



**Item #09-6-4
Action**

Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee

May 28, 2009

Centers of Excellence Legislation (Matsui)

Issue: Congresswoman Matsui recently introduced legislation to establish Centers of Excellence for Regional Smart Growth Planning.

Recommendation: The Government Relations and Public Affairs Committee recommend that the Board take a position to support this legislation.

Discussion: The Centers of Excellence legislation is intended to establish centers of excellence for regional smart growth planning with state-of-the-art data and modeling tools that accurately estimate travel, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and other impacts from regional land use patterns and transportation systems. These centers would serve as resource centers for regional smart growth planning supported with as much as \$5 million in annual funding to assist centers in carrying out this function, including collecting information and best practices associated with regional smart growth planning, transit-oriented, mixed-use and infill development, use of data and models to develop smart growth plans, and effective civic engagement. The centers would work with higher education institutions along with state and federal agencies in providing technical assistance for grant recipients from regions seeking to do regional smart growth planning. This legislation includes funding for grants to regions in years 2010 through 2015.

This legislation is crafted on the Blueprint work SACOG has done, including the work with the Caltrans Blueprint Learning Network. If SACOG is designated one of the centers it would potentially increase SACOG's capacity to continue Blueprint and MTP implementation and serve as a model to other regions in the state and country to further regional smart growth planning policy and application.

Attached is the text of the legislation. The bill will be formally introduced prior to the meeting on June 8 and a bill number will be assigned to the attached language for the House Resolution. Staff recommends the Board take a position of support for Rep. Matsui's Centers for Excellence legislation as it aligns with our federal and state advocacy principles associated with Blueprint implementation.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Executive Director

Attachment

MM:RS:pm

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