



STAFF REPORT
Board Meeting of July 23, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 4-Q

PREPARED BY: Jeff Findley, Principal Regional Planner

SUBJECT:

San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Directors Surface Transportation
Reauthorization Letter

Enclosure: Yes

Action: Information and Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

The Directors' Committee of the San Joaquin Valley Planning Agencies provided a letter to the Valley's U.S. Senate and Congressional members outlining core goals of the transportation funding bill reauthorization to provide adequate and stable funding to ensure the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The agencies requested that the potential disproportionate impact of models that utilize vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on Valley rural users accessing healthcare services and employment and educational opportunities be considered during these discussions.

An additional request is that lawmakers increase prioritizing the distribution of funding through key formula programs, and to implement mandatory suballocations of these funds directly to MPOs to more swiftly deliver infrastructure projects supported by Valley communities. These include the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP). The MPP Program should be provided with adequate funding to support planning requirements that reflect both the evolving role of MPOs and their ability to fulfill federal mandates. The Valley supports legislative efforts intended to shift the share of federal dollars to these funding streams that are more predictable and accessible to Valley agencies than competitive programs.

The reauthorization should maintain a focus on streamlining the delivery of infrastructure projects nationwide. Legislation that supports the advances the ongoing efforts of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to simplify grant application processes and enhance access to federal funding for small and rural agencies is supported by the Valley. The Valley agencies also requested the continuation of streamlining project permitting processes,

including National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews, by requiring federal interagency coordination to be fulfilled on reasonable and established timelines that avoid delays to project schedules. Another request is the consideration of providing reciprocity between NEPA and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reviews. Lawmakers were encouraged to reconsider the utility of National Performance Management Measures implemented by DOT, which have hampered the delivery of infrastructure projects.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to the approved 2025-26 Overall Work Program and Budget.