



Council of Fresno County Government's 2010 Legislative Platform



Council of Fresno County Governments

2010 Legislative Platform

Policy Board

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INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THE 2010 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

The Fresno COG, in coordination with our member agencies, has established a 2009 Legislative Platform that reflects the current priorities of the Fresno COG in state and federal legislative matters. The Legislative Platform represents a unified voice when communicating legislative priorities to our state and federal legislators as well as to relevant state and federal agencies. It also provides guidance to the Fresno COG staff and our lobbying partners when advocating on behalf of the Policy Board.

The goal of the Legislative Platform is to have a document in place that outlines the legislative priorities of our region that will direct advocacy efforts for improvements in areas such as air quality, transportation mobility, and regional prosperity that will ultimately contribute to an improved quality of life throughout Fresno County.

ABOUT THE FRESNO COG

Our Role:

The Council of Fresno County Governments, better known as Fresno COG, brings together mayors, city council members and county supervisors to work on regional issues for Fresno County. Since its inception in 1969, Fresno COG has primarily acted as the transportation planning, coordinating and financing agency for Fresno County. Fresno COG functions as both the state designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency and for federal purposes, as the county's Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Organization:

A 16-member Policy Board gives Fresno COG policy direction. The Board consists of the mayors from each of the 15 incorporated cities in Fresno County and the Chairman of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. Fresno COG offers each of these agencies an opportunity to come together on a level playing field to discuss and resolve transportation and related air quality issues that go beyond their own jurisdictional boundaries.

Regional Profile:

Fresno County is classified as an urban county (despite many rural characteristics) and is located in the Central San Joaquin Valley within the state of California. Fresno County is the first most populous county and second geographically largest county in the San Joaquin Valley, encompassing approximately 6,000 square miles. With \$5.3 billion a year in commercial crop production it is the nation's leading farm county. The January 2009 population of 942,298 places Fresno as the tenth most populous of the 58 California counties and the City of Fresno is the fifth most populous city in the state, with a population of 495,913. There are fifteen incorporated cities and the county contains a federally-recognized urbanized area – the Fresno Clovis Metropolitan Area – with a January 2009 population of 680,000.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Protect and enhance current funding levels for transportation-related programs.
- Continue to advocate for transportation-related improvements in state and federal legislation.
- Continue to coordinate advocacy efforts with our local and regional partners to advance common goals and shared interests that will contribute significantly to an improved quality of life for Fresno County residents.

MEMBER AGENCY PRIORITIES

- Advocate for legislative priorities that are identified as regional priorities throughout the year by our local member agencies and agreed upon by the Fresno COG Policy Board.

ONE VOICE ADVOCACY EFFORTS

- Support Federal Surface Transportation Program and FY 2009 Federal appropriation requests for Fresno COG One Voice projects and priorities.
- Continue to pursue state support for the projects and policy issues identified through the Fresno COG One Voice efforts.

VALLEY VOICE ADVOCACY EFFORTS

- Support Federal Surface Transportation Program authorizations and FY 2009 Federal appropriation requests for the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council's Valley Voice projects and priorities.
- Continue to pursue state support for the projects and policy issues identified through the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council's Valley Voice efforts.

TRANSPORTATION

Funding - Federal

- Actively participate with Caltrans and other interests on the development of state and national consensus principles and priorities that will be favorable to the Fresno County region for the next Federal Surface Transportation Program due to be enacted in 2009.

Funding - State

- Support legislation to implement and fund the remaining provisions of Propositions 1B (state transportation bond), 1C (state affordable housing bond), and Proposition 84 (state water and parks bond) that will maximize Fresno County's regional share of funding.
- Protect Proposition 42 (Transportation Congestion Improvement Act) and other transportation funds from being diverted to other purposes in the state budget.
- Support full dedication of gasoline sales taxes to transportation and oppose the practice of directing gasoline "Spillover" funds to the State General Fund to be used for other purposes.

Funding – Local

- Support efforts to reward self-help counties in funding programs and policies.
- Support legislation that lowers the threshold required to pass transportation initiatives to 55%.
- Support legislation that includes the use of design/build, public/private partnerships, and other innovative financing for transportation infrastructure projects.

Highway 99 as an Interstate

- Continue to support efforts to designate State Route 99 through the Central San Joaquin Valley as a federal interstate.

High Speed Rail

- Support federal and state funding for the development of the high-speed rail system in California.
- Support annual appropriation of Proposition 1A funding through the state budget.
- Support Amtrak as a complimentary service to the high-speed rail system.
- Support the San Joaquin Valley as a test track for high-speed rail and support the location of a maintenance station in Fresno County.
- Support federal funding for the development of the high-speed rail system in California, including full funding for high-speed rail projects as authorized under the Amtrak Reauthorization bill, HR 2095 (2008).

Goods Movement

- Support goods movement legislation that includes the San Joaquin Valley region as a recipient of any new port container fees collected at the California ports to mitigate the emissions associated with freight movement to and from the ports through the Valley. Additionally, ensure that exporters of valley agricultural products do not carry an unfair burden of any port fees that may be enacted.
- Support including the Central Valley Trade Corridor in legislation pertaining to Goods Movement funding and programs.
- Support the inclusion of a dedicated funding program for Goods Movement infrastructure projects in the next Federal Surface Transportation Program due to be enacted in 2009. Work with the appropriate state and federal agencies and legislators to ensure that the San Joaquin Valley receive an equitable share of this funding to complete goods movement projects of regional significance.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Senate Bill 375 (2008)

- Ensure cleanup legislation and implementation guidelines related to SB 375 advances Fresno County's transportation and land use goals.
- Advocate for funding through Proposition 84 and other sources, to adequately assist Regional Transportation Planning Agencies and local governments in implementation of SB 375.
- Advocate for expansion of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining for transportation projects that are consistent with a Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- Advocate for local agencies to be able to use the EIRs and EIS prepared for the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy when performing project-level CEQA analysis for transportation projects. This will reduce the analytical burden and cost for transportation projects and eliminate duplication of effort.

Blueprint Planning

- Support consistent and ongoing funding in the state budget for the development, implementation, and update of regional blueprints.

- Support consistency with regional blueprints as a major factor in allocating bond funds from state agencies and in developing legislation and state policies on climate change.

AIR QUALITY

- Seek the establishment of a new San Joaquin Valley designation as an Air Quality Enterprise/Empowerment Zone at the state and federal level.

WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND RELIABILITY FOR THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

- Support the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley's Water Quality, Supply, and Reliability advocacy efforts. Their mission is to ensure a reliable, adequate quality water supply to sustain a high quality of life, and a world-class agricultural sector, while protecting and enhancing the environment.

CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY

- Support the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley's Energy Development advocacy efforts. Their mission is to promote energy use efficiencies and adoption of clean, renewable energy technologies to ensure a reliable supply, grow the economy, and improve air quality.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

- Promote the inclusion of transportation and other types of infrastructure funding in any state and federal proposal for an economic stimulus package.

CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP FOR THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

- Support funding to ensure sustainability of the Partnership.

PROCESS STREAMLINING

- Support legislation and/or administrative reforms to streamline the federal and state government's project delivery process and to eliminate unnecessary and/or duplicative requirements.