

Report for January 2022 SBCCOG Board of Directors –  
Britt Huff: meetings attended:  
SCAG/ Energy & Environment Committee  
CALCOG Board of Directors

SCAG/Energy & Environment Committee, Jan. 6, 2022

**Action item: EEC voted to recommend** to the Regional Council (RC) approval of transmittal to the South Coast Air Quality Management District of the Draft 2022 Air Quality Management Plan Appendix IV-C Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and Transportation Control Measures.

Pursuant to the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA), the 2022 AQMP is being prepared primarily to attain the federal 2015 8-hour ozone national ambient air quality standard in the South Coast Air Basin. The 2022 AQMP is being jointly prepared by three responsible agencies: the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD), the lead agency; the California Air Resources Board (ARB), and SCAG. The 2022 AQMP is required to be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by August 3, 2022. SCAG's role in the 2022 AQMP development process includes providing the socio-economic growth forecast and regional transportation demand model output data to the South Coast AQMD for use in estimating and forecasting emission inventories and airshed modeling; and vehicle activity data to the ARB for use in developing on-road emissions. SCAG has provided these data to the respective agencies.

**Information items:**

Subject 1 :

**2121 Student Showcase** - For more than five years, SCAG has created a platform for students to apply their critical thinking skills and compete in a planning competition. SCAG invited college and university students in the region to conceptualize, create, and submit ArcGIS StoryMaps using SCAG's open data. The 2021 Student Showcase was a virtual StoryMap competition with two award categories: Innovation and Planning.

Subject 2:

**ICARP 2021 State Climate Adaptation Strategy & Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy.**

On October 18, 2021, the draft of the 2021 California Climate Adaptation Strategy was released for public comment. California is statutorily required to

release an updated climate adaptation strategy every three years, and the 2021 update is intended to outline the state's key climate resilience priorities, offer specific and measurable steps, and serve as a framework for action across sectors and regions. The 2021 strategy integrates key elements of the latest sector-specific plans, such as the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure, and Water Resilience Portfolio.

In addition to the California Climate Adaptation Strategy, California Natural Resources Agency released a draft of the state's Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy on October 11, 2021. The strategy, part of Executive Order N-82-20 calling for the acceleration of nature-based solutions to achieve the state's climate goals, is intended to align existing state efforts and identify land management actions that can support climate resilience, public health, economic opportunity, and equity.

### **Subject 3: Cooling Long Beach - Urban Heat Island Mitigation.**

The Cooling Long Beach project is one of several projects the City of Long Beach is working on to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This project specifically helps to implement measures that are identified in the Long Beach Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and General Plan, such as policies aimed at creating a more resilient and sustainable community. Funding for this project was awarded by SCAG as part of the Sustainable Communities Program.

### **Subject 4: SCAG Climate Action Resolution Quarterly Update**

On January 7, 2021, the Regional Council (RC) adopted Resolution 21-628-1 affirming a climate change crisis in Southern California and called on SCAG and other local and regional partners to join together to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, improve regional resilience, and reduce hazards from a changing climate (the "Resolution"). The RC's action will help to promote climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience in support of the 197 jurisdictions in Southern California and the 19 million residents who call the SCAG region home.

Over the last year, SCAG has been working to:

- Develop a regional resilience framework to help the region plan and prepare for a changing climate and other potential near- and long-term disruptions to Southern California;

- Initiate a regional climate planning network that will provide technical assistance for local climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives;
- Provide resource support and technical assistance for local jurisdictions to integrate climate planning in their local planning activities;
- Initiate a Regional Advanced Mitigation Program (RAMP) as described in the Connect SoCal Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR);
- Develop a work plan to advance the Accelerated Electrification strategy envisioned in Connect SoCal;
- Evaluate the economic and job creation benefits of climate adaptation and mitigation practices for inclusion in regional planning efforts; and
- Develop climate adaptation and mitigation analysis and strategies for the 2024 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

## **CALCOG/Calif Council of Governments Board meeting, 1/14/2022**

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES** At the end of the legislative year, CALCOG was tracking 258 bills, 91 were signed into law and 10 were vetoed. We are still tracking 157 measures that are considered “two-year” bills. Staff provided quick updates for the bills in which CALCOG has a position, including:

AB 43 (Friedman) Traffic Safety (Support);

SB 44 (Allen) CEQA: streamlined judicial review (Support);

SB 261 (Allen) RTP: SCS (Oppose);

SB 339 (Wiener) Road User Charge Pilot Program (Support); and

SB 623 (Newman) Electronic toll and transit fare collection (Support).

- Recommended Letter to Assembly Member Friedman on AB 1147. Staff reported there was not consensus within the membership to take a position on AB 1147. Staff recommended a NEUTRAL position, but also recommended sending a letter thanking Assembly Member Friedman for the way she worked with us on the issues and documenting the improvements she made for the bill. Friedman will be the Assembly Transportation Committee Chair for the foreseeable future.

- Brown Act. Staff sought confirmation in researching potential reforms around the Brown Act, including making it easier for Board members to participate virtually in meetings where virtual public participation is allowed, and also investigate the extent to which wholly virtual meetings could be permitted, even when there is not a declared emergency.

Affordable Housing: The budget includes a \$22 billion investment in affordable housing and homelessness resources. Highlighted here are some of the elements likely to be of interest to CALCOG members

- • \$100 million one-time General Fund to CalHFA to expand its First Time Homebuyer Assistance Program
- • \$500 million one-time General Fund to HCD to preserve affordable housing and promote resident ownership or nonprofit organization ownership of residential real property at risk of foreclosure.
- • \$300 million to provide capital to HCD legacy projects, preventing them from converting to market-rate housing as their affordability requirements expire.
- • \$1.75 billion for shovel ready affordable housing units, which have successfully acquired HCD funding.
- • \$81 million for CalHFA's accessory dwelling unit program for a total of \$100 million in available financing for ADUs.
- • \$4.65 million General Fund for HCD to provide continued technical assistance to local governments in meeting Regional Housing Needs Allocations, comply with state housing laws, and help facilitate production.
- • \$600 million for REAP 2.0 (summarized in Part A above).
- • \$500 million allocated in 2022 for a third year of state tax credits through the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee. (dollar-for-dollar tax credits, when paired with federal credits attract private investment in low- and mixed-income affordable housing financing).
- • \$250 million one-time General Fund and reallocation of \$284 million in remaining Proposition 1 funds to HCD for the Infill Infrastructure Grant Program. Of the \$250 million, \$160 million is for capital improvements in large jurisdictions and \$90 million is reserved for small jurisdictions.

In addition, the Budget also includes \$7.3 billion for homelessness in 2021-22, plus an additional \$4.7 billion in 2022-23, for a total homelessness package of \$12 billion. About \$50 million of this funding is for Encampment Resolution Grants and Encampment Coordinators to resolving critical encampments and safety issues associated with encampments on Caltrans properties near state highways.

D. BROADBAND: The Budget also included a significant investment in broadband. (See SB 156). There are three main parts to the framework:

Middle-Mile Infrastructure. Creates a structure and framework for the construction of a \$3.25 billion state-owned open-access middle mile broadband infrastructure through a third-party administrator overseen by the Department of Technology. 20 21 2021 Legislative Report Page 8 To get more details, visit [www.calcog.org/bill-tracker](http://www.calcog.org/bill-tracker)

- Requires the PUC to identify priority locations that enable last-mile connections to residences unserved by 25 mbps downstream and 3 mbps upstream and are in communities where there is no known middle-mile infrastructure that is open access, with sufficient capacity, and at affordable rates.
- Requires the PUC, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to identify state highway rights-of-way where installation of open-access middle-mile broadband infrastructure should be prioritized.
- Exempts the middle-mile and other linear broadband deployment in a state right of way by private or non-profit corporations from CEQA if certain conditions are met. Last-Mile Support. This bill also amends the existing Broadband Infrastructure Grant Account program to allocate \$2 billion for last mile expenditures provided for in the 2021- 22 fiscal year and future budgets. Of this amount, at least \$1 billion must be used for last mile projects in rural counties, and \$1 billion is initially allocated to urban counties. Any funding not encumbered on or before June 30, 2023, shall be made available to the commission to allocate for the construction of last-mile broadband infrastructure elsewhere in the state. Loan Loss Reserve. Finally, SB 156 creates a continuously appropriated loan-loss fund to assist local governments and non-profits in financing broadband service projects. The budget includes \$750 million over three years for this purpose.
- Allows a County to acquire, construct, improve and maintain broadband infrastructure and operate a broadband internet access service.
- Expands the definition of local agencies subject to public broadband services requirements to include counties, local education agencies, tribal governments, joint power authorities, and electrical cooperatives.
- Allows a joint powers authority to issue revenue bonds for deployment of broadband by a public or nonprofit organization that are supported by the Broadband Loan Loss Reserve.

**Key Focus Areas for 2022.** The following is a list of key focus areas for 2022. Absence from this list does not mean that CALCOG will not take action or engage

on other issues. Rather, these are the issues that we expect will be of greatest importance to the majority of our membership.

**1. Implementation of Federal Infrastructure Act.** California is slated to receive as much as \$30 billion over the next five years, nearly a 50 percent increase over the previous allocations under the previous FAST Act. Several of these are new programs that may require new legislation; other existing funds may have to be defended against new policy ideas.

- **Climate Funds.** One area that may require specific CALCOG focus is the new Climate Funds, which are drafted to mirror the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) where funds are directly allocated to regions meeting minimum requirements. Additional budget language is likely necessary to allow for these Climate funds. This may require a concerted effort on the part of staff to help develop and advocate for appropriate language in the transportation budget.

- **State – Local Split.** Historically, federal transportation funds have been split “60-40” between the state and local (including regional) entities. Recently, CALSTA has suggested that this could be changed. They actually created a subcommittee as part of their implementation working group to examine the issue. Changing this allocation would represent a serious departure from past practice. Staff would anticipate prioritizing this issue if there is a serious movement to increase the state share. And if the traditional split continues, CALCOG participates in the negotiation about how the 60 – 40 split is achieved (it’s nuanced given the design of multiple programs in the federal act). Board of Directors Meeting Agenda January 14, 2022 Page 21

- **General Implementation Issues.** Given the number of programs in the new bill, there will be a number of other programs where we will have to engage. In all of these discussions, we work with our partners, including the CSAC, the League, Self Help Counties Coalition, and our other partners.

**2. Expenditure of State Surplus in the State Budget.** Governor Newsom’s January budget blueprint estimated that the state would enjoy a \$45 billion dollar surplus and designated a \$9 billion dollar transportation package (including High Speed Rail bonds). Between now and June, there will be countless discussions about what programs can be designed.

**3. SB 375 Implementation & “Reform” Ideas.** Last year saw three SB 375 “reform” bills. Two were held in the Senate Transportation Committee and one

was vetoed by the Governor (but probably more for the author's stance on other issues than what was included in the bill). We expect that these bills will be back this year.

**4. Brown Act Improvements for Regional Agencies.** Several CALCOG members are interested in amending the Brown Act. There are at least three issues that have been raised.

- Clean up to the new emergency meeting procedures that require a body to meet every 30 days just to keep the procedures in place.
- Make virtual attendance by board members for regional agencies easier by eliminating the requirement that a public official to make their location (often their home) open to the public when they are joining a meeting virtually.
- at least one of our members would like the ability for regional entities (that span more than one community) to be able to hold entirely virtual meetings.

Unfortunately, groups like the Newspaper Publishers Association and First Amendment Coalition do not want to see any changes in the Brown Act and are pretty good at holding that line. Progress will require a lot of conversation, education, and outreach.