SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY
REGIONAL
PLANNING AGENCIES
Policy Council

VALLEY VOICE DC

FEDERAL PLATFORM

2023

VALLEY VOICE DC

Kern Council of Governments
KCAG Kings County Association of Governments
TCAG Tulare County Association of Governments
StanCOG Stanislaus Council of Governments
Fresno Council of Governments
MCTC Madera County Transportation Commission
MCAG MERCED COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
San Joaquin Valley AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT
San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

2023 VALLEY VOICE DC DELEGATION

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San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council

Valley Voice DC

2023 VALLEY VOICE DC DELEGATION

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DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

The Valley Voice delegation understands that the Administration and lawmakers reached an agreement to lift the debt ceiling and take steps to reduce the national debt with the enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (P.L. 118-5) earlier this year. We are concerned that the law effectively freezes topline Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 nondefense discretionary spending at FY 2023 levels, and some lawmakers are pursuing further reductions beyond those levels. As appropriators continue work on FY 2024 spending bills, we urge Congress to avoid cuts to key discretionary transportation programs authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169).

Maintaining those investments in the FY 2024 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (T-HUD) spending bill will help the Regional Planning Agencies in their 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 that were to be provided by the historic laws.

Furthermore, we urge lawmakers to reach agreement on all twelve annual spending bills to avoid sequestration. We ask the Senate and House to maintain all Community Project Funding and Congressional Directed Spending requests submitted by Members of Congress to the Appropriations Committees and included in spending bills. We ask Members of our Congressional delegation to work to ensure local projects sponsored by the Policy Council and its member agencies are ultimately funded.

See a map of San Joaquin Valley surface transportation infrastructure priority projects on the next page.

San Joaquin Valley, California

Surface Transportation Infrastructure Projects

PENDING FEDERAL GRANT APPLICATIONS

1. Kern COG, SR 58/99 Connector
2. Fresno COG, SR 99/South Fresno Interchange
3. SJJPA, Rail Capacity and Enhancement Project
4. SJJPA, Madera HSR Station
5. Merced HSR Station
6. SJRRC, Ceres to Turlock Double Tracking
7. SJRRC, Rail Academy of Central California
8. SJJPA, SJV Rail Corridor Vision Program (valleywide)

COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING & CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED FUNDING REQUESTS

1. SJ COG, SR 99/120 Connector
2. Port of Stockton, Emission Reduction Initiatives
3. Manteca, Veterans Center
4. Lodi, Mainstreet Housing
5. Stockton, Van Buskirk Park
6. Madera County, Parksdale Road Rehabilitation
7. Fresno, Air Terminal Expansion
8. Fowler, Downtown Streetscape
9. Sanger, Fire Station Remodel
10. Fresno County, Tranquility Complete Streets
11. Fresno County, Cantua Creek Sidewalk Improvements
12. Mendota, Pavement Management
13. Tulare County, Ave 56 Farm to Market
14. Tulare, International Agri-Center
15. Porterville, Porterville St. Realignment
16. Farmersville, Streetlight Additions
17. Habitat for Humanity, Disabled Veterans at Sante Fe Roundabout
18. Woodlake, Mulberry St. Roundabout
19. Hanford, E. Lacy Improvements
20. Bakersfield, MLK Blvd. Complete Streets
21. Delano, Well 42
22. Golden Empire Transit, Bakersfield Portable Fueling Container

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE & SR 99 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Our Valley generates major economic activity within California with our dominant industries, including agriculture and food production. In recert years, a burgeoning logistics sector has emerged. We expect that freight will exceed 500 million tons annually by 2040. Safe, efficient, and reliable goods movement corridors are vital to the economic health of the San Joaquin Valley, the State of California, and the United States. Our RPAs work in close consultation with FHWA, Caltrans, and other stakeholders to prioritize investments in State Route (SR) 99, the economic backbone of the Valley that facilitates the movement of goods and people.

The Valley Voice delegation requests federal support to strengthen the SR 99 corridor throughout the Central Valley, particularly the key segments and connections that have been identified as priorities for the Policy Council in the year ahead. We ask our Congressional delegation to support federal grant applications and earmark requests submitted to maintain a state of good repair and improve goods movement. Those projects include:

- The **State Route 99/120 Connector Project Phase 1B** sponsored by the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG). This project will improve the connector from northbound State Route (SR) 99 to northbound SR 120 by widening the connector to two lanes and adding merge/weave lanes on westbound SR 120 between SR 99 and the Main Street Interchange. Congressman Josh Harder (CA-9) submitted a Community Project Funding (CPF) request that was included in the House FY 2024 T-HUD spending bill. We urge Members of Congress to maintain this request in the FY 2024 T-HUD spending bill.

- The **Centennial Corridor Southbound State Route 99 to Westbound State Route 58 Connector Project** sponsored by the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG). This project completes the interchange by adding a freeway-to-freeway ramp allowing over-the-road freight to transition from southbound SR 99 to westbound SR 58, connecting them to western Kern County and Interstate 5. Kern COG is seeking $25 million in INFRA funding to support this project. The project leverages $9 million in funding from the State of California. We strongly urge DOT to support this project.

- The **SR-99/South Fresno Corridor Interchanges Project** sponsored by the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG). The project will replace a non-standard, split interchange at North/Cedar Avenues and a non-standard, half-interchange at American Avenue. The Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA), Fresno COG, and Caltrans have partnered on this critical project and have filed a Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) application for $25 million. We strongly urge DOT to support this project.

See a map of other SR-99 priority projects included on the following pages.

San Joaquin Valley, California
State Route 99 and Passenger Rail

San Joaquin Valley, California

Critical State Route 99 Interchange Projects

Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA

AIR QUALITY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) disapproval of the 2018 PM2.5 Plan contingency measures remains an ongoing concern. Working toward a resolution that avoids sanctions is a top priority for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the eight Regional Planning Agencies. Proposed contingency measures submitted by SJVAPCD conform with draft guidance issued by EPA on March 17, 2023, and those would result in significant emission reductions to fully satisfy fair-share reductions from sources under the jurisdiction of the District. While we await the EPA review of those measures as well as the release of a federal implementation plan (FIP) for contingency measures anticipated in the summer months of 2023 that could impact next steps, we understand that the implementation of federal funding sanctions could occur as early as December 2023 if a resolution is not attained working with the federal agency.

We urge EPA to work with our partners at SJVAPCD toward a resolution on the 2018 PM2.5 Plan contingency measures and approval of the plan to avoid sanctions. Sanctions will adversely impact the ability of the RPAs to ensure the timely and effective delivery of transportation and infrastructure projects that receive federal resources authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58). This would counter the goals of the Biden Administration to advance transportation projects and initiatives that will improve air quality in alignment with the objectives of the Clean Air Act, while enhancing other mobility, safety, resiliency, and equity outcomes for our constituents in the San Joaquin Valley. We ask for the cooperation of EPA and federal partners in coordinating together on these air quality planning efforts to approve the 2018PM2.5 Plan contingency measures and avoid potential impacts to project delivery. **The Valley Regional Planning Agencies have identified $4.5 billion of projects "at risk" from the possible EPA sanctions.**

FEDERAL FUNDING

The challenges faced by the San Joaquin Valley with respect to air quality are amongst the most challenging in the nation. The Valley's topography, climate, geography, and the presence of two major transportation corridors connecting Northern and Southern California contribute to the region's challenges. Sources that can only be regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are now the largest categories of emissions in the San Joaquin Valley. Those sources include trucks, trains, planes, and off-road equipment. These challenges will be exacerbated by changing climate conditions including ongoing drought and increases in fallowed agricultural land.

A number of Valley communities qualify as environmental justice areas highly impacted by environmental and socioeconomic challenges. In alignment with the Biden-Harris Administration's EJ40 Initiative, we urge EPA and other federal agencies to continue to prioritize federal resources, including, but not limited to funds authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), to reduce emissions in regions that face the most significant air quality challenges in the country. In particular, resources should be prioritized to regions like the San Joaquin Valley that are most significantly impacted by emissions sources that are under federal authority to control.

The Air District recommends a focus in areas including, but not limited to, heavy-duty zero-emission vehicle charging and fueling infrastructure/corridor funding in regions, such as the Valley where there is significant confluence of transportation modes ranging from drayage to long-haul trucking to freight rail allow for wide variety of fleets to access and share infrastructure needs. Particular focus should be placed on goods movement corridors in the Valley, including State Route 99 and Interstate 5. A key element in the infrastructure development should be significantly bolstered grid capacity to support transportation electrification goals of California.

Additionally, federal resources should be prioritized to address emissions across key industries and sectors through the Valley, particularly agriculture and freight and logistics to facilitate goods movement. Those investments could include developing and supporting innovative sustainable agricultural practices, accelerating the adoption of cleaner agricultural equipment, including tractors, harvesting equipment, agricultural utility terrain vehicles, and converting diesel irrigation pump engines to electric motors. We seek investments toward modernizing and cleaning up existing port and cargo handling equipment with zero and near-zero emission equipment and addressing emissions from freight and goods movement equipment in use throughout the Valley.

PASSENGER RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Valley Voice delegation supports new federal investments that will enhance passenger rail service in the Central Valley. We encourage lawmakers and the Administration to support the following projects of local and regional significance:

1) The **Ceres to Turlock Double-Tracking Project** will construct a new, second mainline track along an approximately 10-mile portion of the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and provides the opportunity for future extension of the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) passenger rail service southward to the city of Turlock. The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC) submitted an application on August 21, 2023 for a 2023-2024 MPDG (INFRA) grant for the improvements needed, with the State of California providing matching funds.

2) The **San Joaquin Valley Rail Corridor Vision Program** sponsored by SJRRC. This project will lay the groundwork for the expansion of San Joaquin Intercity Passenger Rail service frequencies and service territory to provide connections to initial service on the California High Speed Rail (HSR) operating segment. SJRRC applied for federal funding for the project through the FY 2022 Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program.

3) The **North Central Valley Rail Capacity Enhancement Project** sponsored by SJRRC. This project proposes an ambitious suite of corridor-based capacity improvements that will enable the expansion of state-supported intercity passenger rail service and enhanced freight rail velocity and efficiency that is critical to the corridor's agricultural sector. SJRRC applied for federal funding for the project through the FY 2022 and 2023 Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Program.

4) The **Rail Academy of Central California (TRACC)** sponsored by SJRRC. This project is a strategic partnership between educational and business entities to train and place students into quality transportation-related jobs in the railroad and transit sectors. SJRRC applied for federal funding for the project through the FY 2022 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program.

5) The **Madera High Speed Rail Station Project** sponsored by the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA).This project will construct a new station in Madera County for California's Interim High-Speed Rail (HSR) Service between Merced and Bakersfield. Located along Avenue 12 and the relocated Amtrak San Joaquins station, planning and future development are anticipated adjacent to the project location and near the Madera Community College. In partnership with SJJPA, Caltrans resubmitted a joint application on August 21, 2023 for a 2023-2024 MPDG (MEGA) grant for the Madera HSR Station Project, with the State providing matching funds.

BUY AMERICA

The San Joaquin Valley recommends that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are consistent in the implementation of agency waivers to the Build America, Buy America Act. We appreciate recent actions taken by the Administration to avoid or reduce delays in project delivery, including the Department of Transportation (DOT) announcement of a public interest Waiver of Buy America Requirements for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants for awards obligated after August 16, 2023. We encourage FHWA and FTA to expedite the review of any pending waiver requests from our member agencies and to publish those determinations as soon as possible to ensure that key infrastructure investments are delivered on schedule.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Local governments within the Central Valley are considering various federal funding streams for projects to enhance the safety, reliable, and consistency of our regional water supply. We ask Members of our Congressional delegation to support any forthcoming grant applications or earmark requests that will improve our supply. Those local investments include the Community Project Funding (CPF) request for the **Stockton Diamond Sewer Upsizing Project** sponsored by the City of Stockton and submitted by Congressman Josh Harder (CA-9) to the House Appropriations Committee for inclusion in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies spending bill. We urge lawmakers to reach agreement on FY 2024 appropriations bills to ensure water infrastructure projects like these are ultimately funded.

See a map of San Joaquin Valley water infrastructure projects on the next page.

San Joaquin Valley, California
Water Infrastructure Projects

COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING & CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED FUNDING REQUESTS

A. Stockton, Diamond Sewer Upsizing Project
B. San Joaquin County, Lincoln Village Improvements
C. Turlock, Sewer Extension
D. Turlock, Stormwater Infrastructure
E. Madera, Storm Drain Replacement
F. Madera, Sewer Trunk Main
G. Fresno Irrigation District, Upper Kings Groundwater Resiliency
H. Consolidated Irrigation, Upper Kings Resiliency
I. Lindsay, Water Pipeline Replacement
J. Tulare County, Traver Sewer Project
K. Dinuba, Sewer Improvements
L. Visalia, Groundwater Basin Project
M. Lindsay, Self Sustainable and Clean Drinking Water
N. Tulare Irrigation District, Seaborn Reservoir Project
O. Alta Irrigation District, Alta Upper Kings Water Resiliency
P. Arvin-Edison Water Storage District, Water Pipeline Project
Q. California City, Water Infrastructure Replacement

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY
REGIONAL
PLANNING AGENCIES
Policy Council

The San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

is a partnership that exemplifies the regional transportation planning agencies' commitment to working collaboratively to address regional issues, challenges and opportunities. The 18- member Policy Council was established to build regional consensus and provide a forum for the Valley to organize, coordinate and communicate as a region. The Policy Council consists of two elected officials from each of the eight regional planning agencies' policy boards, and the Executive Directors of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority.

Valley Voice is the Policy Council's advocacy program that communicates the region's priorities to policy makers and agency staff in Sacramento and Washington, DC. Each year, a coalition of elected officials and COG staff from throughout the region travel to Sacramento and Washington, DC to advocate on behalf of the valley with a unified voice.

The San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council is led by Chair Robert Poythress, Supervisor of District 3, Madera County.

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