

**Board Report**

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**File #:** 2020-0388, **File Type:** Informational Report**Agenda Number:**

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**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
JUNE 18, 2020****SUBJECT: STATE AND FEDERAL REPORT****ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE****RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE June 2020 State and Federal Legislative Report.

**DISCUSSION****Executive Management Committee  
Remarks Prepared By Raffi Haig Hamparian  
Government Relations Senior Director, Federal Affairs**

Chair Butts and members of the Executive Management Committee, I am pleased to provide an update on several federal matters of interest to our agency. This report was prepared on June 5, 2020 and will be updated, as appropriate, at the Executive Management Committee meeting on June 18, 2020. Status of relevant pending legislation is monitored on the [Metro Government Relations Legislative Matrix <http://libraryarchives.metro.net/DB\\_Attachments/200611\\_LA\\_Metro\\_Legislative%20Matrix.pdf>](http://libraryarchives.metro.net/DB_Attachments/200611_LA_Metro_Legislative%20Matrix.pdf), which is updated monthly.

**Surface Transportation Reauthorization**

On June 4, 2020, Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee introduced H.R. 7095 - Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation (INVEST) in America Act. The five year reauthorization bill would replace the FAST Act, which will expire on September 30, 2020. The INVEST in America Act contains many of Metro's Board-approved federal priorities, such as a new freight funding program that is aimed at mega-projects. This new program brings back to life the Projects of National and Regional Significance grant program that was originally authorized under SAFETEA-LU. The bill streamlines the FTA Capital Investment Grant Program by speeding approval of projects that seek less than 60% federal funding. Also included in the proposed bill are changes to incentivize more domestic manufacturing of railcars and buses. Lastly, the bill invests in frontline transportation workforce training and brings back the Local Hire Pilot Program that Metro worked with the Obama Administration to create.

Metro is working - across many departments - to analyze the bill language. We will be working closely with the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation as the bill is considered in the House.

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The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is scheduled to mark-up the legislation on June 17, 2020.

### **Federal Fiscal Year 2021 Spending Bills**

Following the Trump Administration unveiling of their proposed Federal Fiscal Year 2021 Budget - Congress is now preparing to craft their versions of the transportation spending bills for the coming year. Specifically, the Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations subcommittee has held a hearing with Secretary Chao as it continues to consider its spending bill. Likewise, the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations subcommittee is working on their spending measure. Consistent with our Board-adopted 2020 Federal Legislative Program - we are working to advocate our multi-modal priorities - including full funding for our transit and highway priorities.

### **National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020**

Last year, the U.S. House and Senate negotiated the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020, which was signed into law by the President on December 20, 2019. The final language in the NDAA conference report mirrors legislation authored by Senator Cornyn (R-TX) and Congressman Rouda (D-CA) that limits the use of federal funds to procure rolling stock from China. The U.S. Department of Transportation recently issued an FAQ document to clarify this matter.

Congress is scheduled to debate the Fiscal Year 2021 NDAA in the coming months. Metro's government relations team have and will continue to follow this matter closely and keep the Board apprised of any developments related to this matter.

### **Federal Grants**

We continue to aggressively advocate for a series of federal grants being sought by our agency. It is expected that the INFRA Grants should be announced by USDOT in the coming weeks.

### **Local Hire Pilot Program**

As mentioned, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure recently introduced the INVEST in America Act. We are happy to share that the bill reflects the strong advocacy of our agency and Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA) and includes a mandate to bring back the Local Hire Pilot Program established during the Obama Administration. Rep. Bass has been a longtime champion of Metro's effort to enact federal local hiring reforms and we thank the Representative and Chairman DeFazio their leadership on this issue.

### **Conclusion**

Chair Butts - I look forward to expanding on this report at the Executive Management Committee meeting with any new developments that may occur over the next several weeks.

**Executive Management Committee  
State Remarks Prepared by Michael Turner  
Deputy Executive Officer, Government Relations**

Chair Butts and members of the Executive Management Committee, I am pleased to provide an update on a number of state matters of interest to our agency. This report was prepared on June 5, 2020 and will be updated, as appropriate, at the Executive Management Committee meeting on June

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### **California State Legislative Process Update**

The California State Legislature is currently holding a shortened legislative session. The policy committees have hosted a limited number of hearings and are reviewing a very specific set of legislative proposals. The Assembly on Appropriations Committee met on June 2, 2020 to vote on bills that were held on the suspense file. The Senate Appropriations Committee plans to meet on June 9, 2020 to dispense with the bills that are currently held on suspense. Staff continues to review all bills daily that are introduced during the Legislative Session for impacts to the agency. Our process includes reviewing all introduced bills, identifying potential impacts to the agency, working with agency staff to review proposals and then bringing bills to the Board for consideration of a position.

The Legislative Calendar includes the following dates of note:

**Thursday, June 25** - Floor Session, 9 a.m. Last day for a legislative measure to qualify for the November 3rd General Election ballot

**Friday, June 26** - Last day to pass Senate Bills

### **SB 288 (Weiner) Introduced to Expand Exemptions Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

Senator Scott Weiner introduced SB 288 which would expand the list of categorical exemptions under CEQA. Pursuant to the Board approved Legislative Program staff have worked with a number of stakeholders around the state and members of the Los Angeles County legislative delegation on efforts to improve CEQA for our transit projects. SB 288 is consistent with that effort and could help to expedite certain Metro projects like limited transit projects, active transportation projects, bus only lanes and Metro's Express Lanes program for example. The language of the bill however still needs to be clarified to ensure that Metro's projects can fully benefit from the legislation. Metro staff will continue to work with Senator Weiner and others to address improvements to the current version of the bill. If appropriate amendments can be secured then we will support the legislation pursuant to the Board approved legislative program. The California Transit Association moved to support the bill if the author considers incorporating the proposed transit-specific amendments.

### **CEQA Streamlining and High Speed Rail Bills Die in California Assembly**

Chair of the California Assembly Appropriations Committee Lorena Gonzalez (D - San Diego) announced that five bills were being pulled from committee prior to today's Appropriations Committee hearing. Among the bills that died were two that Metro staff had been following through the legislative process: AB 2991 (Santiago) and AB 3213 (Rivas).

AB 2991 (Santiago) was a CEQA streamlining bill that would have extended, for large developments such as sports stadiums, an expedited CEQA approval process first established by the Jobs and Economic Improvement Through Environmental Leadership Act of 2011 (AB 900). The projects would have to be certified as not contributing to greenhouse gas emissions by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in order to qualify. AB 3213 (Rivas) would have required the California High-Speed

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Rail Authority to prioritize rail investments that provide the most benefit to the state. This would have likely pulled funding away from a Central-Valley-based project and focus on more populated areas of California, including Los Angeles.

Metro staff continue to remain engaged with state leaders during the shortened legislative session as bills that potentially impact the agency's work continue to move through the legislative process and will keep updating the Board regularly with the progress of these bills.

### **California Assembly Holds High Speed Rail Hearing**

The California Assembly Transportation Committee held an informational hearing on the California High Speed Rail Authority's Draft 2020 Business Plan. First, the Committee heard from CalSTA Secretary David Kim, who emphasized the necessity for the project as part of the larger effort to reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions in the state. Chief Executive Officer of the California High Speed Rail Authority, Brian Kelly, then walked the committee through a presentation that highlighted the key themes from the 2020 Draft Business Plan, and took questions from the committee on shifting budget projections and anticipated ridership differences between a Merced to Bakersfield line and a Bay Area to Los Angeles line.

Staff will continue to follow developments regarding the high speed rail project for impacts to transportation in LA County.

### **LA County Delegation Engagement**

Metro held a briefing in May, in order to update local, state, and federal offices on the status of key Metro projects and programs and the agency response to COVID-19. Staff briefed the offices on the CEO's Call to Action item that was presented to the Board of Directors in May. Historically, these briefings are held in-person, seasonally, in order to have both an opportunity to brief staff from elected offices, as well as to hear comments and concerns directly from their constituents. Due to current measures in place statewide and nationwide - Government Relations staff has moved to a virtual model - hosting the updates via an online video meeting platform. These briefings, as well as district-specific briefings, will continue on a regular basis to ensure that the members of the LA delegation have access to Metro's most up-to-date project and program information on a regular basis.

### **Conclusion**

Staff will expand on this report at the Executive Management Committee meeting with any new developments that occur over the next several weeks.

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