



**Item #09-6-5
Consent**

SACOG Board of Directors

June 10, 2009

Support H.R. 2665 (Matsui) Centers of Excellence Legislation

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

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

Committee Action/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 supportive of 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 Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee recommends that 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:sb

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111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2665

To establish national centers of excellence for regional smart growth planning,
and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 2, 2009

Ms. MATSUI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To establish national centers of excellence for regional smart
growth planning, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Centers of
5 Excellence for Regional Smart Growth Planning Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE FOR RE-**
7 **GIONAL SMART GROWTH PLANNING.**

8 (a) DESIGNATION AND SELECTION OF NATIONAL
9 CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.—In accordance with the re-
10 quirements of this Act, the Administrator shall designate

1 not fewer than 3 national centers of excellence for regional
2 smart growth planning, selected from metropolitan plan-
3 ning organizations that have demonstrated regional plan-
4 ning excellence by—

5 (1) developing and using state-of-the-art data
6 and modeling tools that accurately estimate travel,
7 air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and other
8 impacts from regional land use patterns and trans-
9 portation systems;

10 (2) engaging a broad range of citizens and
11 stakeholders in regional planning in an interactive or
12 innovative manner;

13 (3) forming political consensus through regional
14 transportation plans that predict significant im-
15 provements in future travel patterns, air emissions,
16 and other impacts compared to baseline projections;

17 (4) showing significant changes to land use pat-
18 terns and transportation systems that conform with
19 regional transportation plans;

20 (5) maintaining effective partnerships with
21 local, State, and Federal agencies working on re-
22 gional smart growth planning; and

23 (6) providing expert technical assistance.

1 (b) GUIDELINES.—The Administrator shall develop
2 guidelines for the designation and operation of the Cen-
3 ters.

4 (c) FUNDING.—Of the amounts available to carry out
5 this Act, the Administrator shall allocate not more than
6 \$5,000,000 for each fiscal year to each Center to carry
7 out this section.

8 (d) GENERAL OPERATION.—The Centers shall—

9 (1) collect information and best practices
10 about—

11 (A) regional smart growth planning;

12 (B) street design and implementation of
13 complete streets policy by local governments;

14 (C) transit-oriented, mixed-use, and infl.
15 development;

16 (D) use of data, models, and performance
17 metrics to develop smart growth plans;

18 (E) needed upgrades to models from
19 MPOs; and

20 (F) effective civic engagement in regional
21 smart growth planning;

22 (2) distribute smart growth planning informa-
23 tion and best practices to MPOs that are seeking
24 to—

1 (A) upgrade data, models, and perform-
2 ance metrics;

3 (B) achieve greenhouse gas reductions in
4 regional transportation plans; or

5 (C) work effectively with units of local gov-
6 ernment to coordinate regional planning and
7 economic development plans;

8 (3) make research and development rec-
9 ommendations to the Environmental Protection
10 Agency and other appropriate entities to further im-
11 prove the quality and ease of smart growth analysis;

12 (4) work with appropriate institutions of higher
13 education and State and Federal agencies to further
14 improve smart growth analysis; and

15 (5) provide technical assistance to grant recipi-
16 ents under section 3.

17 **SEC. 3. IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS.**

18 (a) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The Administrator, in con-
19 sultation with the Centers, may make grants on a competi-
20 tive basis to eligible entities for—

21 (1) improving the collection of data and the de-
22 velopment of models for smart growth planning;

23 (2) implementing comprehensive regional smart
24 growth planning programs;

1 (3) applying planning outcomes in regional
2 transportation plans; and

3 (4) working with units of local governments to
4 coordinate land use, transportation, and air quality
5 planning.

6 (b) APPLICATION.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a
8 grant under subsection (a), an entity shall submit to
9 the Administrator an application at such time, in
10 such manner, and containing such information and
11 assurances as the Administrator may require.

12 (2) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—An entity is
13 eligible to receive a grant under this section only if
14 such entity—

15 (A) is an MPO;

16 (B) commits to use funds to develop and
17 maintain a regional database that contains high
18 quality data and modeling capability;

19 (C) agrees to make a good-faith effort to
20 produce and adopt plans that use the latest
21 available estimates and assumptions for popu-
22 lation, land use, travel, employment, congestion,
23 and economic activity;

24 (D) provides long-term guidance to the
25 public to minimize greenhouse gas emissions by

1 reducing vehicle miles traveled, offering more
2 housing choices within existing urban centers,
3 and incorporating new housing and employment
4 close to existing public transportation options;
5 and

6 (E) has a demonstrated record of working
7 effectively with the units of local government
8 within the region.

9 (c) MATCHING REQUIREMENTS.—

10 (1) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of
11 the cost of a project under this section shall be 80
12 percent.

13 (2) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Federal
14 share of the cost of carrying out a project under this
15 section may be provided through an in-kind con-
16 tribution.

17 (d) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the end
18 of the grant period for which an MPO receives a grant
19 under this section, such MPO shall submit a report to the
20 Administrator regarding the use of such grant.

21 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

22 As used in this Act:

23 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
24 trator” means the Administrator of the Environ-
25 mental Protection Agency.

1 (2) CENTER.—The term “Center” means a na-
2 tional center of excellence for regional smart growth
3 planning designated under section 2(a).

4 (3) COMPLETE STREETS POLICY.—The term
5 “complete streets policy” means a transportation
6 law or policy at the local, State, regional, or Federal
7 level that ensures—

8 (A) the adequate accommodation, in all
9 phases of project planning and development, of
10 all users of the transportation system, including
11 pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, chil-
12 dren, older individuals, motorists, and individ-
13 uals with disabilities; and

14 (B) the consideration of the safety and
15 convenience of all users in all phases of project
16 planning and development.

17 (4) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
18 term “institution of higher education” has the
19 meaning given such term in section 101 of the High-
20 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

21 (5) METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZA-
22 TION.—The term “metropolitan planning organiza-
23 tion” or “MPO” has the meaning given such term
24 in section 134(b)(2) of title 23, United States Code.

1 (6) SMART GROWTH.—The term “smart
2 growth” means policies regarding growth and devel-
3 opment that—

4 (A) recognize the effects of new growth
5 and development, including the environmental,
6 economic, and social costs, such as—

7 (i) loss of open space, farmland, rural
8 landscapes, wildlife, or natural, cultural,
9 scenic, or recreational resources; or

10 (ii) high public costs for infrastruc-
11 ture, public facilities, or transportation
12 that lead to disinvestment in older urban
13 or suburban areas; and

14 (B) attempt to mitigate such effects in ad-
15 vance so as to avoid or reduce the negative im-
16 pacts of such effects.

17 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Admin-
19 istrator to carry out this Act \$65,000,000 for each of fis-
20 cal years 2010 through 2015.

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