

DRAFT
Valley Voice
Federal Platform
September 2024

Highway Projects

The San Joaquin Valley generates major economic activity throughout California and the United States with goods produced in our dominant industries, including agriculture and food and beverage sectors. A burgeoning logistics sector has emerged in recent years, facilitating goods movement from maritime ports along the West Coast to inland ports and market destinations. Safe and efficient goods movement corridors are critical to ensure the reliability of our supply chains as freight is expected to exceed 500 million tons annually by 2040.

The Regional Planning Agencies work in close consultation with federal and state partners to prioritize investments in ensuring the safety and enhancing the capacity of State Route (SR) 99, the economic backbone of the Valley that supports the movement of goods and people. Our delegation supports requests seeking federal funding to support the planning, design, or construction of key segments and connections that have been identified as regional priorities to complete the modernization of the corridor.

These requests are critical to maintain a state of good repair and improve travel and goods movement along SR 99:

- **LIST OF PENDING GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Multimodal Projects

The Regional Planning Agencies continue building upon their ongoing efforts to enhance multimodal connectivity throughout the transportation system, reduce carbon emissions, and improve air quality for residents of the San Joaquin Valley. Our delegation supports federal funding requests that advance those objectives in alignment with the Administration's policy goals focused on mobility, economic opportunity, sustainability, resiliency, and environmental justice. We urge your support for the following grant applications submitted by the Regional Planning Agencies:

- **LIST OF PENDING GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Rail Projects

The delegation supports new federal investments that will enhance passenger rail service in the San Joaquin Valley. The expansion of rail service and improvements to freight rail are integral to our planning efforts, while our Regional Planning Agencies prepare for continued population growth, support economic development and workforce development strategies envisioned by our intergovernmental partners, connect with other regions, and comply with federal clean air standards. We encourage lawmakers and the Administration to support the following projects of regional significance:

- **LIST OF PENDING GRANT APPLICATIONS**

FY 2025 Budget and Appropriations

Programmatic Priorities

As appropriators continue working toward a resolution Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 spending bills, we urge Members of Congress to avoid cuts to key transportation programs authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169). The Regional Planning Agencies encourage lawmakers to maintain critical investments, particularly in the FY 2025 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (T-HUD) spending bill. Discretionary grant programs help our Regional Planning Agencies in ongoing work to enhance mobility, safety, goods movement, transit, and air quality in the Central Valley. Programmatic reductions would counter our ability to fully realize the potential of the federal investments in our regional infrastructure. **The Regional Planning Agencies also oppose any legislative efforts to rescind previously awarded federal grants supporting transportation projects and benefitting local communities and our workforce in the San Joaquin Valley.**

Project Priorities

As negotiations involving FY 2025 spending bills progress, we urge lawmakers to maintain Community Project Funding and Congressionally Directed Spending requests as submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees by the Members of our San Joaquin Valley Congressional delegation. These pending requests are included below, sorted by Member listed alphabetically by chamber. Together, these requests represent **[\$ WORTH OF FEDERAL INVESTMENT across X counties]**.¹

Senator Laphonza Butler

[List of T-HUD Disclosures](#)

Recipient Name: Kern Council of Governments

Project Purpose: Bakersfield, California at State Route (SR) 58 and SR 99 interchange, this project completes the funding package for a missing freeway-to-freeway ramp from southbound SR 99 to westbound SR 58, completing a National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) interchange on the SR 58 corridor.

Project Location: Kern County CA

Amount Requested: \$10,000,000

Recipient Name: Merced County Association of Governments

Project Purpose: Funds would be used for the acquisition of four new clean-diesel motor coaches to replace portions of an obsolete Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) fleet.

Project Location: Merced CA

Amount Requested: \$3,400,000

Recipient Name: San Joaquin Council of Governments

Project Purpose: Phase 1B of the State Route 99/120 Connector Project will improve the connector from northbound State Route (SR) 99 to northbound State Route 120 by widening the connector to two lanes and adding a merge/weave lane on westbound SR 120 between SR 99 and the Main Street Interchange.

Project Location: San Joaquin County CA

Amount Requested: \$5,000,000

Recipient Name: Stanislaus Council of Governments

Project Purpose: Funds would be used to secure right-of-way for approximately 5 miles of realigned highway, two grade separations with overpasses, and a roundabout.

Project Location: Modesto CA

Amount Requested: \$5,000,000

Senator Alex Padilla

[List of T-HUD Disclosures](#)

Recipient Name: Kern Council of Governments

Project Purpose: The funding will be used to replace a rural 4-way stop with a safer, trucking-enabled roundabout.

Project Location: City of Bakersfield CA

Amount Requested: \$5,000,000

Recipient Name: Kern Council of Governments

Project Purpose: This funding will support construction of a ramp from southbound SR 99 to westbound SR 58.

Project Location: County of Kern CA

Amount Requested: \$5,000,000

Recipient Name: Merced County Association of Governments

Project Purpose: This funding will secure four new motor coaches to replace portions of a fleet that provides public transit access to Yosemite National Park.

Project Location: Counties of Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Tuolumne CA

Amount Requested: \$3,400,000

Recipient Name: San Joaquin Council of Governments

¹ To be updated after spending bills are introduced

Project Purpose: This funding will reconstruct the existing interchange between SR 99 and SR 120 in the City of Manteca.
Project Location: County of San Joaquin CA
Amount Requested: \$5,000,000

Recipient Name: Stanislaus Council of Governments
Project Purpose: This funding will provide for right-of-way acquisition.
Project Location: Stanislaus CA
Amount Requested: \$5,000,000

Recipient Name: San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission
Project Purpose: This funding will support the expanded installation of positive train control on Altamont Corridor Express from Natomas to Ceres.
Project Location: County of San Joaquin CA
Amount Requested: \$2,900,000

[Congressman John Duarte](#)
[Full List of Disclosures](#)

Project Name: SR 132 Dakota Avenue to Gates Road
Requested Amount: \$5,000,000
Intended Recipient: Stanislaus County
Full Street Address of Intended Recipient: 1111 I Street, Suite 308, Modesto, CA, 95354
Explanation of the Request: The funding would be used to acquire rights-of-way to construct an expressway, two grade separations with overpasses, and a roundabout.
[Member Certification Form](#)

[Congressman Vince Fong](#)
[Full List of Disclosures](#)

Project Name: Centennial Corridor SB 99 to WB 99 Connector
Sponsor: Kern Council of Governments
Recipient Address: 1401 19th Street, Suite 300, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Explanation of Request: The funding would be used to build a connector ramp from southbound State Route 99 to westbound State Route 58. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because this will help improve safety and access to an important transportation route.
[Certification Letter](#)

Project Name: Roundabout and Ancillary Facilities
Sponsor: Kern Council of Governments
Recipient Address: 1401 19th Street, Suite 300, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Explanation of Request: The funding would be used to upgrade a four way stop with a roundabout at State Route 34 and 7th Standard Road. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because of the improvements to safety and flow of traffic.
[Certification Letter](#)

[Congressman Josh Harder](#)
[Full List of Disclosures](#)

Project Name: I-205 Managed Lanes
Requested Amount: \$5,000,000
Subcommittee: THUD
Project Sponsor: San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG)
Project Explanation: The funding would be used for the design element of the I-205 Managed Lanes Project, which will make vital improvements to the I-205 corridor.
Financial Disclosure: [View here](#)

[Congressman Jay Obernolte](#)
[Full List of Disclosures](#)

Project name: SR58/Edwards AFB North Gate Intersection-Interchange Safety Consolidation
Location: 1401 19th St Ste 300, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Project Sponsor/Requestor: Kern County
Amount requested: \$6,000,000
[Click here for certification letter.](#)

[Congressman David Valadao](#)
[Full List of Disclosures](#)

Project Name: State Route 43/7th Standard Road Roundabout Project
Proposed Recipient: Kern Council of Governments
Address of Recipient: 1402 19th St., Ste 300, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Requested Amount: \$5,000,000

Explanation of Request: The funding would be used to replace a rural 4-way stop with a safer, trucking-enabled roundabout at the intersection of SR 43 and a county expressway corridor (7th Standard Rd), providing access to southern and northern California via I-5. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it will fix this vital linkage between the Cities of Bakersfield and Shafter, which serves the needs of agriculture and goods movement.

IIJA/IRA Implementation

Lawmakers must hold states accountable throughout the implementation of the IIJA and IRA, ensuring that state governments are appropriately coordinating with regional or local government partners and distributing federal resources as required by the law and intended by the spirit of it.

As the Administration continues to focus on improving safety outcomes as its top policy priority, we ask our federal and state partners to recognize that increasing highway and road capacity throughout the Valley is critical to helping to prevent crashes, injuries, and fatalities on two-lane facilities in our most disadvantaged communities.

Reauthorization Principles

Ensuring the Solvency of the Highway Trust Fund

As reauthorization approaches, Congress must soon begin discussions on how to provide adequate, stable funding to ensure the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund. Recognizing that outflows have long exceeded HTF cash inflows, we understand that policymakers may consider increasing federal fuel (gasoline and diesel) taxes or instead establishing new taxes or fees on electric vehicles (EVs), commercial trucks, and/or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). We urge lawmakers to consider potential disparate impacts on rural road users in low-income communities throughout the Valley while assessing these options, recognizing our residents may need to commute dozens of miles for access to jobs, education, or medical services.

Prioritizing Regional and Local Funding

Regional governments, including councils of government and metropolitan planning organizations, are uniquely situated within our system of federalism to effectively implement projects and policies supported by intergovernmental partners and federal investments. Our Regional Planning Agencies convene county, municipal, and community interests and coordinate with federal, state, and local government entities. It is our mission to work across multi-jurisdictional boundaries to ensure the effective planning and delivery of infrastructure projects and services as well as the equitable distribution of federal, state, and local funds. The diversity of our regional board representation is our strength, balancing the interests of our urban, suburban, and rural communities and partner transportation agencies across modes to deliver the outcomes and solutions desired by federal policymakers.

Regional and local governments are responsible stewards of direct dollars who can maximize the use of federal funding to deliver impactful projects and services without the administrative costs and burdens associated with distributing resources through state government agencies. Our Regional Planning Agencies support federal efforts to redistribute a greater share of federal formula funds directly to regional councils or MPOs. We recommend increasing formula funding levels for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) and the Metropolitan Planning (PL) Program. Our delegation respectfully urges lawmakers to seek legislative opportunities to expand eligibility to include regional councils and MPOs wherever appropriate across the full spectrum of discretionary and competitive funding opportunities.

Maintaining a State of Good Repair

According to a CBO report from October 2023, state and local governments spent \$180 billion on highways in 2022, which was “three times as much as the federal government on highways.” State and local spending on highways was equal to 0.71 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The federal government only spent \$52 billion – or 0.21 GDP – that same year. According to the same CBO report, operations and maintenance accounted for 57% of that state and local spending on highways in 2022. We encourage federal lawmakers to prioritize funding programs that support maintaining a state of good repair on highways in the next reauthorization.

Reauthorization OR Farm Bill Principles

Farm-to-Market Routes

The Regional Planning Agencies support federal funding to support the maintenance of critical farm-to-market routes that are subject to heavy truck traffic carrying agricultural products through a set-aside in the next Farm Bill or surface transportation reauthorization. Trucks hauling dairy can weigh up to 80,000 pounds each, putting immense stress on roadway and bridge infrastructure and costing local governments throughout the region.

While the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Rural Development (RD) administers grants to support public facilities and infrastructure improvements, the federal award size and share are oftentimes not attractive to address these specific infrastructure needs in our local communities. Additionally, those commercial trucks bringing food to market often traverse exurban and suburban communities with populations greater than 20,000 people in route to ultimate destinations, but those agricultural producers in rural communities are the economic beneficiaries of the goods movement.

Potential solutions include creating a new grant program to be administered by either the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) or USDA for this sole purpose; creating a formula set-aside for local corridors to be designated under existing transportation programs would be a welcome solution; or increasing the maximum grant award and federal share and expanding eligibility for RD programs administered by USDA as an effective alternative solution. Any of these changes can help remove barriers and better enable the Regional Planning Agencies to overcome challenges associated with seeking federal resources to help maintain farm-to-market routes locally.