

Memorandum

To: Board of Directors
From: Christina Watson, Director of Planning
Meeting Date: March 27, 2024
Subject: **Legislative Update**

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Legislative Update:

1. **RECEIVE** update on state and federal legislative issues; and
2. **ADOPT** positions on proposed legislation.

SUMMARY:

This report presents updates on state and federal legislative activities and proposed positions on draft legislation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The state legislative proposals may have a financial impact on TAMC if they are enacted. The 2024 federal transportation appropriations bill included \$1,811,000 for the G12 Pajaro to Prunedale project. TAMC submitted funding requests to Senator Butler for \$2 million for the Elkhorn Slough Highway 1 Climate Resiliency project and \$1.5 million for the King City Multimodal Transportation Center by the March 12, 2024 deadline.

DISCUSSION:

Attachment 1 is the draft state bill list. Priorities listed in the bill list refer to the adopted 2024 legislative program, online as a **web attachment**. The Executive Committee recommends the Board adopt the following positions:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 817 (Pacheco): Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body - this is one of two Brown Act reform bills that could help TAMC have more flexibility on its committee meetings. Recommend a "support" position.
- AB 2535 (Bonta): Trade Corridor Enhancement Program - would require the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to ensure that at least 50% of the funds allocated under the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program in any fiscal year are allocated to investments in zero-emission freight infrastructure and would prohibit funding any capacity projects or general purposes lanes on the state highway system. The US 101 South of Salinas project is poised to apply for this grant program but would not be eligible with these revisions to the program. Recommend an "oppose" position.
- AB 3005 (Wallis): Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Law: adjustment suspension - this is a reintroduction of a bill from prior years that would severely impact the main funding source for transportation in California, the gas tax. Recommend an "oppose" position.

- Senate Bill (SB) 537 (Becker): Open meetings: multijurisdictional, cross-county agencies: teleconferences - this is the other Brown Act reform bill; this one could facilitate virtual meetings of multijurisdictional bodies such as the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments and the Coast Rail Coordinating Council. Recommend a "support" position.
- SB 768 (Caballero): California Environmental Quality Act: Air Resources Board: vehicle miles traveled: study - would require the State Air Resources Board (ARB) to coordinate with relevant agencies, including Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), to conduct a study on how vehicle miles traveled is used as a metric for measuring transportation impacts pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Recommend a "support" position.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee recommends the Board support AB 2259 (Boerner): Transportation: bicycle safety handbook, which would require the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to develop and distribute a bicycle safety handbook that includes information on existing laws regulating bicycles and e-bikes.

The Monterey Bay Air Resources District requests the Board support AB 2401 (Ting): Clean Cars 4 All Program, which would expand the grant program to the entire state, including Monterey County.

TAMC may need to pursue legislation to clarify project eligibility for Proposition 116 funding, which was used to purchase the Monterey Branch Line in 2003. The MST SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit project, as currently designed, removes small portions of the tracks in three places. Due to the removal of tracks, some are questioning the Agency's commitment to the ultimate build-out project of light rail in the corridor. However, the tracks are expected to be refurbished and upgraded for the eventual rail project anyway, and the removal of a minor section of the corridor is not a barrier to implementing future rail service.

The TAMC Board demonstrated an ongoing commitment to passenger rail on the Monterey Branch Line via adoption of the Monterey Bay Area Network Integration Study on August 25, 2021. The vision service scenario shows a passenger rail service on the Monterey Branch Line, connecting "around the bay" to the Santa Cruz Branch Line, enabling a one-seat ride from the City of Monterey to the City of Santa Cruz in the full build-out scenario and connecting to intercity passenger service on the coast rail line at the community of Castroville. The initial service scenario shows TAMC's support for the Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit project within the TAMC-owned Monterey Branch Line corridor as a precursor to rail service. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recommended the TAMC Board pursue bus rapid transit service to demonstrate demand for rail service on the corridor. As a result, the TAMC Board approved the SURF! project in its Measure X local transportation sales tax ballot measure in 2016. Thanks to Measure X and Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) grant funding, the SURF! project is now at 95% design and is ready to go into construction in 2025, once the required permits have been approved.

Attachment 2 is a state legislative update; **Attachment 3** is a summary of a Legislative Analyst's Office report on the impacts of climate change goals on transportation funding options.

Attachment 4 is a federal legislative update, celebrating the enactment of the transportation appropriations bill that included \$1,811,000 for the G12 Pajaro to Prunedale project.

Web Attachment 2 is a summary of President Biden's budget request and its implications for transit and rail projects, from the American Public Transportation Association.

ATTACHMENTS: