



SACOG Board of Directors

Item #06-2-17 Action

February 9, 2006

Regional Planning as Component of Infrastructure Bond

Issue: SACOG continues to track significant land use legislation and participate in working group discussions at the Capitol regarding significant CEQA reform. Efforts to provide local governments flexibility in implementing Blueprint growth principles continue to be the focus of SACOG staff input to the legislative working groups.

Recommendation: The Legislation & Public Affairs Committee recommends that the SACOG Board of Directors approve support for including elements in SB 1024 that encourage the development and implementation of regional growth strategies such as the SACOG Blueprint.

Committee Acton/Discussion: The current version of SB 1024, Senator Perata's infrastructure bond bill, includes provisions that would provide funds to regions with Blueprint style growth strategies to support housing infrastructure investments, open space acquisition, and planning activities that support implementation of their regional strategies. The regional Blueprint plans would need to first meet certain standards to ensure that they truly support smart growth and the funds would be sent through regional agencies to cities and counties within their region. The related bill SB 832 that would also provide some measure of CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) relief to projects consistent with the regional Blueprint is still being worked on in committee (see agenda Item #6).

The CALCOG Board of Directors is on record in support of this type of encouragement for regional planning, with the caveat that the funding to qualifying regions should come in the form of block grants rather than categorical grants that specify certain amounts must be spent on housing infrastructure, etc. SACOG staff recommends that the Committee support the CALCOG position and direct staff to continue actively working on this issue as bills are amended. The general approach included in SB 1024 appears to place SACOG in a strong competitive position to secure some of the funds in the infrastructure bond because of its widely respected Blueprint growth strategy. The Governor's initial proposal for a much larger infrastructure bond has been criticized in some quarters for lacking a policy element to ensure funds are spent to promote smart growth rather than sprawl. Staff expects to see SB 1024 and the Governor's proposal merge at some point in the process.

Approved by:

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