

# Issue Briefing Paper For Wednesday, August 22, 2007 East Bay EDA Legislative Meetings



## Key Focus -Transportation

**Goods Movement --** The East Bay EDA has been working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Bay Area and Central Valley business and government groups advocating for a comprehensive strategy to improve goods movement infrastructure in Northern California. The two corridors of greatest importance both originate at the Port of Oakland. The Central Corridor extends over Donner Pass and services mainly high-volume containerized imports. The second corridor extends over the Altamont pass, into the San Joaquin Valley, and then on to the Tehachapi Pass. Both corridors are in need of improvements to privately owned rail tracks in order to increase volume and improve reliability, and railroad owners have committed to fund 50 percent of the projects.

- **SB 9 (Lowenthal)** is the current vehicle to implement the \$2 billion goods movement infrastructure program funded by Proposition 1B. In order for this program to proceed, the Legislature must enact legislation that directs the California Transportation how to implement the program.

*Status --* SB 9 was amended on July 19 that undermined efforts to improve rail on the Central and Altamont Corridors, ensuring that railroads will choose to not partner with the State to improve these corridors. These projects are vital for the Port of Oakland and northern California goods movement, and the Legislature needs to work out a compromise that ensures that these rail projects can move forward without delay.

*Position –* Revise bill to remove railroad objections and support proposals to assign specific dollar amounts to regions defined in the “Goods Movement Action Plan” and maintain the 1:1 match including flexibility to match for highway projects.

- **SB 974 (Lowenthal)** requires the Port of Oakland, Los Angeles and Long Beach to collect a user fee from the owner of a container moving through the ports at a rate not to exceed \$30 per container. Half of the revenues would be dedicated to a Congestion Relief Fund administered by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the other half dedicated to a Port Mitigation Fund administered by the State Air Resources Board (ARB).

*Status –* Voted out of Senate and moved to Assembly

*Position –* Support and seek amendments – Recommend user fees be held in a special trust account for congestion mitigation and emissions mitigation. Projects funded from

the trust would be selected by the Port in consultation with the CTC and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

***Congestion Management*** - While Proposition 1B supported a number of key East Bay corridor improvements, each project relies on the local match. Both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties Congestion Management Agencies have approved ½ cent sales tax measures to meet a portion of the match requirements; however additional revenue sources are needed.

- **AB 444 (Hancock)** would authorize the County Congestion Management Agencies (CMA's) in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Santa Clara and Solano by a majority vote of the agency's board, to impose an annual fee of up to \$10 on motor vehicle registered within the county for transportation programs and projects within the County. The bill would require the governing board of the CMA to adopt a specific expenditure plan relative to the use of the registration fee.

*Status* – Suspense file.

*Position* – Support – the fees are needed to complete the approved “Corridor Mobility Improvement Account” investments made in the East Bay by the California Transportation Commission.

### **Key Focus – Housing and Land-Use**

***Transportation Planning*** – East Bay EDA has supported legislative efforts over the past three years that encourage local land-use planning to meet the projected growth needs of the State. While a number legislative initiatives have been proposed this year little progress has been made to streamline the regulatory process and provide predictability for local housing development. One bill, considered by local government and regional planning agencies to increase the complexity for local planning is SB 375 that seeks to density development along transportation corridors and minimizing adverse impacts of green house gasses from automobiles (California League of Cities has requested that the bill become a two year bill).

- **SB 375 (Steinberg)** would require the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to adopt guidelines for travel demand models used in the development of the regional transportation plans. The intent of the bill is to align transportation funds with regional strategies designed to reduce reliance on automotive use and vehicles miles traveled. The bill requires the regional agency to develop a “preferred growth scenario” to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.

*Status* – Moved out of the Senate and Assembly Transportation and next goes to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

*Position* – Oppose – the bill in its current form will not result in improvements in CEQA. The proposed infill exceptions are cumbersome and narrow and may further manufacturing and housing land use conflicts.

## **Key Focus - Health Care**

East Bay EDA has joined with the United Way of California and other business, labor and health advocacy groups in the position that any meaningful healthcare reform in 2007 must include covering all children. SB 32 (Steinberg) and AB 1 (Laird) provide legislators with a blueprint for how to finish the job on children's health coverage this year.

At the federal level, we are supporting the re-authorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) at \$50 billion. Re-authorization of SCHIP is vital to California's ability to provide low-cost health coverage for the state's children. Nearly 800,000 children are enrolled in California's Healthy Families program--two-thirds of the program funding comes from federal SCHIP funds.

## **Key Focus – Water**

The East Bay EDA has joined with the Contra Costa Council to advocate for a comprehensive plan to protect the ecology of Sacramento – San Joaquin River Delta while working to provide a reliable water supply for the 23 million residents and business in the State (Delta Vision and Principles attached).

Over a third or 3 million Bay Area residents depend on water drawn from the Delta (i.e. 80 % Tri-Valley; 40% Southern Alameda County). While many Southern California business groups have already endorsed the construction of a Peripheral Canal (PC), East Bay EDA and other Bay Area business groups have encouraged efforts to complete on a full range of alternative are explored using the principles as guidelines for evaluating solutions.