



SACOG Board of Directors

Item #06-2-15
Action

February 9, 2006

Second Tier Priorities for Federal Appropriation Earmarks

Issue: Should SACOG develop a second tier list of earmark requests to supplement its single top priority of the Intermodal Station this year?

Recommendation: That the SACOG Board of Directors support the Legislation & Public Affairs Committee's direction to staff to continue work considering a second tier list of specific priorities consistent with the guidelines described below.

Committee Action/Discussion: At its January meeting, the Board decided to identify the Intermodal Station as its number one regional priority. This decision was labeled a one-year pilot test of this idea, with two important caveats: 1) that if our federal advocate Mike Miller concludes from discussions with our Congressional delegation that this is a bad idea, SACOG staff will amend the strategy; and 2) that we develop a list of second-tier priorities that are consistent with our MTP, geographically representative if possible, and do not compete for funding with the number one priority.

Staff is working as fast as we can to develop a second tier list of priorities. We have solicited input from staff from local agencies through the Regional Planning Partnership and the Public Works Directors and from the Board's Legislation & Public Affairs Committee; staff expects that to be complete before the Board meeting. We also are working with our federal lobbyist to determine which programs will be earmarkable this year; that determination may be in flux for awhile.

Three overriding considerations underpin our thinking:

- We believe it very unlikely that there will be any road and highway funds earmarkable this year;
- Certain programs appear to be available for earmarks – value pricing, freight intermodal connections, advanced clean fuel bus, federal lands roads – that don't seem to fit particularly well with either the Intermodal station or any other projects in our MTP, but may be worth some further thinking and attention;
- There may be opportunities for planning-type earmarks, either for air quality or Blueprint-MTP linkage or advance project feasibility work, that are not obvious at present but are worth further search by our lobbyist; so

We ask for the Board's support to continue looking for good earmark candidate projects for specific program opportunities. Staff will keep the Legislation & Public Affairs Committee, Board, and member agencies informed and involved over the next few weeks as best we can, realizing that time is short and we may need to exercise some staff discretion, but within the considerations laid out above. The kind of projects we expect to be looking at include Harbor/Industrial port entrance intersection, I-5 operational improvements through downtown Sacramento, and rail track re-location in West Sacramento, at the Intermodal station, or near the Roseville Rail Yard. Staff will update the situation at the February Board meeting.

Approved by:

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Executive Director

MM:ts

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