Council of Fresno County Governments

2010 Legislative Platform

THE PURPOSE OF THE 2010 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

The Fresno COG, in coordination with our member agencies, has established a 2010 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.

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 2010 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 2010 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

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 2010.

FUNDING - STATE

Oppose the Gas Tax Swap

• 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.

• Protect Proposition 42 (Transportation Congestion Improvement Act) and other transportation funds from being diverted to other purposes in the state budget as this will have a severe negative impact on:

- o Cities
- o Transportation Planning Agencies
- o Transit Agencies
- o School Districts

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.

HIGH SPEED RAIL

• Support federal and state funding for the development of the high-speed rail system in California.

• Promote Fresno County's *Expression of Interest* to locate the High Speed Train heavy maintenance facility on the proposed site in Fresno County.

• Encourage the completion of the Central Valley segment of the high-speed rail system in the first phase, since its construction is not as complex or costly.

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 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 2010. 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 advance 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 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

• Water is currently the most critical issue being faced by the San Joaquin Valley. 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.

• The region relies on a combination of ground water pumping and surface water deliveries to supply its water needs, which are crucial to Fresno County's and the San Joaquin Valley's ag-based economies.

• The successes or failures of the agricultural industry reverberate throughout the regional economy.

• The loss of surface water supplies over the last decade, especially the last two years of drought exacerbated by pumping restrictions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, have put a tremendous strain on the agricultural economy and the communities it supports.

• As drought and Delta pumping restrictions reduce surface water supplies, increased pumping pressures are placed on groundwater supplies, risking the long-term reliability and quality of these crucial water sources.

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 DEVELOPMENT

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

• Support policies that create the skilled and labor ready work force that Fresno County desperately needs to combat high rates of unemployment and poverty of Fresno County families.

• Remove policy obstacles to the regional economy as a whole, and direct jobs-creation provisions, including a direct wage subsidy for small businesses to create jobs and grants to retrofit public buildings.

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.

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 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 most populous county and geographically the second 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 ranks as 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.

Council of Fresno County Governments Policy Board

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Tony Boren - Executive Director
Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201
Fresno, California 93721
(559)-233-4148 (Phone)
(559)-233-9645 (FAX)
Website: www.fresnocog.org