

INTRODUCTION

The San Joaquin Valley Regional Transportation Planning Agencies include the Fresno Council of Governments, Kern Council of Governments, Kings County Association of Governments, Madera County Transportation Commission, Merced County Association of Governments, San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stanislaus Council of Governments, and Tulare County Association of Governments. In 2006, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies expanded their Memorandum of Understanding to form a Regional Policy Council, comprised of two elected officials from each of the eight Valley counties, to discuss and build consensus on issues of Valleywide importance.

The Regional Policy Council, in coordination with the San Joaquin Valley Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, has established a San Joaquin Valley Legislative Platform that reflects the Regional Policy Council's priorities in state and federal legislative matters. The Legislative Platform provides guidance to the eight Valley Regional Transportation Planning Agencies and their lobbying partners when taking action on specific legislative proposals. The Platform is intended to provide a unified voice when communicating legislative issues of regional importance to the Valley's state and federal legislative delegation as well as to relevant state and federal agencies.

This brochure identifies the legislative priorities within different topic areas that are most important to the Regional Policy Council and the San Joaquin Valley Regional Transportation Planning Agencies for the upcoming legislative session.

San Joaquin Valley Regional Transportation Planning Agencies 2011 Legislative Advocacy Priorities

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Protect and enhance current state and federal funding levels for transportation related programs.
- Continue to advocate as a region to advance common goals for improvements in state and federal legislation and policies.

VALLEY VOICE ADVOCACY EFFORTS

- Continue to pursue federal and state support for the projects and legislative priorities identified through the Regional Policy Council's advocacy program called "Valley Voice".

TRANSPORTATION

Funding – Federal

- Work with Caltrans, California Association of Councils of Governments, National Association of Regional Councils, and other interests to develop state and national principles and priorities that will be favorable to the San Joaquin Valley for the next Federal Surface Transportation Program.

- Support Federal Surface Transportation Program authorizations and FY 2011 appropriation requests for Valley Voice projects and priorities.

Funding – State

- Support legislation to implement and maximize the San Joaquin Valley's regional share of bond funding provided by Proposition 1B (includes 99 Corridor improvements and local match programs), and Proposition 84 (includes the sustainable communities and climate change reduction grants).

- Oppose state project cost shifts or changes in responsibility to local transportation entities

- Ensure that federal transportation planning funds are available to regional agencies throughout the year and are not

made unavailable due to delays or changes in enacting the state budget.

- Oppose revisions to state transportation programming and funding reform legislation not consistent with SB 45 (1998).

Funding – Local

- Support legislation that lowers the threshold required to pass transportation initiatives to 55%.

- Continue to support legislation to authorize design/build and expand public/private partnerships and other innovative financing opportunities to fund transportation improvements.



Highway 99

- Continue to protect and solicit funding for Highway 99, a major trade corridor in the San Joaquin Valley.

Goods Movement

- Support goods movement legislation that includes the entire San Joaquin Valley region as a recipient of any new port container fees collected at the ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland in order to mitigate the burden imposed by the overland movement of cargo through the San Joaquin Valley as related to the ports.

- Support including the Central Valley Trade Corridor in legislation pertaining to goods movement funding and programs and that identifies all eight San Joaquin Valley Regional Transportation Planning Agencies as stakeholders.

- Support legislation that would implement the San Joaquin Valley Goods Movement Action Plan.

- Support rail preservation through additional funding and policy changes at the state and federal level in the next Federal Surface Transportation Program, the annual budget appropriations, and in state and federal regulations and guidelines.

- Preserve and enhance short-haul rail as a vital tool for goods movement and air quality improvement throughout the state.

High-Speed Rail

- Support federal and state funding for the development of the high-speed rail system in California that serves the entire San Joaquin Valley.

- 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 Regional Rail Commission's efforts to extend commuter rail service from Merced to Sacramento and the Bay Area along the Altamont Corridor.

- Support the San Joaquin Valley as a test track for high-speed rail and support the location of a heavy maintenance facility in the San Joaquin Valley.



LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Senate Bill 375 (2008)

- Ensure SB 375 clean-up legislation advances the Valley'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 EISs 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.

Sustainable Communities

- Support legislation and administrative policies for continued support from state Prop. 84, federal HUD Sustainable Communities and other funding sources for comprehensive revitalization strategies and projects that enhance the long term prosperity of urbanized valley cities and communities.

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.

Housing

- Support legislation that would provide flexibility for rural housing trusts in the San Joaquin Valley to better participate in the Proposition 1C Local Housing Trust Fund program.
- Support legislation and administrative policies for a fair share allocation of Prop 1C housing funds, and state funded CDBG programming for valley projects and programs.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Targets

- The Valley MPOs reject the GHG emission targets adopted by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Those targets were not based on the best information available from the regions. The Valley urges the CARB to work in concert with the Valley MPOs and with the best methodology available to re-evaluate the targets in 2012 or earlier.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Promote the inclusion of transportation funding in any proposal for a national economic stimulus package.
- Advocate for Department of Energy Conservation Block Grant Program funds to be utilized for regional energy planning purposes.
- Increase income caps in State and Federal grants so that qualified mid-income entrepreneurs may participate. Current guidelines provide financial aid for only those in the low to very low income brackets.

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.
- Support integrating state and federal environmental impact studies without compromising environmental standards, to avoid project cost increases that occur due to lengthy processes.

AIR QUALITY

- Support a new designation for the San Joaquin Valley as an Air Quality Enterprise/Empowerment Zone at the state and federal level.
- For any funds generated under a cap-and-trade program, support legislation that will provide adequate funding to disparately impacted regions such as the San Joaquin Valley for mitigating air quality or climate change impacts.

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.

CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP FOR THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

- Support efforts to provide a continuing stream of funding the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

OTHER

- Oppose unfunded federal and state mandates on local and regional governments.



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The Legislative platform of the

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCIES

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