

Fresno COG “One Voice” - 2010 Regional Issues

Issue	Summary	Area Affected
Water – Supply, Reliability and Quality	Water is currently the most critical issue being faced by the San Joaquin Valley. Many pressing concerns—new as well as long standing—are affecting water supply reliability, quantity, and quality of the region’s agricultural, urban, and environmental water needs. <i>The San Joaquin Valley needs the support and partnership of State and Federal legislators, and water management and infrastructure agencies as we work through the complex issues surrounding water supply, reliability, and quality. Several recommendations are included on accompanying materials.</i>	San Joaquin Valley
High Speed Rail – Federal Component	<i>Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger submitted the state’s application for nearly \$4.7 billion in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) funding for engineering, design and construction on California’s high-speed train system.</i> Pledging a dollar-for-dollar match from state and local funds, including the high-speed rail bond passed by California voters in November 2008, the state’s application would generate a nearly \$10 billion investment. This funding would collectively create nearly 130,000 jobs throughout California.	California
San Joaquin Valley Goods Movement Program and State Route 99	The efficient movement of goods across state and international boundaries increases the nation’s ability to remain globally competitive and generate jobs. This request is one of seven principles contained in the California Consensus Principles on Federal Transportation Authorization – endorsed by California’s Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, the California Association of Councils of Governments, California State Association of Counties, League of California Cities, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies.	San Joaquin Valley
Air Quality Enterprise/ Empowerment Zone Designation <i>Federal Tax Legislation (Authorization)</i>	<i>The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is seeking the establishment of a new designation as an Air Quality Enterprise/Empowerment Zone at the state and federal level.</i> The new designation would recognize that the Valley has a unique air quality and economic situation that calls for additional state and federal resources to effectively meet the challenges that we face. Given the Valley’s climate and economic situation, it is abundantly clear that aggressive regulatory measures alone will not yield the needed reductions to attain the federal air quality standards. A primary reason for this is that new tail-pipe standards for on-road and off-road engines will not produce any reduction in emissions until old engines are replaced with new cleaner engines. Without incentive grants, the full benefit of the new engine standards will not be realized for decades. Additionally, incentive grants can allow for adoption of cleaner technologies that may otherwise be unaffordable. Furthermore, industrial equipment at stationary sources could be replaced with newer and cleaner equipment with appropriate incentive funding.	San Joaquin Valley

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Department of Labor Apprenticeship Programs	Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Department of Labor provides four (-4-) primary performance measures for adult-aged clients. The current policy, however, does not consider placement of an unemployed or underemployed worker into a training program leading to an apprenticeship as a successful performance outcome. <i>We are seeking a waiver from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) to allow placement in a recognized apprenticeship program as equal to "Entry into unsubsidized employment."</i>	Fresno County
Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics	Under the previous administration, the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics stopped counting agricultural workers, forestry personnel, fishermen, and government workers in its compilation of mass layoff statistics. As in the Central Valley of California, farm workers, forestry personnel, fishermen and government workers are contributing members of the workforce around the country. Not counting these workers in the overall statistics produces inaccurate figures that are used to make precise decisions. <i>We are requesting that the current administration reverse this policy to once again include these workers into the calculus of mass layoff statistics.</i>	Fresno County
Internal Revenue Service Empowerment Zone data	The Empowerment Zone (EZ) was established to spur the creation of businesses in economically distressed areas and to create job opportunities for economically disadvantaged workers. These tax incentives are an important component of the larger economic development and revitalization strategies in these federally designated areas. These tax incentives, however, are scheduled to expire at the end of 2010 (the EZ designations were slated to expire at the end of FY09, but the current administration allowed for a short extension). To advocate that these tax incentives be renewed, the designated regions must be able to provide accurate data that reflects the efficacy of the program. <i>To show the efficacy of the program we are requesting that the Internal Revenue Service provide aggregate data based on the designated regions (through ZIP codes) to allow for 1) better tracking, 2) better management and 3) quantifiable defense for the renewal of this incentive program.</i>	Fresno County
Energy Efficiency	<i>We ask for continued appropriations and changes to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program administered by the US Department of Energy.</i> This program is providing needed funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in all jurisdictions throughout the San Joaquin Valley in 2009. Much has been accomplished as a result of this federal clean energy funding. Much more remains to be done. We ask that the EECBG be continued with some changes described above to enable the Valley jurisdictions to fully utilize these clean energy funds to reduce their energy usage and costs and develop renewable energy capacity in their communities.	San Joaquin Valley

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Clean Energy and Water Technology Environmental Permit Streamlining and Certified Sites	<i>We request the creation of a federal program or process to assist jurisdictions in streamlining environmental permitting and create a set of "Certified Sites" – nationally pre-permitted for the attraction of clean energy and water technology companies and projects.</i> The envisioned program would streamline environmental and entitlement processes to attract and "nest" clean energy and water technology companies around the country, but particularly in the San Joaquin Valley that is strategically positioned for clean energy development, including wind, solar, geothermal, hydropower, energy storage, smart grids, biomass, biogas, and biofuels	Fresno County
Sustainable Communities Initiative	<i>We ask for support to establish the San Joaquin Valley as a demonstration region for the implementation of HUD/EPA/DOT/DOE's Sustainable Communities Initiative.</i> Among their proposed activities, this interagency partnership "will seek to integrate housing, transportation, water infrastructure, and land use planning and investment. HUD, EPA and DOT propose to make planning grants available to metropolitan areas, and create mechanisms to ensure those plans are carried through to localities." Upon his visit to the Valley in August 2009, Deputy Secretary Ron Sims indicated that the San Joaquin Valley's interest in becoming a demonstration region would be best realized with support requests from the Valley Congressional delegation.	San Joaquin Valley
Innovation for Sustainable Growth and Quality Jobs	Since taking office, President Obama has taken historic steps to lay the foundation for the innovation economy of the future. The Obama Innovation Strategy builds on well over \$100 billion of Recovery Act funds that support innovation, additional support for education, infrastructure and others in the Recovery Act and the President's Budget, and novel regulatory and executive order initiatives. It seeks to harness the inherent ingenuity of the American people and a dynamic private sector to ensure that the next expansion is more solid, broad-based, and beneficial than previous ones. It focuses on critical areas where sensible, balanced government policies can lay the foundation for innovation that leads to quality jobs and shared prosperity.	San Joaquin Valley
The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009	Update in progress – Mike Dozier/Stacie Dabbs Provide an update on Valley's progress to date.	Fresno County