



# Executive Director's Report

February 2, 2009

## STATE UPDATE

**Task Force Meets to Consider Funding Recommendations:** I convened last week, with our partner and co-host, California Transportation Commission Executive Director John Barna, a small group of transit agency staff and regional agency representatives to define next steps after last October's Transit Capital Summit. The group focused on three areas for possible action: 1) changes to the current process for planning, programming and funding transit capital projects (e.g. the State Transportation Improvement Program); 2) the need for stable and growing transit funding sources; and, 3) new transit-supportive policies. I will take the group's findings to our Legislative and Executive Committees for review and action. In the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions about the specific topics tackled by the task force.

**California at the Forefront of Operations Funding Crisis:** As part of its efforts to promote public transit as a worthy recipient of federal stimulus dollars, [Transportation for America](#) produced an [interactive map](#) documenting transit systems across the country that are either contemplating or have already enacted service cuts, fare increases or layoffs as a result of inadequate funding for day-to-day operations. The data doesn't purport to account for all such threats (updates to the map are appearing daily). Still, **of the 53 transit systems cited as of January 29, 15 are located in California.** Attempts to include operations funding in the federal stimulus package passed this week by the U.S. House of Representatives came up short, as an amendment by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) that proposed \$2 billion for transit operations fell victim to parliamentary procedures in the House Rules Committee. The final package did include an amendment by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-New York) that boosted funding for transit capital projects by \$3 billion (from \$9 billion to \$12 billion). Transit advocates maintain hope that operations funding can be included as part of Senate deliberations over the plan. Of course, the operations funding crisis in California is magnified by the Governor's insistence on eliminating the State Transit Assistance (STA) Program beginning in Fiscal Year 2009-10.

**Member Survey Details Potential Pain of STA Cuts:** Most of the California data included in Transportation for America's online map (see item above) was provided by the Association, and reflects member responses to our recent survey regarding the ill effects of proposed cuts to the State Transit Assistance (STA) Program. The data provides details on potential (or already enacted) fare hikes, service cuts and job losses faced by transit systems throughout the state. It also includes some eye-opening figures regarding transit ridership demographics, and lists capital improvement projects that have been delayed or eliminated due to inadequate state funding. [Click here](#) to read the summary of the survey results.

**AB 118's AQIP – Public Workshops Planned:** The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is hosting two public workshops on the Air Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Guideline and FY 2009-10 Funding Plan development next month. The AQIP is pursuant to AB 118 (Nunez, Chapter 750, Statutes of 2007), which provides about \$50 million annually through 2015 for the AQIP Program to fund a variety of air quality incentive projects, including low-emission vehicles and equipment projects, air quality research, and advanced technology workforce training. The public workshops will be held on February 4 in Sacramento and February 5 in Fresno. The workshop on February 4 will also be webcast. [Click here](#) to see the notice for this public workshop. Please contact Legislative and Regulatory Assistant Sabrina Means at 916-446-4656 or by email at [sabrina@caltransit.org](mailto:sabrina@caltransit.org) with any questions.

**CARB Panel to Address SB 375 Targets:** The California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC) will hold its first public meeting this Tuesday, February 3. The RTAC will provide recommendations to CARB by September 2009 regarding the factors to be considered and methodologies to be used in the SB 375 target setting process. The meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Byron Sher Auditorium at the California Environmental Protection Agency located at 1001 I Street in Sacramento. Please contact Legislative and Regulatory Assistant Sabrina Means at 916-446-4656 or by email at [sabrina@caltransit.org](mailto:sabrina@caltransit.org) with any questions.



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## Executive Director's Report (continued)

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### ASSOCIATION NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

**Executive Committee Considers Development of a Statewide Referendum Initiative:** Your Executive Committee recently hosted a joint workshop with our Legislative Committee to consider responses to the persistent State budget crisis. At the end of the full day workshop, attended by over 35 Transit Association leaders, **Executive Committee Chair Michael Burns (General Manager, Santa Clara VTA)** called an official session of the Executive Committee to act on recommendations from the workshop. The notable outcome was a unanimous vote to take a leadership role in considering development of a statewide referendum initiative to protect and enhance funding for public transit service and capital programs. Many participants expressed reservations about resorting to a public initiative but the unanimous vote reflects the deep frustration at the massive and imbalanced reductions felt by our industry. Contact Deputy Executive Director Jim McElroy ([Jim@CalTransit.org](mailto:Jim@CalTransit.org)) for a draft of the action minutes from that Executive Committee business meeting. I am now moving to the polling phase, involving appropriate consultants, to determine the public's mood and messaging for a potential initiative. The effort will be overseen by a subcommittee of your Executive Committee. Please let me know if you have questions.

**Association's Lobby Day Set for March 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.

**Association's Maintenance Committee Sets Sights on Terminal Inspection Webinar:** At a recent meeting, your [Maintenance Committee](#) voted to host a webinar to examine CHP's annual Terminal Inspections. Maintenance Committee Member **John Roberts (Deputy Executive Officer, Operations, Los Angeles Metro)** reports extraordinary success in hosting sessions with CHP terminal inspection personnel and transit agencies. The Maintenance Committee under the leadership of **George Karbowski (Director of Operations and Maintenance, Foothill Transit)** and **David Olmeda (Director of Maintenance, San Mateo County Transit)** want to extend the model to a statewide forum. George, David, John, and Association Deputy Executive Director Jim McElroy ([Jim@CalTransit.org](mailto:Jim@CalTransit.org)) will be talking this week to lay out the details for the session and report back to the Maintenance Committee. "Stay tuned" for more information.

**New Task Force to Coordinate Statewide Media Outreach:** A new Association task force has been formed, and the collective work of the group is already paying off. Comprised of Public Information and Media Relations representatives from ten of our largest member agencies, the PIO Task Force will convene bi-weekly via conference call under the direction of Association Communications Director Jeff Wagner. The group was launched with the goal of fostering a coordinated statewide approach to media outreach efforts on behalf of public transit, particularly focused on the funding crisis. Task force members were instrumental in the process that led to the [Los Angeles Times editorial](#) of January 12, and in arranging editorial board meetings with the San Francisco Chronicle and Sacramento Bee. Please contact Jeff at [jeff@caltransit.org](mailto:jeff@caltransit.org) with any questions, comments or suggestions.



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