

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

## FEBRUARY 2013

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### **2013 Regional Conference & General Assembly – Registration Open**

Registration is open for the 2013 Regional Conference & General Assembly, May 2 – 3, at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort in Palm Desert. The annual event brings together elected officials, community leaders and business stakeholders throughout Southern California to discuss the region's most pressing issues. Last year, over 800 participated in the approval of the Final 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. This year, the theme of the Regional Conference & General Assembly is "Gateway to National Prosperity," where the region's key goods movement industry will be highlighted. To register for the event and to learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please visit [www.scag.ca.gov/ga2013](http://www.scag.ca.gov/ga2013).

### **Imperial County Highway Sanctions Lifted**

On January 7, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published in the Federal Register a proposed rule approving the revised fugitive dust regulations (Regulation VIII) submitted previously by the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District and an interim final rule to stay highway sanctions in Imperial County. As a result, Imperial County highway sanctions are lifted effective January 7. Within 60 days of the close of public comment on the published rules, the EPA Region 9 Regional Administrator is expected to sign a notice of final rulemaking. If the Regulation VIII revisions are finalized as proposed, EPA's final action would permanently terminate the highway sanctions.

### **SCAG lends amicus support for Perris Valley Line Project**

As authorized by the Regional Council, SCAG submitted an amicus letter on January 16 in support of the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) in the CEQA lawsuit challenging RCTC's EIR for the Perris Valley Line (PVL) project (Friends of Riverside's Hills v. RCTC, RCSC Case No. RIC1113896). In the amicus letter, SCAG provided information for the court's consideration regarding how the EIR fully analyzed the potential impacts to the operational air quality and how the EIR's analysis of alternatives for the PVL project was supported by substantial evidence. The hearing on the matter was heard on January 29, with the judge acknowledging SCAG's amicus letter. The judge took the matter under submission and there is no decision at this time. Staff will apprise the Regional Council of further developments.

### **Cal/EPA Environmental Health Screening Tool Update**

Subsequent to the December 12, 2012 workshop on Cal/EPA's California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) hosted by SCAG, Cal/EPA released the Second Public Review Draft of the Tool on January 3. The Second Draft presents an updated screening methodology to identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution and provides statewide results. In response to public comments, including those received at the December SCAG Workshop, the Second Draft includes an updated technical methodology and is accompanied by a Guidance Document on the intended uses of the Screening Tool and a summary of changes. Cal/EPA has also responded to requests to release the input data for the Tool as well as a Google Earth application to view the results in a map format. See <http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/cipa010313.html>.

On February 5, Cal/EPA conducted a second workshop on the updated guidelines at SCAG offices. A copy of the presentation and summary of meeting will be posted on the SCAG website within the next few days.

### **ARB Workshops on Cap-and-Trade Investment Plan**

As part of AB 32, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) has developed a Cap-and-Trade program that limits statewide emissions from sources responsible for 85% of greenhouse gases (GHG) and creates a financial incentive for clean and efficient technologies. Under the program, a portion of the allowances required for compliance are auctioned. The State portion of the proceeds from these auctions will be used to fund projects to reduce GHG emissions, consistent with State law. In September 2012, the Legislature passed and Governor Brown signed into law two bills – AB 1532 (Pérez, Chapter 807) and SB 535 (De León, Chapter 830) – that together establish a framework for developing an investment plan for projects and programs to be funded with Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds. SB 535 further requires that 25% of the proceeds that will be expended benefit disadvantaged communities and at least 10% of the proceeds expended be invested in projects located within those communities (see also Executive Director's report item on Cal/EPA Workshop related to identifying disadvantaged communities). The Department of Finance, in consultation with the ARB and other state entities, will develop and submit to the Legislature a three-year investment plan for the auction proceeds.

The investment plan will identify the State's greenhouse gas reduction goals and priority programs for investment of proceeds to support achievement of those goals. At the January Regional Council meeting, providing for equitable Cap-and-Trade expenditures for transportation was adopted as part of SCAG's 2013 Legislative Priorities. With 40% of GHG emissions attributed to the transportation sector, ensuring that an equitable portion of revenues generated from the implementation of the Cap-and-Trade program are allocated to transportation improvements that result in the reduction of pollution and GHG emissions commensurate with the transportation sector's impact in causing these emissions, is important and will be the focus of SCAG's meeting with the State's Director of Finance on February 21 in Sacramento.

The State of California has scheduled public workshops to provide input on the development of an investment plan for the auction proceeds from the Cap-and-Trade program. The workshop will be held in three locations throughout the State; each workshop will cover the same topics.

FRESNO Workshop: February 19

SACRAMENTO Workshop: February 25 (also webcast)

LOS ANGELES Workshop: February 27 (300 South Spring Street)

Further information on the investment of the State portion of the auction proceeds, including the detailed notice for these workshops is available at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/auctionproceeds.htm>.

### **Seventh Annual Compass Blueprint Recognition Awards**

Nomination packets for the Seventh Annual Compass Blueprint Recognition Awards are ready. This year's Awards Program will take place during the Regional Conference & General Assembly in May. The Recognition Awards Program is held to recognize the great planning and development work occurring throughout our region that exemplifies the Compass Blueprint Principles. Please take this opportunity to encourage your staff to nominate innovative plans/projects in your cities. The Recognition Awards are a great stage to showcase your projects and to be recognized for your groundbreaking achievements. Nomination packets are due Tuesday, February 19, at 2 p.m. For more information, visit <http://www.compassblueprint.org/awards/2013announcement>.

### **Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) Update**

On January 25, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) held a public hearing at the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Headquarters in Diamond Bar and approved the 2012 AQMP. ARB will submit the 2012 AQMP to EPA as a revision to the California State Implementation Plan (SIP). As reported previously, the Backstop Measure for the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach was not included in the Final 2012 AQMP as acted upon by ARB, but rather was reconsidered by the AQMD Governing Board at its February 1 public hearing. On February 1, the AQMD Governing Board approved the Backstop Measure, and will forward to ARB for inclusion in the SIP. The adopted measure is the same version as originally presented to the AQMD Board in December, which includes revisions to the draft final measure intended to address certain concerns of the ports.

As directed by the Governing Board, AQMD staff initiated the first 2015 AQMP Advisory Group Meeting on January 29 to discuss the development of the 2015 AQMP. The 2015 AQMP, which is required to be submitted to EPA by July 20, 2015, will include, as necessary: 1) the SIP for the new, more stringent, 8-hour ozone standard; 2) an update to the 2007 8-hour ozone SIP; 3) an update to 1-hour ozone SIP; and 4) an outlook of efforts expected to be required to meet the new, more stringent, annual PM2.5 standard.

### **GIS Services Program**

SCAG has entered into an agreement with the City of Villa Park to provide computer hardware and software to support the city's planning activities. This effort is part of SCAG's GIS Services program which is nearing membership of 100 jurisdictions and planning stakeholders. SCAG staff recently met with staff from the City of Placentia to welcome them as the newest member and we expect to offer the city staff GIS training and sharing of SCAG data and information. In upcoming months, SCAG staff expects to welcome the cities of Brea, Calabasas, Carson, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Hemet, Huntington Beach, Monrovia, Orange, Redondo Beach, San Fernando, Thousand Oaks, Victorville and Westminster; the County of Orange and the Ventura County Transportation Commission as new participants into the Program. I wish to thank the City of Ojai for hosting SCAG GIS training at city hall in early January.

SCAG staff is in discussion with the County of Los Angeles and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink) to partner in the development of regional databases, data standardization and information sharing. We anticipate that such collaboration will be beneficial to all parties. I will keep you apprised as this effort continues to evolve over the coming months.

### **Southern California Freeway Cap Coalition**

The Southern California Freeway Cap Coalition held its third meeting on Thursday, January 24 at SCAG headquarters in Los Angeles. The Coalition was formed in 2012 to bring together elected officials, planners, advocates and other stakeholders working on freeway cap concepts in Downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood, Glendale, Ventura and Santa Monica. By creating new park space or walkable neighborhoods over below-grade freeway corridors, each of these freeway caps will eventually re-connect parts of the cities' urban fabric that have been separated by these corridors slicing through their downtowns. Work of the coalition has focused on sharing planning strategies and lessons learned among the different projects and working collectively with Caltrans on policy issues related to planning improvements within freeway rights-of-way. The next meeting of the coalition will be February 20 and will feature a visit from Congressman Adam Schiff, a key supporter of freeway cap projects in his Los Angeles County district and the rest of the region. For more information contact Senior Regional Planner Peter Brandenburg, at 213-236-1937 or [brandenburg@scag.ca.gov](mailto:brandenburg@scag.ca.gov).

### **New Executive Directors for OCCOG and SGVCOG**

I would like to congratulate two individuals on their new positions as Executive Directors of our subregional partner agencies. Gwen Norton Perry has been selected as the new Executive Director for the Orange County Council of Governments (OCCOG). Gwenn Norton-Perry comes to OCCOG with an extensive background in transportation and public policy while developing collaborative relationships with elected officials at all levels and outreach to stakeholders. Additionally, as a Mayor and Councilmember of the City of Chino Hills, Ms. Norton Perry served for 10 years on SCAG's Regional Council.

Andrea Travis-Miller has been selected as the new Executive Director for the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG). As the Acting City Manager for the City of San Bernardino, Ms. Travis-Miller helped guide the City through the complex bankruptcy process. Prior to that position, Ms. Travis-Miller was the City Manager for The City of La Mirada. We applaud both the OCCOG and SGVCOG on hiring such qualified leaders and we look forward to continuing our successful partnership with both agencies.