



April 21, 2023

To: James Corless, Executive Director, Sacramento Area Council of Governments

From: Chris Lee, Partner, Politico Group
Kiana Valentine, Partner, Politico Group

Re: State Advocacy Report for April 2023

Politico Group is pleased to provide the following report to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) on recent state advocacy efforts, as well as key developments on state legislation and other matters of interest to SACOG.

AB 350 (Aguiar-Curry) Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) Update – SACOG-Sponsored Legislation

SACOG worked with Politico Group, Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry's office, and the Assembly Natural Resources Committee to negotiate a technical amendment related to the applicability of the California Environmental Quality Act to the limited metropolitan transportation plan update that SACOG will complete in late 2023. Following the amendment, [AB 350](#) was re-referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, where it must be approved by May 19.

Northern California Megaregion Lobby Day

Politico Group worked with SACOG, the San Joaquin Council of Governments, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to request, coordinate, and develop messaging for meetings with the California Transportation Agency, the Strategic Growth Council, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the California Transportation Commission, and the Senate and Assembly Committees on Transportation for an in-person lobby day on April 19 in Sacramento.

The delegation from the three MPOs highlighted the interregional planning and collaboration taking place within the Megaregion, as well as the group's legislative platform and SACOG-sponsored AB 350, which will better synchronize RTP/SCS updates across the Megaregion. In meetings with state funding partners, the delegation highlighted the Megaregion Dozen project list, with a particular emphasis on intercity rail, goods movement, and managed lanes projects that have pending grant applications before the state, or which will soon be pursuing funding.

State partners were impressed by the voluntary collaboration taking place across the Megaregion and provided helpful input on the timing of upcoming grant opportunities and strategies for successful applications, such as corridor-focused projects in the transit and intercity rail capital program. They also highlighted ongoing state-level programs and planning efforts that could relate to the Megaregion's priorities, including the SB 671 (Gonzalez, 2021) Clean Freight Corridor Efficiency Assessment.

SACOG Comments on Infill Infrastructure Grant Guidelines

Following SACOG's testimony on Green Means Go in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee last month, Politico Group worked to connect SACOG staff with relevant program staff at the

Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to prepare and disseminate comments and recommended changes on both the large jurisdiction and small jurisdiction guidelines for the state's infill infrastructure grant (IIG) program. In addition, SACOG staff reiterated these comments during the formal public comment period for the pending multifamily housing Super NOFA, which includes the large jurisdiction IIG program. These comments focused on regulatory changes that are within the discretion of the Department to adjust, as distinct from any underlying statutory issues.

Legislative Updates

In April, Legislative policy committees kicked into high gear. Policy committees must approve bills that have a fiscal impact by April 28 and all other bills introduced in their respective house by May 5.

Politico Group continues to track 136 bills for SACOG. The following section discusses key legislation in the areas of regional transportation planning, housing and transportation, and open meetings laws.

In addition to those key items, Politico Group testified on SACOG's behalf in support of the confirmation of **Anthony Tavares as Director of the California Department of Transportation** in the Senate Rules Committee, and in support of SACOG state legislative delegation member **Senator Ashby's [SB 659](#)**, the "California Water Supply Solutions Act of 2023" in the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

Open Meetings Legislation

In April, SACOG joined coalition efforts supporting two key bills related to remote meetings and the Brown Act. **[AB 557 \(Hart\)](#)** and **[AB 817 \(Pacheco\)](#)** will each face their first policy committee hearing on April 26 in the Assembly Local Government Committee, which is chaired by SACOG state legislative delegation member, **Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters)**.

- **AB 557 (Hart)**: Sponsored by the California Special Districts Association, the League of California Cities, and the California State Association of Counties, AB 557 would eliminate the sunset provisions included in AB 361 (R. Rivas, 2021), which authorized remote meetings during a state-declared emergency, extend the renewal period from 30 days to 45 days.
- **AB 817 (Pacheco)**: Jointly sponsored by the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts and the League of California Cities, AB 817 would authorize local boards, commissions, subcommittees, etc. that are not legislative bodies to meet remotely.

Regional Transportation Planning and Climate

Assembly Bills 6 and 7 by Assembly Transportation Committee Chair Friedman were approved by the Assembly Transportation Committee on March 27, although further amendments are expected. **[AB 6](#)** currently makes minor tweaks to CARB's review process for sustainable communities strategies (SCSs) and requires project nominations for the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program to demonstrate how projects would contribute to achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Although it does not make conforming changes to the authorizing language for any particular state transportation funding program, **[AB 7](#)** currently includes language overlaying a new selection process for any project funded at least in part by state gasoline and diesel excise taxes, transportation improvement fee revenues, the Transportation Development Act's Local Transportation Fund (LTF), or Proposition 1B bond funds (2006). The specified required selection criteria would include bridge and pavement asset

management goals, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, safety and accessibility for all roadway users, and involvement of disadvantaged and underrepresented communities in the project development process, among other criteria.

Key Housing and Transportation Legislation

Other bills with implications for regional plans and agencies that Politico Group is monitoring include:

[AB 68](#) (Ward): The Assembly Housing Committee did not set a hearing for this bill, which means it will not advance in 2023. AB 68 would have curtailed the ability of local agencies to approve higher intensity housing or extend utilities to land outside of census-designated urban areas with limited exceptions that would require concurrence by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. The bill also creates a streamlined approval process for housing projects consistent with the regional sustainable communities strategy, among other criteria, in urbanized areas. AB 68 was strongly opposed by business and housing developer groups.

[AB 821](#) (Grayson): This bill allows housing projects consistent with the general plan to proceed through the approval process without a rezoning following notification that the local zoning is not consistent with a general plan. Amendments taken to the bill prior to its passage by the Assembly Local Government Committee remove requirements that housing projects reasonably deemed consistent with a sustainable communities strategy must be approved with a limited number of hearings, notwithstanding the underlying zoning, and preventing local agencies from reducing the intensity of the development. AB 821 will be heard in Assembly Housing and Community Development on April 26.

[AB 1335](#) (Zbur): This bill applies language related to population estimates under the regional housing needs allocation process to the development of the sustainable communities strategy, essentially requiring regional agencies to use Department of Finance population projections. The bill also expands local government reporting requirements on SCS implementation. CALCOG expressed concerns about the bill and indicated their interest in working with the author on a resolution. AB 1335 was passed by the Assembly Transportation Committee on March 28.

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