

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 2005

TO: TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD

FROM: CANDICE STEELMAN, PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER

RE: ONE VOICE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

In August 2004, members of the MCAG Governing Board asked staff to develop a "One Voice" Legislative Plan, in which representatives from the public and private sectors would present issues of regional importance to State and Federal legislators. Interviews were held with stakeholders, including supervisors, county, cities, and various agencies, and an invitation list was developed. During workshops, participants prioritized 10 issues to present, within the categories of Transportation, Economic Development, and Water. Those issues were presented to Merced County's representatives in Sacramento on Feb. 8-9, 2005, and Congressional and Senate representatives, and federal agency representatives in Washington, D.C. from Feb. 28 to Mar. 3, 2005. The delegation came back with commitments from legislators to try to secure \$13.125 million for Merced County projects.

DISCUSSION

On Oct. 26, 2005, three members of One Voice, two staff members, and a representative from the Citizens Advisory Committee visited with seven legislative and committee staff members to learn about "bigger picture" issues facing the legislature. Key points were as follows:

- There is only one more year for legislature to suspend the funds. But already there is a \$6-\$8 billion deficit in next year's budget, so it's likely that the legislature will take Prop. 42 money.
- The average transportation project now has five sources of funding. COGs now have more discretion on how to spend the money, but it takes much more work to find funding.
- Changes in global climate will be a driver for policy this session. Foremost is infrastructure funding to fix levees. The inability of current dams to handle increased runoff will be another concern.
- The Senate Committee on Transportation is preparing a goods movement plan and seeks input.
- Cleaning up air quality emissions at ports, especially concerning trucks and trains.
- The issue of enterprise zones will have a series of meetings in Sacramento and Fresno shortly.
- The committee is looking at partnering on wastewater infrastructure.
- There is a realization that the state has a responsibility to grow the valley.
- SEN Denham presented a bill, which would allow state fairs to transition to local control.
- LNG is being considered as an alternate fuel.
- The Chief Consultant to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water asked why the legislature hasn't seen more acceptance of the ag waiver from the ag community.

REQUESTED ACTION

For information only