

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 14, 2011

TO: MCAG GOVERNING BOARD

FROM: LORI FLANDERS, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

RE: ONE VOICE / LEGISLATIVE WATCH

BACKGROUND

The One Voice delegation consisted of 25 elected officials, staff of member jurisdictions, educators, private businesses, a staff member from Congressman Cardoza's Merced County office and two MCAG staffers. The group had 17 meetings with legislators, key staff, and federal agencies February 8-9, 2011.

This was our seventh visit to Washington, D.C. for the One Voice group. The message we heard was gloomy due to the eliminations of earmarks in late January. Timing was not on our side as far as funding was concerned; however, on the morning of our first meeting on February 8, 2011 Merced was highlighted on the front page of USA Today for the housing crisis. This provided the delegation a visual to kick-off several meetings to educate our host(s) of the challenges that the region is faced with.

At their meetings the delegation presented the following priorities:

1. \$9 million to fund Right-of-Way for the first segment of the Los Banos Bypass
2. \$600,000 to create and sustain Multiple Career Pathways project at Pacheco High School in Los Banos
3. \$33 million to construct segment two of Campus Parkway
4. Request legislation to change the "wild and scenic" designation of the Merced River to allow modification to the Exchequer Dam Spillway – sponsored by the Merced Irrigation District
5. \$3 million to upgrade and expand the Planada Community Services District Wastewater Treatment Plant to comply with mandated federal and state regulations
6. \$250,000 to provide education intervention and gang prevention activities to school age children – BIG Program
7. \$7.4 million for Gustine's Downtown to revitalize and upgrade infrastructure to improve downtown occupancy rates and improve ADA accommodations
8. \$1.2 million to expand small business support programs through Business Incubators
9. \$150,000 to facilitate the Development of Industrial Parks for three cities
10. Support California's effort to build a High Speed Rail system

Although the lack of money was voiced repeatedly, legislators and their staff were eager to assist our delegation with grants and discuss any policy requests they may be able to assist us with.

Grant opportunities were identified through the Economic Development Administration, Small Business Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency. Policy requests discussed included No Child Left Behind Reauthorization and the Transportation Reauthorization Bill.

One project has seen movement since the visit – MID’s Exchequer Dam Spillway Project. Five Congressmen have co-sponsored a bi-partisan bill (HR 869), which, if passed, would allow the project to move forward.

NEXT STEPS

For the next fiscal year program, we will alter our strategy and assume no earmarks. Additionally, we will ensure One Voice becomes a year round process. Meetings and roundtable discussions with state and federal legislators and/or their staff are in the works for late April, July, September and November 2011.

If the Technical Review Board would like to express support/non-support of programs/bills, have specific policy requests or need direction for funding opportunities, contact Lori Flanders to ensure issues/requests are included in the program.

Staff will begin to provide the “MCAG’s Legislative Watch” monthly to the One Voice group, which will include updates regarding the State/Federal Budgets as well as any legislation that may be of interest.

REQUESTED ACTION

For information only.

Attachments: One Voice Delegates



**Merced County Association of Governments
One Voice Delegation List – Washington D.C.
February 8-9, 2011**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Mike Conway	Public Information Officer, City of Merced
Raynee Daley	Deputy Superintendent, Merced Union High School Dist.
Steve Gomes	Superintendent, Merced County Office of Education
Olivia Gomez	Planada Project
Larry Gonzales	Planada Project
Greg Greeson	Manager, City of Gustine
Mark Hendrickson	Commerce, Aviation & Econ Dev. Dir., Merced County
Gloria Keene	Planada Project
Bryan Kelly	Dir. of Regulatory Compliance, Merced Irrigation District
Lacey Kiriakou	Government Relations, UC Merced
John Pedrozo	Supervisor, Merced County
Elaine Post	Redevelopment & Econ Dev. Dir., City of Los Banos
Curtis Riggs	Owner, VIA Adventures
Stan Rodriguez	Planada Project
Lynn Schultz	Councilmember, City of Gustine
David Spaur	Director, Merced County Economic Development Corp.
Bill Spriggs	Mayor, City of Merced
Elizabeth Stone	Councilmember, City of Los Banos
Steve Tietgen	Superintendent, Los Banos Unified School District
Steve Tinetti	Tinetti Realty Group
Mike Villalta	Mayor, City of Los Banos

Staff:

Jesse Brown
Lori Flanders
Steven Nascimento