



Executive Director's Report

December 22, 2008

STATE UPDATE

Latest Budget Plan Radically Alters Transportation Funding: The 2008-09 state budget revision passed by both houses of the legislature last week is decidedly not any cause for celebration among transit advocates. But the plan makes such profound changes to the way state funding for transportation is raised and allocated that it's difficult to pinpoint its long-term prognosis from transit's perspective. The plan would cut the State Transit Assistance (STA) Program to \$150 million (a 52-percent cut compared to the budget adopted in September), which is good news only in the sense that it defies the Governor's insistence on eliminating the program completely. It eliminates the state sales tax on gasoline and the excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel, and replaces them with a 39-cents-per-gallon "fee," 22 percent of the proceeds from which would be deposited into a new "Transportation Stabilization Fund," some of which may be accessible to transit. That's good news in the sense that money from such fees cannot be borrowed or otherwise redirected, but bad news because transit's use of these funds would be limited to rail and guideway projects. The plan retains the sales tax on diesel – good news because that's historically been the largest single revenue stream into the Public Transportation Account (PTA), not-so-good news because we all know what's been happening with PTA funds lately. [Click here](#) for a more thorough analysis of the plan – which may ultimately be moot given the Governor's promise to veto the plan since it doesn't meet his notion of necessary economic stimulus provisions, although that too may be open to negotiation. One encouraging sign to come out of last week's process: acknowledgements both personal and public from Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg and Senate Transportation Committee Chair Alan Lowenthal that more needs to be done to provide stable state funding for day-to-day transit operations, and promises to do something about it. Stay tuned!

ASSOCIATION NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Association's Lobby Day Set for March 24-25: All California Transit Association members are invited to join us in Sacramento for our annual Lobby Day. The event presents an opportunity to meet with your legislative representatives to give them a first-hand account of the importance of state funding for public transit. A briefing and orientation session helps bring you up to speed on the latest developments in the Capitol, and will include a primer on our key messaging points and issues of emphasis. We then turn you loose on the Capitol so you can make your case face-to-face. The Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel will serve as Lobby Day headquarters. There is a discounted sleeping room rate of \$199 for the evening of March 24. To receive the \$199 rate, call 916-341-3627 to make your reservation by March 3, and ask for the California Transit Association group rate.

Transit Advocates Rally in Support of Association Lawsuit: As we work our way towards oral testimony in late January, the appeal effort in our lawsuit to recover Public Transportation Account (PTA) funds raided from the 2007-08 state budget has received a vital boost in the form of an amicus brief filed on our behalf by a number of transit-supporting organizations. The list of supporters includes TransForm (formerly known as the Transportation and Land Use Coalition); the California Public Interest Research Group (CalPIRG); Urban Habitat, the Planning and Conservation League; California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.; Legal Services of Northern California and the Los Angeles Bus Riders Union. The filing of this brief will play an important role in the court's consideration of the depth and breadth of support for restoring transit funding to its proper levels. You can read the amicus brief – and all the other legal documents that have been filed to date – at www.caltransit.org/lawsuit.

California Transit Association Dues Increases Limited to Maximum 2% for 2009: Dues invoices for 2009 membership in the California Transit Association were mailed the week of December 8, 2008. **Your Executive Committee recently voted to hold dues to a base line zero percent increase with a range of plus or minus two percent.** The range comes into play as the actual dues calculation for most transit agency members is based on year over year changes in transit agency expenditures from the State Controller's annual report. **Other member categories, including Commuter Rail, Support Groups, and Suppliers will see invoice amounts that are identical to 2008.** If you have any questions about your dues invoice, please contact Meetings and Member Services Director Mary Zavislan (mary@caltransit.org).



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