OLDA

California High Speed Rail SB 1029 Approved

On July 6, 2012, the California State Senate approved SB 1029 by a 21-16 vote, authorizing the California High Speed Rail Authority to begin construction.

The bill authorizes phase 1 construction in Central Valley with $2.6 billion in Prop 1A funding and $3.2 billion in federal government grants. An additional $1.1 billion will be set aside to fund “bookend” projects for the Los Angeles and San Francisco metropolitan regions. $713.3 million is for connectivity projects (including improvements in the OLDA Northern Corridor/Antelope Valley Line).

California Governor Jerry Brown is expected to sign the bill into law.

President Obama Signs MAP-21 Bill

President Obama signed the $105 billion Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) bill on Friday, July 9, 2012. MAP-21 approves $100 billion to be spent on highway, transit, and other transportation programs. The bill reauthorizes the Federal highway program at current levels on funding, plus inflation, for two fiscal years. In addition to the funding, the bill consolidates Federal transportation programs while allowing states more flexibility with federal funds. The bill is intended to bring faster project delivery while maintaining environmental quality.

Seven federal transportation programs have been consolidated into five primary programs. The National Highway Performance Program, (which replaces the Interstate Maintenance, National Highway System) and the Highway Bridge programs allows flexibility at the state and local level while focusing investments onto the National Highway System. Programs that previously funded (under SAFETEA-LU) will be funded through MAP-21. The National Freight Network Program (a new federal program) funds improvements to freight infrastructure at the national and regional levels. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), provides funding for projects designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), has been allocated increased funding under MAP-21 and is designed to reduce highway fatalities. MAP-21 builds upon the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Program (TIFIA), which will continue to provide loans for transportation projects. Funding for the TIFIA program is being increased by $1 billion a year.

Highway and transit spending will still be split 80/20 with approximately $81.4 billion for highway and $21.2 billion for transit over fiscal years 2013 and 2014.