022-23 State Budget also contains an FY 21-22 carryover of \$3.4 Billion funds, and \$1.1 billion in Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA) interest, which has no current statutory claim that the Governor made available through his veto of AB 604 (Daly). Our proposal would also include appropriating the remaining \$4.2 billion of Proposition 1A of 2008 (Safe, Reliable, High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century) to deliver a true statewide rail network, \$1.2 billion for goods movement, \$970 million for transit and passenger rail, and an additional \$500 million (\$1 billion total) for active transportation.

Goods Movement Infrastructure Modernization, Disaster Response on Lifeline Routes- \$1.2 Billion

The state must consider areas where capacity expansion is necessary to address climate adaptation and resiliency or to close gaps on evacuation routes to prepare for natural disasters or other climate events. Highway 99 is the San Joaquin Valley's "main street," serves as the main arterial for the region, and is the spine for interstate commerce. The same is true for State Route 101, which is the Central Coast's

equivalent of “main street,” a critical arterial for most of the region, a lifeline and evacuation route, and is integral for interstate commerce. When Interstate 5 closes annually due to inclement weather over the Grapevine, the 101 becomes the only-north-south arterial in the state. East-west connector routes Enhancing access and throughput by completing gap closures is essential to help move goods and people in a safe manner. East-west connectors such as State Routes 46 and 132 are vital to facilitating commerce, especially with the focus on constructing inland ports to accommodate supply chain needs.

The San Joaquin Valley represents one of the most productive agricultural regions in the nation, if not the world. The San Joaquin Valley annually generates over \$35 billion and produces 25 percent of the nation’s food supply. Over \$50 billion in freight movement is also conducted along the Central Coast, particularly in the Salinas Valley, making east-west connector, such as Highway 41 and 46 critical. Fresh produce cannot be delayed when going to processing or to market. This necessitates a more balanced planning approach, which supports sustainable economic development across all of California and recognizes the diversity and interconnectedness of all regions. We have nearly 27 million registered drivers in this state, all of whom do not have the same travel destinations. The state’s population has more than tripled since the highway system was built in the 1950s (13.3 million to over 40 million today), which has exacerbated the challenge, particularly with 50% of all imports and exports in the nation moving through the Ports of Oakland and Los Angeles/Long Beach and utilizing the San Joaquin Valley’s arterials to get goods to market. We must continue to accommodate the exponential growth in goods movement, and build a system is more befitting of accommodating a 21st century economy. The following is not a “wish” list, but rather critical projects that need funding to improve safety, throughput, of people and goods.

Closing Gaps on State Route 99: The Spine for Goods Movement

City of Tulare SR 99 Rehabilitation and Interchange Improvements \$150 million

This project is located along SR 99, within the City of Tulare. It includes safety and goods movement upgrades to five miles of the mainline SR 99 corridor and reconstruction of a deficient overcrossing and interchange at Paige Avenue, allowing for multi-modal access between through the City.

Madera County Reconstruction and Widening \$144.5 million

This project is located along SR 99, within the County of Madera. The project will rehabilitate and widen a five-mile segment of SR 99 to support goods movement, motorist safety, reducing commuter delays.

Atwater-Merced Expressway \$16.57 million

The Atwater-Merced Expressway (AME) is a multi-phase expressway project that will improve access from Highway 99 to Castle Commerce Center (formerly Castle Air Force Base), UC Merced, and the cities of Atwater and Merced.

Tulare Gap Closure \$168 million

This project would finish the SR 99 gaps in Tulare County. It would fill the gap between the Delano SR 99 project to the south and the SR 99 project within the City of Tulare. It would include a full environmental analysis, designing the project and acquiring the needed property for right-of-way to build these lanes.

South Fresno SR 99 Corridor Project: North Avenue Interchange - \$31.4 million

The project will include reconstructing the split interchange on SR 99 at North and Cedar Avenues by expanding the North Avenue interchange to a full interchange and bringing it into compliance with current Caltrans design standards, thereby improving traffic operations at this location.

South Fresno SR 99 Corridor Project: American Avenue Interchange- \$49.8 million

The project will include reconstructing the existing half interchange on SR 99 at American Avenue by expanding the interchange to a full interchange and bringing it into compliance with current Caltrans design standards, thereby improving the traffic operations at this location.

San Joaquin SR 99/120 Connector - \$25 million

SR 120 is a major connector between Interstate 5 and SR 99. The project reconstructs the SR 99/120 interchange, which is subject to significant congestion, delays, seven times higher than the statewide average for a similar facility. The project improves air quality by reducing passenger delays by 30% and 45% in throughput.

Kern Southwest U.S Goods Movement Hub Interchange Improvement- \$25 million

This project would connect eastbound SR 58 to northbound SR 99 on the west extension to the 1-40/SR 58 Transcontinental Corridor. Final 2 ramps connecting North approach of SR 99 to the West approach of SR 58 Centennial Corridor new route. SR 58 connects I-40/15 in Barstow to I-5 near Buttonwillow. This project would complete the interchange movements at this nationally significant corridor.

Vital East-West Connectors

SR 132 West Project -Stanislaus- \$100 million

(SR-132) corridor is the main east/west arterial and freight corridor from the City of Modesto to San Joaquin County and the San Francisco Bay Area. The two-lane conventional highway provides an interregional connection between Interstate 5 (I-5) near the City of Tracy to the west and State Route 99 (SR-99) in Modesto to the east. The facility is the only east-west highway with access across the Tuolumne, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus rivers from Modesto. As such, SR-132 has increasingly served the San Joaquin Valley and has become a major truck route between I-5 and SR-99. The purpose of the SR-132 West Project is to improve mobility through western Stanislaus County by converting SR-132, west of State Route 99, to a four-lane freeway/expressway along an adopted realignment route. This will provide a safer and more efficient east-west connection between State Route 99 and Interstate 5.

State Route 46 Overcrossing- Paso Robles-\$52.5 million

State Route 46 East has state, regional, and local significance given that it is a heavily traveled goods movement and tourism corridor. The route connects the state to the two main north-south highways - US 101 and Highway 5 - and is the only major east-west goods movement corridor between Ventura and Gilroy (274 miles). The route supports the \$7 billion of annual goods shipments, accounting for 575,000 jobs in the region. SR 46 also supports the \$5 billion Central Coast tourism industry serving national and international travelers. The project would build an overcrossing allowing for the City to create parallel local routes to remove local traffic off SR 46, creating more room for commercial trucks. The state has invested nearly \$700 million in the corridor, to eliminate head-on collisions on 46, which has experienced several fatal collisions that exceed the state average. This project provides an immediate safety and mobility enhancement for residents, tourists, and commuters, while concurrently improving goods movement throughput.

State Route 41 Yosemite National Park and Emergency Preparedness Access -\$50M

State Route 41 between Fresno and Yosemite National Park serves as the primary access to the entire eastern Madera County region, which is planned for new population growth. Additionally, the destructive 2020 Creek Fire demonstrated the need for safety improvements as SR 41 is the primary evacuation route for the foothill and mountainous areas of Eastern Madera County. This area includes

the communities of Oakhurst, Coarsegold, Yosemite Lakes Park, Bass Lake and North Fork. This is a major population center in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains and is a vital part of Madera's economy providing services to national and international tourists as well as retail and employment to Madera County residents. Traffic served on SR 41 ranges from average annual daily traffic of 47,500 vehicles per day from the Madera/Fresno County Line to 21,500 to the juncture with SR 49 in Oakhurst.

Delivering CTC Vetted Projects

The CTC comprehensively vetted and recently approved Cycle 2 of the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP) in December 2020 with remaining highly ranked projects that could utilize the funding for delivery of statewide priority projects. According to the CTC, the SCCP projects will save 250 million-person hours of travel time over the next 20 years, reduce approximately 64 million vehicle miles traveled, reduce approximately 3.5 million tons in GHG emissions, and create 27,000 jobs. Our recommendation is to provide \$400 million to the SCCP Program Cycle 2 backlog. Examples include:

Santa Barbara US 101 Multimodal Corridor- \$184 million

in Santa Barbara County, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and Caltrans have been partnering for over twenty years to deliver on multimodal improvements between Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Only 2.5 miles are left in completing the HOV lane network to promote carpooling and transit use, continuation of interregional transit from Ventura County, peak hour passenger rail service, and completion of gaps on the California Coastal Trail to increase biking and walking. In 2017, the Thomas Fire (then the largest in state history) and Montecito mudslides underscored the importance of addressing this lifeline route.

US 101 San Luis Obispo Managed Lane Project- \$63 million

This project would convert a shoulder into a part-time managed lane in Pismo Beach during peak hours to alleviate congestion and allow for greater transit throughput reliability. : improve operations on U.S. 101 during weekday peak hours, summer/seasonal peak hours, and weekend peak traffic events; reduce traffic congestion and improve the traffic operations at the U.S. 101/Avila Beach Drive interchange and improve access to multimodal transportation options; provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities that serve all user types and abilities, improve active transportation network connectivity between southern San Luis Obispo county communities and the city of San Luis Obispo, and maximize users' contact with the natural environment while minimizing environmental impacts.

Transit and Passenger Rail Investments-\$970 million

High-speed rail is only one component of the California State Rail Plan. We need to make additional prudent, synergistic investments into commuter and intercity rail systems, particularly between the Bay Area and San Joaquin Valley, to maximize our ability to encourage mode shift, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve safety and congestion on our roads. The proposed investments below provide the greatest opportunity to encourage mode shift, particularly for daily super commuters, many of whom live in disadvantaged communities.

Valley Link Initial Operating Segment- \$450 Million

Our request is that \$450 million be directed to build 26 miles of track for the initial operating segment of Valley Link, to extend rail service from the BART station in Dublin to Livermore, and constructs two stations and a maintenance facility.

Valley Link will ultimately provide a reliable alternative to congestion on Interstate 205 and 580 for more than 93,500 Bay Area workers now commuting daily from their homes in Northern San Joaquin County. The project would help fill a 42-mile rail gap between connecting BART in Dublin to the ACE commuter service in Lathrop. It would remove 33,000 cars (not counting people carpooling) off the Altamont Corridor and provide nearly 500 miles of commuter and intercity rail with more than 130 stations in the Northern California Megaregion and remove up to 42,650 metrics tons of greenhouse gas emissions, while creating 22,000 jobs. Valley Link is leveraging over \$748 million in local funding towards this prospective \$450 million state investment opportunity. The system will run on hydrogen. In 2012, the legislature made a similar decision with the initial appropriation of Proposition 1A when SB 1029 (Leno), Chapter 152, Statutes of 1029, was enacted, and funds were appropriated to electrify Caltrain, and expand Capitol Corridor to San Jose and Metrolink service in Los Angeles, among other systems.

Valley Rail Program- ACE/ San Joaquins Connectivity \$450 million

The Valley Rail Program includes the expansion of San Joaquins and ACE passenger rail services from Merced to Sacramento and to the Bay Area and connecting and integrating these services with High-Speed Rail Interim Service in 2028/29 at a new downtown multi-modal Merced Station. The Valley Rail Program is a key part of a passenger rail/Thruway bus network connecting HSR Interim Service throughout California. Valley Rail includes new joint ACE/San Joaquins stations at Merced, Lodi, Elk Grove, Sacramento City College, Midtown, Old North Sacramento, Natomas, new ACE stations at North Lathrop, Manteca, Ripon, Modesto, Ceres, Turlock, and Livingston, and new San Joaquins stations at Oakley and Madera (along Avenue 12). The next steps for implementing the Valley Rail Program include the ACE extension from Ceres to Turlock, the Madera HSR Station costs assumed for Interim Service, BNSF track improvements to enable an additional San Joaquins round-trip to be extended to Merced to connect with future HSR Interim Service, and station funding to account for increased costs for center-loaded platforms. These improvements have CEQA clearance except for the BNSF track improvements (which is expected to only require a negative declaration).

Kings Area Rural Transit Center- \$20 million

Kings County Area Public Transit Agency (KCAPTA) is Kings County's regional public transportation provider. It serves the cities of Hanford, Corcoran, Lemoore, and Avenal; the unincorporated communities of Armona, Grangeville, Hardwick, Kettleman City, Laton, and Stratford; and selected communities in Fresno and Tulare counties. The new transit center will modernize the transit system allowing KCAPTA to improve reliability and convenience by expanding the fixed route service, reduce travel/transfer time, replace an inefficient and costly flex route system, reduce operational costs, increase frequency, and support a growing transit dependent population. It will include EV Car share, micro transit, and bike lockers. The new transit center will eliminate gaps in current route network and connect to the future Kings / Tulare High Speed Rail station and to Amtrak.

Augment Active Transportation Funding - \$1 Billion (\$500 million more than Governor's Proposal)

While the proposed FY 22-23 State Budget proposes \$500 million in General Fund revenues for ATP projects, that would only have funded a handful of Cycle 5 projects with a score of 86. Increasing the amount between \$900 million could allow the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to fund an additional 160 projects that scored above 78, providing for greater geographic equity statewide. Adding \$400 million to SCCP and SHOPP program will help counties statewide to deliver multi-modal projects and achieve greenhouse gas emission targets. Using Cycle 5 as an example, Los Angeles County would have received an additional \$140M, Orange over \$110M, Central Coast over \$90M, Riverside over \$80M, and \$78M for the San Joaquin Valley.

We appreciate all your effort in examining our request and look forward to working together towards strengthening our economy, improving our transportation infrastructure, and addressing climate change.

Sincerely,

Carlos Villapudua
Assemblymember, 13th District

Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Assemblymember, 16th District

Susan Talamantes Eggman
Senator, 5th District

Monique Limón
Senator, 19th District

John Laird
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Jordan Cunningham
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Assemblymember, 29th District