



Item #13-2-13 Action

SACOG Board of Directors

February 14, 2013

Federal Advocacy Principles

Issue: What policy objectives should SACOG pursue at the federal level in 2013?

Recommendation: The Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee recommends that the Board approve the Federal Advocacy Principles as amended.

Committee Action/Discussion: The committee accepted the staff recommendation and added a clause to specify high-speed rail interconnectivity funds as an advocacy item. The new Congress will bring continued discussion of hard-to-fund projects both in transportation and water. The 2012 adoption of a two-year surface transportation authorization bill, MAP-21, consolidated programs, increased performance-based programs, and encouraged streamlined federal review processes. Unresolved is the issue of sufficient federal revenue for the nation's transportation infrastructure demands. As Transportation Secretary LaHood noted in his visit to Sacramento in January, revenue will continue to be point of discussion as will the need for communities and regions to prioritize their needs for what will continue to be insufficient resources for the level of demand. Early in 2013, Congress is expected to take up the Water Resources Development Act, the funding source for critical levee improvements in our region.

SACOG's annual advocacy activities focus on authorizations, grants, appropriations and other relevant legislation. Additions to the continuing four themes carrying forward include:

- encouraging continued coordination and integration among federal agencies, such as the Partnership for Sustainable Communities;
- seeking funding sources for an updated list of key projects based on the adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS);
- continuing to leverage the region's integrated planning for fund development in competitive programs;
- advocating for strategic funding formulas for farm-to-market road maintenance in the Farm Bill;
- advocating for unique flood protection requirements for agricultural lands under the National Flood Insurance Program;
- advocating for a definition of "rural" that ensures federal rural programs funding eligibility for rural communities in the region;
- encouraging federal environmental and regulatory streamlining to reduce barriers to economic growth; and
- supporting open space conservation efforts, including market-based solutions for resource lands protections.

Staff is seeking the committee's recommendation to the SACOG Board for the adoption of amendments to the Federal Advocacy Principles.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment

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Key Staff: Rebecca Sloan, Director of External Affairs & Members Services, (916) 340-6224
Erik Johnson, Government & Media Affairs Coordinator, (916) 340-6247

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Sacramento Area
Council of
Governments

Federal Advocacy Principles

The principles outlined below help support SACOG's work in linking transportation, air quality, and land use. SACOG will work to advance the interests of the Sacramento region. In order to accomplish these principles, SACOG will advocate for sufficient funding in legislation and seek out grants to effectively plan for and deliver projects that meet these principles. SACOG will also advocate for innovative financing options, such as subsidized bonds, public-private partnerships, and a national infrastructure bank.

Economic Vitality

Efficiently connect people to jobs and get goods to market.

- Ensure stable funding sources for all modes of transportation infrastructure investments.
- Include hard-to-fund, MTP/SCS projects in the transportation authorization bill or discretionary programs for transit, urban complete streets (e.g., Woodland's East Main Street and Olivehurst Ave. in Yuba County) and rural complete corridors (e.g., Yolo County Road 98 Beale Air Force Base Gateway), and major infrastructure projects, such as the Intermodal Transportation Facility, South Line and Green Line light rail extensions, West Sacramento-Sacramento Downtown-Riverfront streetcar, Rancho Cordova streetcar, high-speed rail interconnectivity, the Watt Avenue at Highway 50 Interchange, Highway 113 at I-5 interchange and Blueprint implementation planning for hard-to-fund projects such as river crossings in the Sacramento urban core and the 5th Street bridge in Yuba City/Marysville.
- Adjust funding formulas to support rural roads and other rural infrastructure needs, including rural farm-to-market roads.
- Fund local and regional food systems to improve food access and national food security, especially to assist with promoting a connection between rural and urban areas of the region, and also to help producers get their products to all markets.
- Fund evacuation planning and supportive transportation infrastructure including bridges, local roads, as well as state and federal highway connections.

Smart Land Use

Design a transportation system to support good growth patterns, including increased housing and transportation options, focusing more growth inward and improving the economic viability of rural areas.

- Support continued funding for transportation and land use linked planning and formula incentives

for high performing projects resulting from integrated planning, support for regional planning tools for modeling and data gathering, and ongoing public education and engagement related to travel behavior.

- Fund SACOG to implement the Blueprint preferred growth scenario, and continue technical assistance for cities and counties.
- Enact greenhouse gas reduction measures that support and incentivize land use benefits from implementation of Blueprint and MTP/SCS objectives.
- Encourage implementation of Blueprint preferred growth scenario with unique funding sources for new and improved infrastructure to support concentrated housing and employment in high frequency transit corridors.
- Support the revitalization of aging suburban commercial corridors through investing in infrastructure system retrofits and context-sensitive design for infill developments.
- Support open space conservation efforts, including market-based solutions for resource lands protections.
- Support regional economic development planning and fund implementation.
- Support continued eligibility of rural communities for federal rural funding programs by advocating for a definition of “rural” that does not impose restrictions on rural communities due to their adjacency to larger urban areas and, at a minimum, uses definitions of rural as set forth by Congress to ensure fair distribution of funding for Rural Development programs.

Equity and Choice

Provide real, viable travel choices for all people throughout our diverse region.

- Support planning and fund Complete Streets in rural and urban communities designed to accommodate cars, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians including education, encouragement and infrastructure for Safe Routes to School.
- Provide discretionary funding for a balanced transit network to support: an integrated rail network that includes ~~Northeast and Folsom light rail double tracking~~, funding for light rail car rehabilitation and replacement needs; and streetcars that offer a cost-effective expansion of the areas served ~~lifeline and choice bus riders through funding to replace and expand fleets and improve facilities; enhanced passenger rail service on Capitol Corridor; and new streetcar and light rail transit along corridors, with supportive land uses.~~

Environmental Quality & Sustainability

Minimize direct and indirect transportation impacts on the environment for cleaner air and natural resource protection.

- Encourage continued application of regulatory strategy with federal resource agencies that incentivize Blueprint implementation.
- Fund ~~RUCS-identified~~ innovations that link enhance natural resource services mitigation, and, particularly habitat ~~valuation~~, on agricultural lands.
- Incentivize energy conservation, for regional efforts as well as local implementation.

- Fund natural resources data development, including implementation of the Six-County Aquatic Resources Inventory, and overall planning to support habitat conservation plans in the region.
- ~~Improve public safety and~~ Fund local flood protection efforts for improved public safety, with sensitivity to unique land uses and resource impacts on property owners in designated floodplains ~~while protecting local land use authority, not penalizing communities based on floodplain designations through pursuit of.~~ Pursue streamlining and integrated planning opportunities with federal agencies to expedite construction of federally identified levee improvement projects as regional assets.
- Continue eligibility for diesel engine replacement/retrofit programs.