



DATE: February 26, 2021
TO: STA Board
FROM: Vincent Ma, Marketing and Legislative Program Manager
RE: Legislative Update

Background:

Each year, STA staff monitors state and federal legislation that pertains to transportation and related issues. On January 13, 2021, the STA Board approved its 2021 Legislative Platform to provide policy guidance on transportation legislation and the STA’s legislative activities during 2021.

Monthly legislative updates are provided by STA’s state and federal lobbyists and are attached for your information (Attachments A, and B). An updated Legislative Bill Matrix listing state bills of interest is available at: <https://sta.ca.gov/operations/legislative-program/current/>

Discussion:

Passed in December 2020, H. R. 133 - the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA), the California Transportation Commission (CTC) held a workshop on February 10th and a second workshop on February 26th to discuss how the CTC should allocate roughly \$911.8 million. Approximately 40% would be sub-allocated locally and the remaining 60% would be allocated to the State; however, there does not seem to be consensus on whether the Regional/Local portion of funds should be allocated through Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program or the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). CTC Staff will be presenting their final recommendations to the CTC Commissioners during their upcoming March 24-25th meeting. The transit element of CRRSAA includes allocations to the 5307, and 5311 programs. However, funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act combined with CRRSAA would be capped at 75% of a transit agency’s 2018 operating expenses. Early estimates indicate that the three Urbanized Areas (UZAs) in Solano County have already reached the cap and would not be eligible to receive additional funding from CRRSAA.

Currently, there is another stimulus bill working through Congress, which the House passed on February 26th. The Senate is expected to vote on the \$1.9 trillion “American Rescue Plan” shortly and it is expected to pass via the reconciliation process. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) is aiming to have the bill ready for President Joe Biden to sign around mid-March. This latest relief package includes approximately \$100 billion for transportation, of which, \$30 billion would be for transit. Part of the discussion during the CTC workshop on February 26th, centered determining a method to distribute the local funds equitably for CRRSAA, which would also be applied to the American Rescue Plan.

On February 25th, the Senate Committee of Environment and Public Works held a hearing on “Building Back Better: Investing in Transportation while Addressing Climate Change, Improving Equity, and Fostering Economic Growth and Innovation.” Chair Tom Carper (D-DE) set a goal to

introduce infrastructure legislation by the end of May and set priorities for the reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which is set to expire in September. The Administration, including newly sworn in Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, plans to release its infrastructure plan after the next COVID-19 stimulus bill is passed.

February 19th was the final day for members of the California Legislature to introduce new bills. Assembly Member Rob Bonta (D-Oakland) introduced Assembly Bill 455 (AB 455) The Bay Bridge Fast Forward Program, which would allow The Bay Area Toll Authority to designate a Bus Only lane for use during heavy congestion periods on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Staff recommends that the STA Board *SUPPORT* AB 455 as it aligns with STA's 2021 Legislative Platform II. Climate Change/Air Quality #10 "Support legislation to provide funding for innovative, intelligent/advanced transportation and air quality programs, which relieve congestion, improve air quality and enhance economic development."

At their February meetings, both the SolanoExpress Intercity Transit Consortium and the STA Technical Advisory Committee unanimously approved the recommendation to forward the support of AB 455 to the STA Board for approval.

State Legislative Update (Shaw/Yoder/Antwih/Schmelzer/Lange):

More than 2,500 bills have been introduced between members of the California State Senate and Assembly. Hearings within policy committees have begun for some of these bills, but most of the hearing will likely occur in late March, ahead of the Spring Recess which begins on March 25th. The Budget Committees have worked on the pandemic related sections of the Governor's Budget, which was released in early January.

Trailer Bill Language for the Budget was released in early February and proposed an extension of several relief measure for transit agencies by one year to Fiscal Year 2022-23. Additional action on the Trailer Bill is not expected until the Spring/Summer of 2021.

Updates on the following are detailed in Attachment A:

- Legislative Update
- Administration's Budget Trailer Bill for Transit Relief
- Federal CRRSAA Funding
- Bills of Interest

Federal Legislative Update (Akin Gump):

STA's federal legislative advocate (Susan Lent of Akin Gump) continues to work with STA staff and will craft STA's strategic objectives to align with those of the new administration. Staff is also working to setup meetings between the STA Board, Representatives John Garamendi and Mike Thompson, and key federal agencies to advocate for Solano County's priority projects that would eligible for formula and discretionary grant, as well as prepare for the possible return of project earmarks.

The American Rescue Plan – Coronavirus Stimulus Package includes:

- \$26,086,580,227 for grants to recipients and sub recipients in urbanized areas
- \$50 million for enhanced mobility for seniors.
- \$280,858,479 for the rural program
- \$1 billion for Capital Investment Grants
- \$100,000 for grants for intercity bus transportation
- \$25,000,000 for grants to recipients eligible under the urbanized area formula program

- \$2,207,561,294 for competitive grants to eligible recipients or sub-recipients of funds under the transit program
- \$350.7 billion for state and local governments, of that amount:
 - \$87 million is for Solano County
 - \$24 million for Vallejo
 - \$20 million is for Fairfield
 - \$12 million is for Vacaville
 - About \$6.2 million for Benicia
 - About \$6.6 million for Suisun City
 - About \$4.5 million for Dixon
 - About \$2.1 million for Rio Vista

Updates on the following are detailed in Attachment B:

- A Biden Administration Developments
- Coronavirus Stimulus Package
- Earmarks
- Executive Orders
 - Environmental Streamlining
- Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity
- Low or No Emission Program (Low-No Program) Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity
- Potential Bills of Interest

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Recommendation:

SUPPORT AB 455 (Bonta) The Bay Bridge Fast Forward Program.

Attachments:

- A. State Legislative Update
- B. Federal Legislative Update