



S A C O G

SACOG Board of Directors

Item #05-12-19
Receive/File

December 8, 2005

Update on State Land Use Initiatives

Issue: Progress report on state efforts to reform land use practices, including CEQA reform.

Recommendation: None, this item is for you to receive and file only.

Discussion: The three-rings of land use discussions at the state seem to have consolidated to two-rings, with both attempting to create consensus and action, possibly as early as January 2006. Both the Governor's and Senator Perata's initiatives continue to evolve toward trying to find ways to build on, and encourage the successful implementation of, voluntary regional visioning processes like Blueprint.

Staff at the highest levels of the Administration are working to create legislation that, in its most basic form, would:

1. Replace the current Regional Housing Needs Allocation process with a requirement that local governments provide a minimum of 20 years residential land supply in their General Plans and 10 years residential land supply in their Zoning Codes;
2. Connect the timing and substance of these housing requirements to regional visions like Blueprint to help ensure that they promote a diversity of housing choice placed in locations that help the transportation system to function well and promote air quality; and
3. Provide incentives to local governments to work together to successfully implement regional visions like Blueprint by providing lessened CEQA requirements for certain types of projects that are consistent with the regional vision, along with requiring regions to show tangible progress towards protecting natural resource lands in the "green" areas of the regional Blueprints.

Senator Perata's working group continues its efforts to add a CEQA reform component to the bond measure passed by the Senate this year. The bond measure includes funding for infrastructure, housing, natural resource acquisitions, and planning that help to implement regional Blueprints. There are many discussions about combining this bond with a larger (perhaps much larger) bond. The working group's efforts to pass a CEQA reform bill to complement the bond continue to focus on streamlining the process for infill housing projects in those regions that have adopted regional Blueprints that meet certain performance standards, including provisions to provide more certainty that natural resource lands are protected as growth proceeds.

There are obvious commonalities between the Senate's and Administration's initiatives, including most notably their embrace of Blueprint style regional planning. Both have been very good at including SACOG input as a central component to their discussions. The biggest question marks continue to be whether the environmental community will agree to support any changes in CEQA, and whether the Governor and Legislative leadership will be willing and able to work together for meaningful reform in the second year of this legislative session. The Housing & Land Use Committee discussed this item. If Board members have any questions or concerns about this issue, please contact staff directly or raise them at the Board meeting, through the Chair.

Approved by:

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