



SACOG Board of Directors

May 22, 2008

Authorize SACOG Joining Climate Communities

Issue: Whether SACOG should join the national Climate Communities coalition.

Recommendation: The Climate & Air Quality Committee recommends that the Board authorize the Executive Director to join Climate Communities.

Committee Action/Discussion: At the April Board meeting, Director Dickinson asked staff to bring a recommendation to the Board to join Climate Communities. This coalition of local governments—organized by our federal lobbyist, The Ferguson Group—has an action agenda that directly supports three of SACOG’s six advocacy principles: SAFETEA-LU reauthorization, Blueprint implementation, and Climate Change/Air Quality. Climate Communities anticipates 100 members this year (Sacramento County is already a member); the cost to join is \$12,000, which covers the expert resources employed for this advocacy.

Climate Communities organized a Local Government Climate Change Summit, held April 8-10, where local elected officials urged members of Congress to provide full funding for the recently authorized Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG), and include federal resources for local governments within national cap-and-trade climate change legislation. At the summit, Senators Barbara Boxer, Joseph Lieberman, and John Warner pledged federal support for local governments in fighting climate change.

SACOG has a unique opportunity to pursue funding for programs, projects and policies that support Blueprint and Metropolitan Transportation Plan objectives. As a leading metropolitan planning organization, SACOG has a competitive advantage and can help bring federal funds to the region for greenhouse gas reduction efforts. With SAFETEA-LU reauthorization starting in 2009, this group will be advocating for a significant portion of its successor to invest in local land use and transportation planning, public transit, green vehicles and other local actions that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and curb carbon emissions. Cap-and-trade legislation is also moving through the Senate, but there is a need to lobby for a fair share for local governments from the proposed \$100 billion annual regulatory system. Maintaining an active advocacy role will help ensure that SACOG benefits from all climate-related federal legislation.

As a member of this coalition, SACOG would be a founding member of a network of cities, counties, councils of governments, and other local governments influencing how the federal climate change policies. This group would educate national policymakers on the critical role of local governments in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution and ensure that Congress and federal agencies enact policies and programs that provide the resources, tools, and incentives localities need to meet the climate change challenge.

SACOG and its member jurisdictions could benefit from Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants included in the new Energy bill recently passed by Congress. Climate Communities will urge Congress and the Administration to fully fund this program for \$2 billion annually.

Climate Communities will also seek funding for demonstration projects, such as \$50 million to create 100 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency “Climate Communities Demonstration Pilots,” and \$50 million to expand the U.S. Department of Energy’s “Clean Cities Program,” which supports clean fuels and low-emission vehicles at the local level.

Approved by:

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Executive Director

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