

Memorandum

From: Capitol Transportation Consulting and Pavluchuk & Associates
To: James Corless, Executive Director
Date: February 28, 2023
Subject: Federal Policy Monthly Report

February Advocacy Activities

In February, SACOG Executive Director James Corless was in Washington, DC for the National Association of Regional Council's winter conference. As a part of that trip, we organized several meetings for Mr. Corless to discuss SACOG priorities including Green Means Go, the region's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant submission, and resiliency priorities. Specifically, we met with:

- Sam Mahood, Policy Staff for Senator Padilla (D-CA)
- Adam McBride, Legislative Director for Congresswoman Matsui (D-CA)
- Brian Kniesser, Environmental Policy Fellow for Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA)

Last minute scheduling issues prevented us from meeting with Rep. Bera's staff, but Jason Pavluchuk and Devon Barnhart briefed Kelvin Lum of the Congressman's staff shortly after Mr. Corless' visit.

In addition, we spent time with the Association for Metropolitan Planning Organization's Executive Director Bill Keyrouze to discuss Green Means Go as well as policy priorities for the reauthorization of the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

We also spent significant time at the NARC conference discussing Green Means Go and other priorities with like-minded regional governments. This resulted in two follow-up calls involving MPOs and regional bodies from around the nation. The first was to begin to discuss and identify broad priorities for the reauthorization of IIJA and the second call was to discuss a strategy for the FY 2025 appropriation process to increase and target funding that can be used by SACOG and others on housing and transportation projects.

We spent much of the month of February preparing the delegation Members and their staff for what will be a busy spring which will include:

- Support for the region's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant submission – which we hope will include funding for Green Means Go
- Preparations for the FY 2025 budget cycle and a request to increase funding for the PRO Housing program with additional language that would encourage HUD to provide grants for regional efforts
- Finalizing the region's resiliency priorities and identifying potential funding sources
- Final preparation for the 'Cap-to-cap' trip.

Federal Budget Update

As we draft this report, no agreement has been reached on the FY 2024 budget. The current deadline is laddered, March 1st for some Federal agencies (including transportation) and March 8th for other agencies. The current understanding is that more time is needed to work out remaining issues and finalize details. In a sign that all is NOT lost, it appears that Congress will do one more extension which is rumored to last until March 22nd. However, as we prepare to transmit this report, things remain fluid and can change in an instant (and then change again, and so on and so forth). What is clear is that the historic delay in passing a budget for FY 24 will certainly impact and impair Congress' ability to get a bill done for FY 2025.

New Grant Opportunities

In February, three new grant opportunities have been made available through USDOT:

- \$1.5 billion for [Low-No and Bus/Bus Facility](#) – This funding is for transit agencies that are looking to acquire new rolling stock or construct, expand, or maintain bus facilities. There is an emphasis on low or no emission buses. **Deadline is April 25th**
- \$1.0 billion [Safe Streets for All](#) -- This program funds local and regional 'vision zero' plans as well as provides funding for implementation of those plans. In order for an entity to receive implementation funds it must have in place a 'vision zero' plan or safety action plan. USDOT is urging local governments to work regionally and submit proposals in a regional fashion. **The deadline for implementation grants is April 4th and there are three deadlines for planning grants.**
- \$150 million [Congestion Reduction Program](#) – This program is only open for projects in urban areas over 1 million. Eligible projects include a variety of ITS, transportation demand management, and pricing projects. Funding can be used to incentivize drivers. The minimum grant size is \$10 million meaning the minimum project amount must be \$12.5 million. FHWA will allow and encourages programs of projects. The goal of the program is to create mode shift and/or reduce VMT. **Deadline is April 22nd.**