

Chair  
Supervisor Daron McDaniel  
Merced County



Vice Chair  
Supervisor Vito Chiesa  
Stanislaus County

## San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council Executive Committee

**Thursday, November 13, 2025**  
**9:00 a.m.**

*Members of the Policy Council Executive Committee may participate via video teleconference at the following locations:*

**Madera County Transportation Commission**  
2001 Howard Road., Suite 201  
Madera, CA 93637

**Stanislaus County**  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Lobby  
Modesto, CA 95354

**San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District**  
1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726

**Merced County Association of Governments**  
369 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95340

**Tulare County Association of Governments**  
210 N. Church Street, Suite B  
Visalia, CA 93291

**Stanislaus Council of Governments**  
917 Oakdale Rd, Modesto, CA 95355

**Stanislaus Council of Governments**  
1111 I Street, Suite 308  
Modesto, CA 95354

**Fresno Council of Governments**  
2035 Tulare St., Ste. 201., Fresno, CA 93721

Public members may participate at any of the above locations or remotely via Zoom. Please contact Georgiena Vivian at (559) 259-9257 or [givian@vrpatechnologies.com](mailto:givian@vrpatechnologies.com) prior to the meeting to determine which physical locations will be utilized.

### Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86027381655?pwd=ELQjmSj713jrpPkRbSnVXLgIlRRD9b.1>

Meeting ID: 860 2738 1655  
Passcode: 315045  
One tap mobile  
Phone only: 1 (669) 444-9171

Agenda Item	Speaker	Enclosure
<b>A. CALL TO ORDER</b>	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. ROLL CALL</b>	Georgiena Vivian	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodations** – The public meeting room and restrooms are ADA accessible. Representatives or individuals with disabilities should contact the SJV Regional Agencies Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian, at (559) 259-9257, at least three days in advance, to request auxiliary aids and/or translation services necessary to participate in the meeting.



## San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council Executive Committee

### Roll Call

SJVPC	First Name	Last Name	Title	Agency	Present (Y/N)
<b>Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC)</b>					
Member	Robert	Poythress	Supervisor, District 3	County of Madera	
Alternate	Jose	Rodriguez	Councilmember, District 2	City of Madera	
Alternate	Waseem	Ahmed	Councilmember	City of Chowchilla	
<b>Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)</b>					
Member – Chair	Daron	McDaniel	Supervisor, District 3	County of Merced	
Alternate	Scott	Silveira	Supervisor, District 5	County of Merced	
<b>Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG)</b>					
Member – Vice Chair	Vito	Chiesa	Supervisor, District 2	County of Stanislaus	
Alternate	Rosa	Escutia-Braaton	Councilmember, District 1	City of Modesto	
Alternate	Buck	Condit	Supervisor, District 1	County of Stanislaus	
<b>Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG)</b>					
Member	Rudy	Mendoza	Mayor	City of Woodlake	
Alternate	Dennis	Townsend	Supervisor, District 5	County of Tulare	
Alternate	Linda	Launer	Councilmember, District 5	City of Dinuba	
<b>San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)</b>					
Member	Samir	Sheikh	Executive Director	SJVAPCD	
Alternate	Mark	Montelongo	Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs	SJVAPCD	

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<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Enclosure</u>
<b>C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b> 1. October 24, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting	Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS</b>		
1. Budget, Policy, and Legislative Updates a. <i>State</i> b. <i>Federal</i>	<i>Gus Khouri</i> <i>Jen Covino</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2. RTP/SCS Updates and Air Quality Issues a. <i>SB 375 – 2026 GHG Reduction Targets</i> b. <i>Clean Air Act Waiver Recission – Lockdown/Endangerment Finding Update</i>	<i>Ryan Niblock and Alex Marcucci</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>E. OTHER ITEMS</b> 1. Executive Committee Member Comments	Members	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>F. PUBLIC COMMENT</b> This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Committee on items within its jurisdiction but NOT on this agenda. Public comment will be allowed during the Discussion Items above.	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>G. ADJOURN</b>	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>H. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE &amp; STAFF WORK SESSION – <i>Scheduled</i></b> The Executive Committee will recess into a non-public work session with designated staff to discuss preliminary legislative and intergovernmental strategy. No formal action will be taken.	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>

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### Other Meeting Participants

Yes	No	Director   Agency	Yes	No	Director   Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jay Schlosser, Kern COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ahdel Ahmad   SJPPA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Becky Napier   Kern COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michael Hanebutt   SJPPA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rob Ball   Kern COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gus Khouri   Khouri Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ted Smalley   TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mitch Weiss   Khouri Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ben Kimball   TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jen Covino   Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steven Ingoldsby   TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	David Gellman   Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roberto Brady   TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aly Hernandez   Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terri King   KCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Georgiena Vivian   SJV Coordinator   VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Phipps   Vice Chair, Directors' Committee   Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carolina Ilic   VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paul Herman   Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dena Graham   VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ofelia Abundez   Fresno COG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simran Jhutti   Fresno COG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brenda Thomas   Fresno COG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patricia Taylor   MCTC			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dylan Stone   MCTC			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Findley   MCTC			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stacie Guzman   Chair Directors' Committee   MCAG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elizabeth Forte   MCAG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meg Prince   MCAG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kate Miller   StanCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monica Streeter   StanCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jose Luis Caceres   StanCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nick St. Cook   StanCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Nguyen   SJCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Niblock   SJCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kim Anderson   SJCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Montelongo   SJVAPCD			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Morgan Lambert   SJVAPCD			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dan Leavitt   SJPPA			

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AGENDA ITEM C.1.

*October 24, 2025, Executive Committee*

*Meeting Minutes*

Chair  
Supervisor Daron McDaniel  
Merced County



Vice Chair  
Supervisor Vito Chiesa  
Stanislaus County

## San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

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Visalia, CA 93291

**Coast Ballroom, Wyndham San Diego  
Bayside,**

1355 N Harbor Drive  
San Diego, Ca 92101

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Meeting ID: 824 7629 3439

Passcode: 537198

One tap mobile

Phone only: 1 (669) 444-9171

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Member	Samir	Sheikh	Executive Director	SJVAPCD	Y
Alternate	Mark	Montelongo	Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs	SJVAPCD	Y



<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Enclosure</u>
<b>C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b>	Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
October 24, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting		
Member Poythress, MCTC, moved to approve the minutes, which Member Sheikh, SJVAPCD, seconded. The motion passed.		
<b>D. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS</b>		
1. <b>Budget, Policy, and Legislative Updates</b>		
a. <i>State</i>	<i>Gus Khouri</i> <i>Jen Covino</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting, reported that the Legislature adjourned on September 13, extending one additional day to finalize the Cap-and-Trade extension, now renamed the “Cap and Invest” program. He expressed appreciation to the Policy Council for its timely support. As late as the morning of September 10, negotiations were stalled. At that point, Gus contacted the Pro Tem’s office, asking if a support letter would help; the response was affirmative. Despite many members being in Washington, D.C., the group produced a quick turnaround letter, which Gus believes played a meaningful role in helping move the final package forward. The Governor signed the legislation on September 19.		
✓ Funding Structure Under the New “Cap and Invest” Program		
Gus outlined how the updated funding structure works:		
▪ High-Speed Rail Priority Funding		
High-speed rail receives guaranteed funding at the top of the allocation structure, replacing previous continuous appropriations with line-item appropriations.		
▪ New Legislative Appropriations Tier		
A second tier includes new programs, such as \$125 million designated for free transit passes. Statutory guidance for this program is still pending.		
▪ Existing Programs Maintained		
The third tier preserves funding for ongoing transit programs, including capital, operations, and affordable housing initiatives.		
✓ Upcoming Work and Fiscal Outlook		
Looking ahead to the next legislative year, Gus identified a key issue: determining how to allocate any potential excess revenues. There was significant discussion about supplementing multiple funding categories, suggesting opportunities for future enhancements.		
Gus noted that he is preparing the 2026 Draft Legislative Platform, aiming to complete a draft by the following week. He waited for the Governor’s bill-signing period to conclude on October 13 to fully inventory recently enacted legislation. He highlighted that some priorities, such as funding for the “farmer program,” can be pursued again in the upcoming year.		
He also emphasized that new appropriations under the Cap and Invest program will not take effect until FY 2026–27, but market stabilization now provides more predictability for planning.		



- ✓ Comments and Questions
  - Mitch Weiss noted that Caltrans just posted the draft ITIP, which was delayed but is now available for review.

b. *Federal*

- ✓ Overview of the Federal Shutdown Status  
Jen Covino, Covino, Smith, and Simon, provided an update on day 23 of the federal government shutdown, noting that no near-term resolution is visible. She identified November 1 as the critical upcoming milestone, when many agencies will no longer be able to operate using previously unspent funds. While most federal agencies managed to maintain basic operations through October using flexibilities, November marks a point of more severe disruption.
- ✓ Impacts on Local Government Services and Federal Programs  
Jen warned that constituents may face interruptions in key federal benefit programs if the shutdown continues past November 1, including:
  - SNAP (food assistance)
  - WIC (Women, Infants, and Children program)She also noted that several other federal services may be disrupted as agencies exhaust remaining funds.
- ✓ Congressional Dynamics and Emerging Strategy  
Jen explained that the Senate is taking the lead in negotiations. Senate Majority Leader John Thune is signaling interest in abandoning the House's seven-week continuing resolution (CR) in favor of a longer-term CR, to avoid reopening government now only to face another shutdown three weeks later during the holiday season.

Democrats appear focused on securing an extension of Affordable Care Act premium subsidies, especially with November 1 open enrollment approaching, which will heighten public sensitivity to healthcare costs.

- ✓ Transportation-Specific Impacts  
Jen clarified that the shutdown has a limited direct impact on transportation agencies because:
  - Most federal highway, transit, and rail programs are supported by advance appropriations or mandatory Highway Trust Fund spending. As a result, many DOT, FHA, and FRA employees are considered "exempt."

However, despite being exempt:

- Staff are not accepting meetings with external stakeholders, as such meetings are not considered permissible activities under shutdown contingency rules.
- Administration officials may acknowledge receipt of inquiries but will not provide substantive responses until government operations resume.

Jen advised agencies to coordinate through lobbyists or her team if they need help navigating federal engagement.

- ✓ Congressional and Administrative Operations  
Members of Congress and staff remain at work without pay. Some agency officials (e.g., deputy secretaries) can acknowledge emails but cannot act



on requests. Political leadership is still functioning internally but is not engaging externally.

She expressed frustration that some exempt employees are declining to assist, even in areas related to life and safety (e.g., air traffic control concerns), suggesting that the administration may be exerting pressure on Congress to restore full government operations.

✓ Transportation Conformity and Delegation Letter

Jen reported progress on transportation conformity issues. She stated:

- Democratic offices have approved bipartisan amended language for a delegation letter to EPA and FHWA.
- They are awaiting approval from the Republican delegation members.
- She expects the language to be finalized within a few days, after which it will be distributed to the group.

EPA, she notes, will acknowledge inquiries but will not provide answers until operations resume.

✓ Samir Sheikh (SJVAPCD) asked two questions:

1. EPA responsiveness: How the shutdown may affect EPA's ability to work on air quality and conformity solutions once the delegation letter is sent.
2. Status of the letter language: Whether the group will receive it soon.

Jen responded with the following:

- EPA employees will acknowledge inquiries but cannot provide answers.
- Political leadership will only take in-person D.C. meetings, declining virtual ones.
- Regional offices may continue some operations, especially those linked to public health.
- Furloughs at EPA are expanding, adding uncertainty.

She also asked Samir to keep the group updated regarding potential engagement with Deputy Administrator Aaron Zabo during a scheduled meeting in Phoenix. However, she cautioned that agency travel plans are unstable and often canceled at the last moment due to the shutdown.

- ✓ Members noted that many federal activities appear to continue internally, despite agencies limiting external communication.
- ✓ The group shared anecdotal evidence of inconsistent behavior by federal offices, with some continuing internal work while cutting off constituent-facing communications.
- ✓ Jen offered examples of DOT officials canceling travel at the last minute, emphasizing how unpredictable operations have become.

## 2. RTP/SCS Updates and Air Quality Issues

### a. SB 375 – 2026 GHG Reduction Targets

✓ Overview of Current Status

Ryan Niblock, SJCOG, reported that there has been little change since the last discussion on statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) target-setting.

However, statewide conversations continue, and Valley agencies have been actively communicating concerns to state officials.

Ryan  
Niblock and  
Alex  
Marcucci





✓ Primary Issue: Difficulty Meeting New GHG Reduction Targets

Ryan explained that the Valley's ability to meet future GHG targets is becoming more difficult due to declining population growth projections.

Key points:

- When earlier targets were set (for 2020 and 2035), population growth assumptions were significantly higher.
- The state's new demographic forecasts show substantially lower growth, meaning:
  - There will be fewer new residents.
  - There is less new development to influence through RTP/SCS strategies.
- Since GHG-per-capita reductions rely heavily on how new growth is planned, lower growth equates to fewer opportunities to achieve meaningful reductions.

He emphasizes that this shift fundamentally reduces the Valley's "levers" for achieving required reductions.

✓ How Population Decline Impacts RTP/SCS

Ryan explained that Regional Transportation Plans and Sustainable Communities Strategies primarily address future growth through land-use and transportation investment decisions. Examples include:

- Directing new development toward denser areas.
- Supporting infill or compact development.
- Prioritizing transit-supportive land use patterns.

With lower projected population increases:

- 90% or more of the future population are existing residents.
- Agencies cannot realistically force current residents to relocate from single-family homes into urban infill.
- Thus, the Valley loses the most effective mechanism available for achieving per-capita reductions.

Ryan stressed that this makes the state's expectation for continually increasing or more stringent targets unrealistic.

✓ Additional Concerns: Administrative Review Burden

Agencies also raised concerns about the one- to two-year California Air Resources Board (CARB) review process following completion of RTP/SCS documents. Current issues include:

- Excessive delays.
- Significant administrative burden for Valley MPOs.
- Repeated rounds of refinement and negotiation with CARB.

Ryan noted that the Valley is requesting:

- Shorter review timelines, and/or
- The possibility of shifting responsibility to another entity to accelerate decision-making.



✓ Questions Regarding County-Level Growth

Stacie Guzman, Chair, MCAG, asked whether Valley counties (Some of the fastest growing in the U.S.) can calculate targets based on their own growth trends rather than statewide metrics.

Ryan clarified:

- Targets are calculated county by county, not statewide.
- While Valley counties do still grow faster than many parts of California, the growth rate is lower than in past cycles, which still results in reduced ability to meet higher targets.

✓ Larger State-Level Context

Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting, expanded on why this issue matters:

- Difficulty meeting GHG targets affects the Valley's eligibility for state funding, especially SB 1 grants.
- The state is pushing for increasingly aggressive targets despite limited regional control and major state highways (like SR 99) serving heavy statewide and interstate commerce.
- He noted legislation passed this year encouraging:
  - Transit-oriented development,
  - CEQA streamlining,
  - Data-driven planning reforms.

Gus also explained that under the new Cap-and-Invest extension:

- CARB must brief the Legislature on its strategy.
- This creates a critical opportunity for the Valley to present why current targets are unreasonable publicly.

He notes that several MPOs and CalCOG are exploring options to:

- Reduce CARB's oversight role, or
- Allow MPOs' "best effort" plans to be considered sufficient.

He emphasizes that major policy work on this is expected next year.

**b. Clean Air Act Waiver Recission – Lockdown/Endangerment Finding Update**

✓ Overview

Ryan Niblock, SJCOG, provided an update on the Clean Air Act waiver rescission, conformity lockdown issues, and the associated discussions regarding the endangerment finding. He described the situation as a mix of "a lot happening and not enough happening," mainly due to the ongoing federal government shutdown, which has resulted in complete communication silence from the federal EPA.

✓ Valley-Wide Letters Submitted

Ryan reports that:

- Valleywide letters, signed by the chair, have been submitted to federal representatives in Washington, D.C.



- These letters articulate the Valley's needs related to the conformity "lockdown" situation.
- The goal is to secure a grace period that allows a parallel solution to move forward while the state continues developing its standard approach.
- ✓ Congressional Engagement
  - Congressman Jim Costa's office is preparing a congressional delegation letter.
  - This letter is intended to be co-signed by all Valley representatives and then transmitted to EPA.
  - This step is viewed as critical in elevating the urgency of the situation.
- ✓ Communications With State Agencies

The Valley has been actively communicating with:

  - California Transportation Commission (CTC),
  - California Air Resources Board (CARB),
  - Caltrans.

These agencies have shared their general approach to conformity issues, and Valley representatives have requested support for a parallel path.

Key concern:

Although state partners acknowledge the Valley's ideas are reasonable, none have explicitly endorsed or joined the effort, which Ryan finds troubling. Ryan noted a working theory:

  - The State of California is currently engaged in an active lawsuit against the federal administration related to these issues.
  - State agencies may believe publicly supporting the Valley's request could complicate or "muddy" the legal strategy.
  - This has created uncertainty regarding their willingness to publicly align with regional MPOs.
- ✓ CalCOG Involvement
  - The Valley's conformity working group, led by Director Smalley, met with CalCOG Executive Director Bill Higgins.
  - The goal was to leverage CalCOG to:
    - Increase support from larger MPOs such as SANDAG and MTC.
    - Understand more clearly the state's hesitancy.
    - Create a unified statewide front regarding conformity solutions.
- ✓ Joint CARB–CTC Meeting on November 6

Ryan highlighted an important upcoming meeting:

  - CARB and CTC will hold a joint meeting, and conformity will be the central agenda item.
  - Representatives will be present from:
    - CARB
    - CTC



- Caltrans
- The four largest MPOs in California (MTC, SANDAG, SCAG, and SACOG)
- The San Joaquin Valley (represented by Stacie Guzman and Dan Smalley) will present.
- The Valley will:
  - Present impacts on major local projects, including the Atwater-Merced Expressway.
  - Continue advocating for a parallel solution to avoid halting project delivery.

Ryan committed to reporting back the outcomes from this meeting.

✓ Questions and Comments

- Committee members express appreciation for Ryan's continued leadership.
- Member Rudy Mendoza raised concerns about timely communication and emphasized the need to ensure all members receive updates quickly, despite federal delays.
- Ryan assured the committee that:
  - The Valley is waiting on responses from federal and state agencies.
  - As soon as new information becomes available, it will be shared immediately with the executive committee.

✓ Next steps:

- Georgienna Vivian, SJV Coordinator, will schedule another Executive Committee meeting after the November 6th joint meeting between the CARB and CTC.
- Ryan Niblock, SJCOG, and Ted Smalley, TCAG, will prepare talking points and data regarding the Clean Air Act waiver rescission and conformity issues for Executive Committee members.
- Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting, and Jen Covino, Covino, Smith and Simon, will consider drafting a letter to the San Joaquin Valley Legislative Caucus after the November 6th meeting based on the outcome.
- The Executive Committee will focus exclusively on conformity issues at the next meeting.

3. ACTION: 2026 ITIP Hearings (October 30 and November 7). Consider Letter of Support

Patricia  
Taylor



✓ Patricia Taylor, MCTC, provided the following overview:

- Release of the Draft ITIP. The draft 2020 ITIP was recently released, as noted earlier in the meeting.
- MCTC and partners are still conducting a full review of the document.
- Inclusion of State Route 99 Projects.



- Patricia noted that several longstanding State Route 99 projects, supported for years by the regional 99 coalition, are included in the draft ITIP.
- She characterized this inclusion as a major success for the coalition and the Valley's advocacy efforts.
- ✓ Two state ITIP hearings are upcoming:
  - Southern California hearing: October 30.
  - Northern California hearing: November 7.
- ✓ Patricia requested:
  - A Letter of support.
  - Testimony in support of the SR-99 corridor projects included in the ITIP.

She noted:

- TCAG will attend and testify at the Southern hearing.
- MCTC will attend and testify at the Northern hearing.
- Other agencies or individuals are encouraged to participate through letters or testimony.

4. Motion:

Motion to approve moving forward with a letter of support and testimony for the ITIP hearings was made by Member Robert Poythress, MCTC, and seconded by Member Montelongo, SJVAPCD. The motion passed.

5. Next steps:

- Submit the regional letter of support.
- Provide testimony at the upcoming ITIP hearings in support of the SR-99 corridor projects identified in the draft 2020 ITIP—reinforcing the Valley's long-term advocacy for these improvements.
- Georgiena Vivian, SJV Coordinator, to work with Patricia to draft a letter of support for the ITIP projects along the 99 corridor.

6. Spring 2026 Policy Council Retreat – Discuss Date & Location

Georgiena Vivian, SJV Coordinator, provided an update on the annual retreat, which is included in the 2025–2026 Overall Work Program. The intent is to begin early planning for the retreat, anticipated for Spring 2026. The retreat is designed to support long-range organizational planning and the development of the Policy Council.

✓ Purpose and Goals of the Retreat

Georgiena noted the purpose and goals, including the following:

- Developing an organizational vision, goals, and objectives for the San Joaquin Valley Policy Council.
- Reviewing and improving organizational structure.
- Establishing meeting protocols.
- Establishing communication protocols.

Georgiena  
Vivian





- Providing training and development programs for members and staff.

The retreat is envisioned as an opportunity for collective reflection, coordination, and strategic direction-setting.

✓ Event Length:

- Proposed as either a 1.5-day or 2-day event.
- Day 1 could include:
  - A team-building exercise
  - The beginning of policy and organizational discussions

✓ Days of the Week:

Possible options to facilitate member travel and family accommodations:

- Thursday–Friday
- Monday–Tuesday

A Thursday–Friday schedule may work better for elected officials who typically have Tuesday meetings.

✓ Location Considerations

Georgiana reported that staff have surveyed resort and conference facilities across multiple Valley counties, prioritizing sites with:

- Conference spaces.
- Lodging accommodations.
- A setting conducive to multi-day planning.

She listed numerous candidate locations:

- Manteca
  - Great Wolf Lodge
- Tuolumne County (not in the Valley)
  - Rush Creek Lodge & Spa
  - Black Oak Casino Resort
  - Chicken Ranch Casino Resort
- Mariposa County (Not in the Valley)
  - Tenaya Lodge
  - Yosemite Lodge
  - The Ahwahnee Hotel
- Madera County
  - Bass Lake Resort
  - Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino
  - Outbound Resort (under construction in Oakhurst)
- Fresno County
  - Table Mountain Casino & Resort
  - Wonder Valley Ranch



- Tulare County
  - Wuksachi Lodge (Sequoia/Kings Canyon)
  - Silver City Resort
- Kings County
  - Tachi Palace

She notes no suitable facility has yet been identified in Kern County and invites members to offer suggestions.

- ✓ Georgiena asked the Policy Council for:
  - Early feedback on preferred locations.
  - Opinions on whether to choose resort-type settings or major hotel conference sites.
  - Feedback on preferred timing.

She explained that after receiving input, staff will refine the options with the Directors' Committee and narrow down specific choices.

- ✓ Feedback from Members

The Chair asks how "rustic" the more remote locations are—particularly Wuksachi Lodge and Silver City Resort.

Georgiena replied:

- Tenaya Lodge and Yosemite Lodge are somewhat rustic but comparable to Bass Lake accommodations.
- Wuksachi and Silver City are more rustic, popular, and reasonably priced—but she personally has not visited them.

Terri King, KCAG, adds:

- Silver City is extremely remote, located up a steep, winding Mineral King Road, and may not be suitable.

- ✓ Preferred Days

Chair McDaniel, MCAG, supports a Thursday–Friday schedule due to city council and board of supervisors' meetings, which occur on Tuesdays.

- ✓ Board and Director Schedules

Mark Montelongo, SJVAPCD, noted that the SJVAPCD meets on the third Thursday, creating a potential conflict.

- ✓ Scheduling Considerations

- Valley Voice Trip
  - The retreat must take place after the Sacramento Valley Voice trip.
  - Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting, clarifies that the suggested March 11 date for Sacramento Valley Voice is just a placeholder, based on past year scheduling.

- Election Cycle

Chair McDaniel suggested planning early in April, given the June election, which may impact member availability.



- CalCOG Conference Conflict  
Patricia Taylor, MCTC, flagged a potential conflict, noting that the CalCOG Annual Conference is scheduled for the same week in March as the tentative Sacramento Valley Voice date.
- Member Rober Poythress, MCTC, proposed:
  - That the retreat should remain within member counties, so tax revenues and spending stay local.
  - For continuity with past practice, the retreat should be held at the end of April—traditionally when the Policy Conference occurs.
  - A good option is the week after CSAC Legislative Day.

✓ Next Steps

Georgilena committed to:

- Sending the complete list of proposed locations and dates to all members.
- Continue to work with the Directors' Committee to identify the:
  - Final location.
  - Final date.
  - Retreat content and agenda.

She reiterated that the retreat is “critical” to advancing the objectives set in the Overall Work Program.

✓ Next steps:

- Georgilena to send information about potential retreat locations and dates to Executive Committee members.
- The Directors Committee will work on finalizing the retreat location and dates, with a focus on April 2026.
- The Directors' Committee will develop content for the Policy Council retreat.

#### E. OTHER ITEMS

##### 1. Executive Committee Member Comments

**Members**

No comments were provided.

#### F. PUBLIC COMMENT

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Committee on items within its jurisdiction but NOT on this agenda. Public comment will be allowed during the Discussion Items above.

**Chair**

No comments were provided.

#### G. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:59.

**Chair**

#### H. CLOSED SESSION

**Chair**



### Other Meeting Participants

Yes	No	Director   Agency	Yes	No	Director   Agency
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jay Schlosser, Kern COG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ahdel Ahmad   SJPPA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Becky Napier   Kern COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michael Hanebutt   SJPPA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rob Ball   Kern COG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gus Khouri   Khouri Consulting
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ted Smalley   TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mitch Weiss   Khouri Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ben Kimball   TCAG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jen Covino   Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steven Ingoldsby   TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	David Gellman   Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roberto Brady   TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aly Hernandez   Covino, Smith & Simon
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terri King   KCAG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Georgiena Vivian   SJV Coordinator   VRPA Technologies
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Phipps   Vice Chair, Directors' Committee   Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carolina Ilic   VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paul Herman   Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dena Graham   VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ofelia Abundez   Fresno COG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Simran Jhutti   Fresno COG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brenda Thomas   Fresno COG			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patricia Taylor   MCTC			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dylan Stone   MCTC			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Findley   MCTC			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stacie Guzman   Chair Directors' Committee   MCAG			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elizabeth Forte   MCAG			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meg Prince   MCAG			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monica Streeter   StanCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jose Luis Caceres   StanCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nick St. Cook   StanCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diane Nguyen   SJCOG			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Niblock   SJCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kim Anderson   SJCOG			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Montelongo   SJVAPCD			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Morgan Lambert   SJVAPCD			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dan Leavitt   SJPPA			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				