



S A C O G

Item #09-6-13  
Information

## Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee

May 28, 2009

### Consideration of SB 716 (Wolk) — Farmworker Transportation

**Issue:** SACOG is tracking SB 716, which would modify provisions of the Transportation Development Act to allow TDA Local Transportation Funds to be used for the purchase of vans for farmworker vanpool transportation.

**Recommendation:** None; this item is for information only.

**Discussion:** Senator Lois Wolk has introduced SB 716, which would modify provisions of the Transportation Development Act (TDA) to allow TDA Local Transportation Funds to be used for the purchase of vans for farmworker vanpool transportation.

Existing law allows the allocation of TDA funds in counties under 500,000, and in Sacramento County under specified conditions, to be made for streets and road purposes provided that the regional transportation planning agency (e.g., SACOG, PCTPA, EDCTC) makes a finding that there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet.

This bill would expand the list of eligible activities that can be funded using TDA funds after all unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet have been met to include the purchase of vans to provide farmworker vanpool transportation services for transportation to and from work.

To date, the state farmworker transportation program has been operating as a pilot program and relying on the \$20 million dedicated stream of revenue established in the 2006 budget process. The purpose of this bill is to take advantage of the TDA program to continue the services created by the demonstration efforts. The TDA program has been a stable program over its nearly 40 years of existence. In 2007, \$1.4 billion was generated by the statewide local one-quarter-percent sales tax for transportation. Approximately 11 percent of the funds, or \$154 million, were used for local streets and roads purposes. A similar amount could be expected to be eligible for agricultural worker van acquisition if this bill becomes law.

SACOG has received a grant through the state pilot program for \$2 million and implementation of this project could begin as early as the fall of 2009. Funding for the project extends through June 2011. This bill has undergone several revisions to date; in its current form, it appears to provide an additional option for funding a specific type of home-to-work transportation without mandating that the funds be spent as a higher priority than streets and roads projects or other projects contained in the same code section.

SB 716 passed the Senate on May 26, and is currently held at the Assembly Desk. As of May 22, the bill was supported by the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (sponsor) and the Environmental Defense Fund; opponents included CSAC, California Association for Coordinated Transportation, Amalgamated Transit Union, United Transportation Union, and a number of transit operators from outside the SACOG region.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever  
Executive Director

MM:RS:JB:pm

Attachment

Key Staff: Rebecca Sloan, Director of External Affairs & Member Services, (916) 340-6224  
James E. Brown, Principal Program Expert, (916) 340-6221  
Christine Scherman, Junior Planner, (916) 340-6262