

## **SANBAG 2015-2016 Federal Legislative Platform**

The legislative platform serves as the basis to proactively engage in policy and legislative initiatives that will enable the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) to deliver projects and programs that meet the needs of our region. This document also guides staff recommendations to the SANBAG Board of Directors on federal legislative, regulatory, and administrative matters that are anticipated to be addressed.

SANBAG will continue to partner with public and private sector entities to support common objectives in Washington DC and foster the unity of the Southern California region.

### **I. Funding**

- a) Seek the highest level of federal transportation dollars to California and San Bernardino County for SANBAG projects and programs including, but not limited to: interstate highways; transit capital and operations in order to help to meet federal environmental goals; intercity commuter, and higher speed rail; goods movement; intelligent transportation systems and new technologies that maximize existing infrastructure; safety, maintenance, and operations funding for all modes; and regional airport ground access and development needs.
- b) Support extending and expanding the federal Surface Transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21).
- c) Support regional consensus building efforts for potential new funding strategies for transportation.
- d) Oppose efforts to eliminate or erode contract authority for the Highway Trust Fund without identifying a new dedicated, sustainable revenue source of an equal or greater amount.
- e) Support efforts to maintain the principle that transportation-based revenue should be reserved only for transportation purposes.
- f) Oppose any reduction in transportation programs in order to meet deficit reduction goals or fund other projects and programs. If funding is reduced, it should occur concurrently with reductions in federal regulatory and oversight provisions.
- g) Support the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program which provides Federal credit assistance in the form of direct Treasury loans, loan guarantees, and lines of credit to finance highway, rail, and green energy projects of national and regional significance.
- h) Support Build America Bonds and America Fast Forward programs to help states and localities pursue needed capital for infrastructure.
- i) Advocate for the protection of current transportation revenues, additional flexibility for existing revenues, and an accelerated national investment in infrastructure.
- j) Support the implementation of MAP-21 at established funding levels with respect for the roles and responsibilities in existence in each region for project selection and discretion in allocation decisions. Additionally ensure that any extension of MAP-21 or any new reauthorization effort align programs with traditional roles and responsibilities for each region with respect to project selection and allocation decisions, as appropriate.
- k) Ensure that the streamlining provisions of MAP-21 are implemented in a timely manner and in a manner that provides the maximum benefits to project delivery schedules. Seek to include provisions in the next surface transportation bill to ensure that as MAP-21 rulemaking continues, a mechanism exists to evaluate the implementation efforts and suggest modifications as needed.

## **II. Council of Governments**

- a) Support efforts for Council of Government development and funding.
- b) SANBAG will work with the Congressional delegation and local stakeholders to aggressively advocate for legislation, budget actions or proposals that transfer Ontario International Airport to local control in recognition of the benefits of its goods movement and passenger travel to San Bernardino County and the State of California.
- c) Support legislation and administrative actions that enable the implementation of the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program in San Bernardino County.
- d) Support the rescission of Federal Housing Financing Authority guidance regarding Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's discontinuation of mortgage guarantees in order to grow and sustain the PACE program in San Bernardino County.
- e) Support initiatives, legislation, and regulatory actions that incentivize the attraction, retention, and growth of businesses and employment in San Bernardino County.
- f) Support efforts to ensure that any legislation creating a National Recreation Area (NRA) in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains and surrounding urban areas should include a governance structure with representatives from at least the impacted cities, as well as the County and/or the San Bernardino Associated Governments; the protection of existing land use authorities, private property rights, water rights, transportation needs, and ability to develop future infrastructure as needed; and fully evaluates the potential impacts of including any additional elements such as a Wilderness or Wild and Scenic designation before these new layers are included in legislation.

## **III. Goods Movement**

- a) SANBAG will advocate for federal investment in goods movement infrastructure, and policies that properly recognize Southern California and San Bernardino County's role as the nation's premier containerized freight gateway.
- b) Support targeted funding for goods movement projects of national significance that are beyond the funding capacity of local and state transportation programs and budgets (e.g. dedicated exclusive clean truck lanes).
- c) Advocate that any federal goods movement program is funded at a level that is commensurate with national needs and ensure that such funds are protected from diversion for other uses through the designation of a trust fund.
- d) Ensure that revenues generated by any fee that is levied on freight be specifically designated to fund projects that mitigate congestion, air quality, and community impacts directly associated with the movement of freight, and a clear causal relationship should exist between the freight system on which fees are levied and the impacts to be mitigated.
- e) Ensure that revenue collected on freight be administered in partnership with local and regional elected officials and entities impacted by freight movement. SANBAG should be included in any governance structure dealing with revenue collected from freight moved through San Bernardino County.
- f) Support development of a national/regional freight movement plan with clearly defined ports and corridors and inland improvement needs to provide for timely, reliable freight transport, timely implementation of freight-related strategies needed for attainment of federal health-based air quality standards and mitigation of freight-related impacts in communities.
- g) Ensure that federal goods movement legislation imposes no unfunded mandates for administration or oversight regarding new revenue mechanisms and to retain control over project implementation at the local level.

- h) Support the expansion and update of the Primary Freight Network to allow for a fully connected system that accurately reflects the path and nature of goods movement travel in our region.
- i) Oppose legislation that allows triple trailers in urbanized areas of San Bernardino County because of safety concerns with the exception of border cities and/or bump stations, or dedicated truck lanes (e.g. Barstow/Needles).
- j) Support legislation to reduce road damage from heavy trucks by reduced axle loading rather than an exclusive focus on gross vehicle weight.
- k) Participate in national dialogue on freight policy and its focus on improving the performance of the freight network and advocate for improving Southern California's freight strategy.
- l) As part of defining the national freight network, seek recognition of the unique network of parallel corridors in Southern California and recognize the entire corridor as part of the national network rather than focusing on centerlane miles of individual facilities.
- m) Support recognition of the importance of inland ports to overall goods movement systems as part of any investment plan.

#### **IV. Project Delivery & Innovation**

- a) Advocate for reforms that will accelerate project procurement, promote flexibility and innovation in financing, and respect local control.
- b) Support the expanded use of design-build project delivery for federally funded highway and surface transportation projects.
- c) Support the streamlining of federal reporting/monitoring requirements to reduce project delivery times without eliminating critical oversight mechanisms.
- d) Support authority for regional transportation entities to implement pricing measures on federal-aid highways if desired for that region.
- e) Support local options to privatize various aspects of transportation that would maximize available federal funding (e.g. P3s).
- f) Support measures that would provide regional flexibility in meeting the operational requirements for high occupancy vehicle lanes.
- g) Advocate for the implementation and further inclusion of recommendations for project streamlining initiatives as included in the Orange County Transportation Authority's Breaking Down Barriers report.
- h) Support the resolution of outstanding Buy America implementation issues to ensure that projects are able to move forward without unreasonable delays and cost increases.

#### **V. Energy, Air Quality, & the Environment**

- a) Advocate that any federal revenue generated from taxes or fees on energy products used for transportation are utilized for transportation purposes.
- b) Support utility planning and upgrades of electrical infrastructure to support fleet conversion and possible rail electrification programs.
- c) Monitor national Cap and Trade policies as they relate to infrastructure impacts.
- d) Monitor the use of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) oversight authority delegated to the California Department of Transportation to ensure that local and state projects are receiving equal benefits and reduced project review times.
- e) Protect funding sources for congestion relief and pollution reduction related to the transportation sector.

- f) Support efforts to secure funds to facilitate the conversion of public sector fleets to alternative fuels to meet local, state and federal fleet conversion mandates, and provide for the replacement of aging alternative fuel fleets.
- g) Support tax benefits and/or incentives for private sector transportation demand management programs and alternative fuel programs.
- h) Ensure that federal goods movement legislation considers and underscores federal responsibilities for facilitation of international trade and interstate commerce, and regulation of interstate commerce in ways consistent with attainment of federal air quality standards and NEPA.
- i) Support efforts to increase the amount and proportion of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds received by the State of California and ensure that the funds flow to county transportation commissions such as SANBAG for the appropriate South Coast and Mojave Desert Air Basin areas.
- j) Support streamlined environmental revisions that remove duplication of state and federal processes when state regulations and environmental protections exceed federal requirements.
- k) Participate in the development of livability and sustainability programs for the citizens of San Bernardino County.
- l) Oppose additional review and process requirements that delay projects and increase costs while achieving little to no additional environmental benefits.
- m) Monitor federal regulatory efforts to ensure that any new environmental requirements placed on local agencies are accompanied by the funding necessary for implementation.
- n) Support the postponement of federal air quality standard deadlines in the South Coast Basin in order to allow for a more realistic implementation timeframe given the current forecast of available technology and funding options.

## **VI. Transit & Commuter Rail**

- a) Advocate for policies that keep our rail systems safe and increase federal investment in commuter rail services.
- b) Advocate that federal funding programs for Positive Train Control (PTC) and rail safety programs include eligibility to seek reimbursements for past expenditures on systems in operation.
- c) Ensure that various technologies for PTC are compatible across the nation.
- d) Advocate that the appropriate local or regional entity, such as SANBAG, be partners in on-going federal policy discussions to alter the liability cap for commuter rail accidents.
- e) Support legislation to change and/or exempt level boarding access requirements for existing commuter rail systems.
- f) Support policies that recognize the importance and fund commuter rail and transit connectivity to High Speed Rail.
- g) Support the inclusion of San Bernardino County projects in the New and Small Starts programs.
- h) Work to secure the greatest commuter tax benefits possible to incentivize the use of transit options.
- i) Expand eligible uses for federal transit funds to provide maximum flexibility to local agencies to fund capital and operations needs.