

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2006

TO: MCAG GOVERNING BOARD

FROM: CANDICE STEELMAN, PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER

RE: ONE VOICE SACRAMENTO TRIP

BACKGROUND

As part of its annual program, a One Voice delegation, comprised of 16 business people, school superintendents, city and county staff, and elected officials traveled to Sacramento to present issues of regional interest to state legislators and key staff. The One Voice group had previously met, over the course of several months, to narrow down the vast list of issues initially suggested, selecting 10 items to advocate. Those 10 items included four transportation projects, three economic development, one education, and two water projects.

DISCUSSION

The group felt that the trip was successful, with a highlight being a two hour meeting with three of the Governor's cabinet secretaries: Sunne Wright McPeak of Business, Transportation, and Housing; Victoria Bradshaw of Labor and Workforce Development; and A.G. Kawamura of Food and Agriculture.

Other highlights included having lunch with Will Kempton, Director of Caltrans; John Barna, Executive Director of the California Transportation Commission; and Brian Kelly, senior consultant to the Senate Pro Tem, Senator Don Perata. The group also watched a rather feisty meeting of the Senate Committee on Transportation. Tuesday evening, MCAG and One Voice presented Senator Jeff Denham with a plaque, thanking him for his dedicated service on behalf of Merced County's various interests.

In many of our meetings, it became clear that the Capitol was consumed with the three bond proposals on the table, drafted by Governor Schwarzenegger, Senator Don Peralta, and Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez. There are decided differences in philosophy regarding how to go about either choosing programs or projects or divvying up the funds generated, so people are busy analyzing which version they will support. Route 99 is prominently placed within the Governor's proposal. There's a 50-50 shot at getting comprehensive agreement on the transportation package, so that Route 99 will remain prominent.

During the Senate Committee meeting, a representative from Orange County said that voters are asking why they need a Transportation Measure when these bonds will, supposedly, generate enough money to cover the proposed projects? The answer given is that what is on the table today may be far different from what is taken to the voters, so

basing a vote for or against a measure based on what is presented today would be a dangerous gamble.

In addition to One Voice delegates discussing projects needed by Merced County, delegates were asked to provide additional information. Those opportunities for further contact with influential staff members included the following:

- Wastewater Treatment: Secretary Kawamura offered to help arrange meeting with his staff and USDA on water and energy projects. They are currently very interested in looking at research (primarily from Sweden) on how to change human stream to useful byproducts.
- Sunne McPeak requested that One Voice have a presence at SJV partnership meetings.
- Education was invited to have continuing discussions with Senator Jeff Denham and staff regarding school bond procedures.
- Prevailing Wage: One Voice was asked to identify the specialty licenses that caused most problems with this issue and report that information back to Secretary Bradshaw.

REQUESTED ACTION

For information only

ATTACHMENTS

- One Voice delegation to Sacramento
- 10 Fact Sheets for One Voice priorities