



Item #14-4-1C Information

Innovation Task Force

April 10, 2014

Regional Advocacy Coordination

Issue: Staff will present lessons learned and recommendations for next steps on Regional Advocacy Coordination, one of the original member/shared service concept proposals.

Discussion: In 2013, SACOG staff conducted outreach with our members to assess current government affairs and advocacy processes and activities. Staff found a number of similarities in annual processes for adopting legislative priorities, communications with governing bodies, and the development of advocacy positions. Operational budgets and activities for government affairs and advocacy varied greatly between members, ranging from full legislative programs with weekly sub-committees to one-off responses to specific legislative bills of interest/concern.

SACOG identified common areas of member interest, including: information sharing; regular meetings of government affairs staff; coordination of advocacy activities; policy expert presentations; and development of an electronic web center for resource gathering/sharing. SACOG activities associated with this service are consistent with the agency's on-going government affairs and member service activities. Staff anticipates continuing in this coordination role within the time budgeted for these activities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013/14, and will monitor staff time associated with these activities for any potential staff time adjustments in FY 14/15. SACOG staff time to date is estimated at 70 hours.

Lessons Learned:

- Many members do not have designated advocacy budgets or government affairs staff. Participating members find access to other members' analysis and letters of support/opposition useful. Members appreciate the efficiency of the electronic web center and are sharing resource information electronically. Currently, SACOG staff is able to post resource materials to the web center as received from members.
- Coordinated advocacy efforts were initially considered too difficult logistically, but the group is finding increased value from coordination, including increasing influence and shared policy expertise. Participating members are interested in regular monthly meetings, which SACOG staff is able to coordinate as part of its on-going government affairs activities.
- Approximately 10-15 members have participated to date. Participation appears to be limited to members with designated government affairs staff or the ability of executive level staff to attend. Personal contacts and special presentations have helped generate more participation. Staff will increase outreach efforts to those members who have not participated, but may potentially have the most to gain. Outreach will include member visits, conference call opportunities, and written meeting summaries for electronic information sharing.

Staff recommends continuing at this time with Regional Advocacy Coordination as a member service. Over the course of this calendar year, SACOG staff will continue to: coordinate regional advocacy activities, develop the web center as a clearing house of advocacy information for members, expand working group participation, and work with members in consensus building on controversial and difficult issues.

Approved by:

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