Orange County Transportation Authority

Legislative and Communications Committee Agenda
Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Board Room, 550 South Main Street, Orange, California

Committee Members

Donald P. Wagner, Chair
Katrina Foley, Vice Chair
Fred Jung
Janet Nguyen
Kathy Tavoularis
Mark Tettemer

Teleconference Locations:

County of Orange
400 W. Civic Center Drive
Santa Ana, California

715 P St.
Sacramento, California

Accesibility

Any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should contact the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Clerk of the Board's office at (714) 560-5676, no less than two business days prior to this meeting to enable OCTA to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to this meeting.

Agenda Descriptions

Agenda descriptions are intended to give members of the public a general summary of items of business to be transacted or discussed. The posting of the recommended actions does not indicate what action will be taken. The Committee may take any action which it deems to be appropriate on the agenda item and is not limited in any way by the notice of the recommended action.

Public Availability of Agenda Materials

All documents relative to the items referenced in this agenda are available for public inspection at www.octa.net or through the Clerk of the Board’s office at the OCTA Headquarters, 600 South Main Street, Orange, California.

Meeting Access and Public Comments on Agenda Items

Members of the public can either attend in-person or access live streaming of the Committee meetings by clicking this link: https://octa.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx

In-Person Comment

Members of the public may attend in-person and address the Board regarding any item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Orange County Transportation Authority. Please complete a speaker's card and submit it to the Clerk of the Board and notify the Clerk regarding the agenda item number on which you wish to speak. Speakers will be recognized by the Chair at the time of the agenda item is to be considered by the Board. Comments will be limited to three minutes. The Brown Act prohibits the Board from either discussing or taking action on any non-agendized items.

Written Comment

Written public comments may also be submitted by emailing them to ClerkOffice@octa.net, and must be sent by 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the meeting. If you wish to comment on a specific agenda Item, please identify the Item number in your email. All public comments that are timely received will be part of the public record and distributed to the Board. Public comments will be made available to the public upon request.

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Director Tettemer

Closed Session

There are no Closed Session items scheduled.

Special Calendar

1. **Conference Call with State Legislative Advocate Moira Topp**
   Moira Topp/Kristin Jacinto

   Overview
   An update of legislative items in Sacramento will be provided.

Consent Calendar (Items 2 through 5)

All items on the Consent Calendar are to be approved in one motion unless a Committee Member or a member of the public requests separate action or discussion on a specific item.

2. **Approval of Minutes**
   Clerk of the Board

   Recommendation(s)
   Approve the minutes of the October 16, 2025 Legislative and Communications Committee meeting.

   Attachments:

   Minutes

3. **Performance Evaluation of State Legislative Advocate, Topp Strategies**
Kristin Jacinto

Overview
The firm Topp Strategies provides state legislative advocacy services for the Orange County Transportation Authority. A staff evaluation of the services provided during this legislative session is presented to the Board of Directors for consideration and further comment.

Recommendation(s)
Receive and file the staff evaluation of the state advocacy services of Topp Strategies as an information item and provide any additional comments.

Attachments:

Staff Report

Attachment A

Attachment B

4. **Performance Evaluation of Federal Legislative Advocate, Potomac Partners, DC**
Kristin Jacinto

Overview
The firm Potomac Partners, DC provides federal legislative advocacy services for the Orange County Transportation Authority in Washington, D.C. A staff evaluation of the services provided this session is presented to the Board of Directors for consideration and further comment.

Recommendation(s)
Receive and file the staff evaluation of the federal advocacy services of Potomac Partners, DC as an information item and provide any additional comments.

Attachments:

Staff Report

Attachment A

Attachment B

5. **Status Report of State Legislation Enacted in 2025**
Clara Brotcke/Kristin Jacinto

Overview
At the conclusion of the 2025 state legislative session, 794 bills were signed into law by Governor Newsom and chaptered by the Secretary of State, while 123 bills were vetoed. A report containing an analysis of legislation relevant to the Orange County Transportation Authority is provided.

Recommendation(s)
Receive and file as an information item.

Attachments:

Staff Report

Attachment A

Regular Calendar

6. Orange County Transportation Authority's 2025-26 State and Federal Legislative Platforms

Alexis Carter/Kristin Jacinto

Overview

Halfway through each legislative session, staff conducts a refresh of the Orange County Transportation Authority's State and Federal Legislative Platforms to ensure updates are incorporated on relevant issues that are anticipated to be of discussion for the upcoming year. The final drafts of the revised 2025-26 Orange County Transportation Authority State and Federal Legislative Platforms are submitted for consideration and adoption by the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors.

Recommendation(s)

A. Adopt the revised final draft of the 2025-26 State and Federal Legislative Platforms.

B. Direct staff to distribute the adopted platforms to elected officials, advisory committees, local governments, affected agencies, the business community, and other interested parties.

Attachments:

Staff Report

Attachment A

Attachment B

Discussion Items

7. Marketing and Communications Update

Ryan Armstrong/Maggie McJilton

Overview

Staff will present an update on marketing programs for Orange County Transportation Authority's multimodal transportation services and programs.

Attachments:

Presentation

8. Public Comments

9. Chief Executive Officer's Report

10. Committee Members' Reports

11. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of this Committee will be held:

9:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 18, 2025

OCTA Headquarters
Board Room
550 South Main Street
Orange, California

Committee Members Present	Staff Present
Katrina Foley, Vice Chair	Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Fred Jung	Jennifer L. Bergener, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Janet Nguyen	Sahara Meisenheimer, Clerk of the Board Specialist
Kathy Tavoularis	Martin Browne, Employee Rotation Program
Mark Tettemer	Andrea West, Clerk of the Board
	James Donich, General Counsel
Committee Members Absent	OCTA Staff
Donald P. Wagner, Chair	

Call to Order

The October 16, 2025, Legislative and Communications Committee meeting was called to order by Committee Vice Chair Foley at 9:00 a.m.

Special Calendar

1. Conference Call with State Legislative Advocate Moira Topp

Moira Topp, State Legislative Advocate, provided a report on this item.

No action was taken on this item.

Consent Calendar (Item 2)

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Director Jung, seconded by Director Tettemer, and declared passed by those present to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2025 Legislative and Communications Committee meeting.

Regular Calendar

3. Federal Legislative Status Report

Kristin Jacinto, Executive Director of Government Relations, provided a report on this item.

No action was taken on this receive and file information item.

4. Draft Revisions to Orange County Transportation Authority's 2025-26 State and Federal Legislative Platforms

Kristin Jacinto, Executive Director of Government Relations, provided a report on this item.

Director Tettemer requested information on how the sales tax exemption impacts the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and Ms. Jacinto stated she could provide that information.

Committee Vice Chair Foley requested an analysis of the impact of online sales tax revenue dollars relating to the OCTA. Mr. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), responded that OCTA does benefit from it and Mr. Oftelie, Chief Financial Officer, can talk about it more at the next meeting.

A motion was made by Director Jung, seconded by Director Tettemer, and declared passed by those present to direct staff to integrate the recommended revisions to the 2025-26 Orange County Transportation Authority State and Federal Legislative Platforms and seek further feedback from the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors and internal staff, with subsequent drafts being brought forward for final consideration and adoption later this year.

Discussion Items

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, reported on the following:

- Metrolink service update on October 18, 2025
- Rail corridor shutdown on October 25 and 26, 2025
- Wave fare payment system launch update

7. Committee Members' Reports

There were no Committee Member’s Reports.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of this Committee will be held:
9:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 20, 2025
OCTA Headquarters
Board Room
550 South Main Street
Orange, California

ATTEST

Sahara Meisenheimer
Clerk of the Board Specialist

OCTA

November 20, 2025

To: Legislative and Communications Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Performance Evaluation of State Legislative Advocate, Topp Strategies

Overview

The firm Topp Strategies provides state legislative advocacy services for the Orange County Transportation Authority. A staff evaluation of the services provided during this legislative session is presented to the Board of Directors for consideration and further comment.

Recommendation

Receive and file the staff evaluation of the state advocacy services of Topp Strategies as an information item and provide any additional comments.

Background

Since 2007, Moira Topp has served as the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) primary state legislative advocate through her former employment with Sloat Higgins Jensen and Associates, and then as a subcontractor on OCTA's prior contract with Platinum Advisors, LLC (Platinum). On October 26, 2020, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) awarded a new contract for state legislative advocacy services to Topp Strategies, with Platinum as a subcontractor. Under the new contract, Moira Topp continues in her role as lead state legislative advocate for OCTA. The new agreement took effect on January 1, 2021, for a two-year term, with two, two-year option terms. On July 25, 2022, the Board exercised the first two-year option term, and on June 24, 2024, exercised the final two-year option term. This most recent term will expire on December 31, 2026.

Discussion

Annually, OCTA staff evaluates the services provided by the state legislative advocate with respect to major issues addressed and general services provided. Staff's evaluation of the services provided by Topp Strategies is included in Attachment A. The major issues and general services provided by Topp Strategies have been evaluated based on effort and outcome using a rating of excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

Staff has rated Topp Strategies' efforts overall as "excellent" based on responsiveness, advancing OCTA's positions and policies, and assisting in building cooperative relationships with legislators and members of various state departments, boards, and commissions. Staff has rated Topp Strategies' outcomes overall as "excellent" based on the outcomes of the issues discussed.

Next year, the expected focus of Topp Strategies' advocacy for OCTA will include continued efforts related to protect previously committed state funding for transit capital and operations purposes, seek passage of any OCTA sponsor bills, and engage in continued discussions about permit streamlining, SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) reform, tolling and transit coordination, and performance standards. In addition, priorities for Topp Strategies will include advancement of OCTA's positions on legislation and policy goals contained in the Board-adopted 2025-26 OCTA State Legislative Platform.

To assist the Board in fully evaluating Topp Strategies, the legislative advocate's current scope of work is included as Attachment B.

Summary

An evaluation of state legislative advocacy services performed by Topp Strategies is presented to the Board of Directors for information and further comment.

Attachments

A. Staff Evaluation of Services Provided by Topp Strategies for 2025
B. Scope of Work State Legislative Advocacy and Consulting Services

Prepared by:

Kristin Jacinto
Executive Director,
Government Relations
(714) 560-5754

Staff Evaluation of Services Provided by Topp Strategies for 2025

The following narrative provides specific information with respect to major issues addressed by Topp Strategies, with Moira Topp as the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) primary state legislative advocate in 2025, and general services provided. Each issue has been evaluated based on effort and outcome using a rating of excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

State Budget Provisions for Transportation Purposes

Effort: Excellent; Outcome: Very Good

The focus of much of the Legislature's activities and policy actions in the transportation space was related to the budget. This required Topp Strategies to take both proactive and defensive measures to protect funding for OCTA, often in coordination with the larger transit agency network via the California Transit Association. In previous budget cycles, when the State was operating in a budget surplus, the Legislature approved $4 billion in formula funding for the Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) to be used for transit operating and capital purposes. With the State facing both another funding shortfall this year, and negotiations occurring about the reauthorization of cap-and-trade, risk was present about not only these funds continuing to flow, but also funding commitments from previous cycles of discretionary TIRCP. For both the cap-and-trade discussions and budget negotiations, Topp Strategies continuously communicated with not only Orange County delegation offices, but also committee staff and leadership on impacts to OCTA if funding for transportation purposes was not continued, highlighting not only funding commitments OCTA has in the pipeline but also opportunities for future funding. This became paramount as discussions related to the newly rebranded cap-and-invest program turned to discuss the potential for earmarks. Topp Strategies ensured OCTA was at the table this year, but also laid groundwork for continued negotiations next year. Due to both individual agency advocacy and work in coordination with other agencies and partners, transit funding was maintained. However, a lot of work will be necessary next year to keep these commitments in place.

Bills of Interest

Effort: Excellent; Outcome: Good

SB 741 (Blakespear, D-Encinitas)/AB 986 (Muratsuchi, D-Torrance): This year, the OCTA Board of Directors directed efforts to sponsor legislation to streamline the permit process for work along the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor. Topp Strategies worked closely with Senator Blakespear's office to offer a variety of ideas on how this could be done, which led to the introduction of SB 741. While OCTA ultimately did not sponsor SB 741, Topp Strategies remained in constant contact with the Senator's office, remaining nimble as negotiations occurred. Due to opposition, the bill ultimately was amended to have provisions that could have negatively impacted the work on the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. Topp Strategies clearly communicated these concerns and worked with staff on alternative methods to address these concerns. Ultimately the bill became a two-year bill, with OCTA continuing to work with the Senator on these efforts moving forward.

Simultaneous to informing SB 741, the OCTA Board of Directors took a support position on AB 986 which would have streamlined the emergency declaration process for impacts from landslides. This bill was informed by the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, but would have provided benefits for the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. Ultimately, this bill was vetoed by the Governor. But the veto message provided a strategy for future incidents via the Governor's emergency declaration authority.

SB 364 (Chapter 313, Statutes of 2025): Authored by Senator Srickland (R-Huntington Beach), this bill was a repeated attempt from previous years to clarify the process by which the California Department of Transportation can approve outdoor advertising in periods of highway construction. OCTA supported this bill in conjunction with the League of Cities and several Orange County cities. Topp Strategies worked closely with the Senator's office as amendments were offered that would have jeopardized the viability of the bill. Ultimately these conversations proved successful, with the bill being signed into law.

Transit Bills: This year, OCTA supported several bills sponsored by the California Transit Association, including efforts to expand prohibition order authority on transit systems, to streamline the California Environmental Quality Act, and extend the sales tax exemption for zero-emission buses. While several of these were successful, the bill to extend the sales tax exemption for zero-emission buses became a two-year bill, essentially removing this exemption at the end of 2025. Topp Strategies worked closely with OCTA's delegation and partner agencies to get these bills passed. However, next year more work will be needed on the sales tax exemption front to prevent immediate impacts to planned OCTA bus procurements.

General Services
Effort: Excellent; Outcome: Excellent

Topp Strategies regularly scheduled meetings with legislators, committee consultants, Administration staff, and staff of various state departments, boards, and commissions to discuss issues of importance to OCTA. Topp Strategies has been responsive to requests by OCTA staff, provided timely information, advice and reports, and provided testimony in legislative committees that accurately reflected Board positions on legislation and policy issues. Topp Strategies also worked on a number of other issues on behalf of OCTA that were not necessarily contained in legislation.

Specifically, this year, Topp Strategies provided critical meetings with new and existing Orange County delegation members to discuss OCTA's top priorities including support for permitting reform, challenges related to the transition to zero-emission buses, and transportation funding. In addition, Topp Strategies secured meetings with several different administrative agencies, including the California State Transportation Agency, California Coastal Commission, California Department of Transportation, and the California Transportation Commission. These meetings proved critical to making progress on permits for emergency work on the LOSSAN Rail Corridor and highlighting OCTA's leadership on managed lane facilities.

Further work will be needed next year to advance connections with other relevant state agencies, including the California Air Resources Board, as the next stage of the Innovative Clean Transit regulation takes place, and more in-depth conversations about roles and responsibilities in the transportation funding, planning and operating space.

Effort: Excellent; Outcome: Very Good
Topp Strategies efforts overall are rated as excellent based on responsiveness, time dedicated to advocating for and advancing of OCTA's positions and policies, timeliness of information, assisting in building cooperative relationships with legislators and members of various state departments, boards, and commissions, and availability. Topp Strategies outcomes overall are rated as excellent based on the outcomes of the issues discussed.

Scope of Work

State Legislative Advocacy and Consulting Services

Reporting Relationship

The Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) Manager of State and Federal Relations and/or his/her designee will be the key contact and will coordinate the work of CONSULTANT. OCTA, at its sole discretion, may enter into more than one contract with additional firms with a Reporting Relationship of:

OCTA Board of Directors (Board)

OCTA
Legislative and Communications Committee

OCTA
Executive Management and Staff

Principal Sacramento Representative
(Lead Firm)

Specialized Sacramento Representative
(if needed)
Administration, Agencies, Majority or Minority Leadership, California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, Public Utilities Commission, Air Resources Board, Coastal Commission, etc.

Role of the CONSULTANT

Under the coordination of the Manager of State and Federal Relations and/or his/her designee, CONSULTANT shall be responsible for implementing the objectives described below.

Objectives

Objective 1: Maintain regular contact with the Governor's office; members of the Legislature and committee staff; and state departments, agencies, boards, commissions, committees, and staff to determine impending changes in laws, regulations, and funding priorities that relate to OCTA.

- Meet with members of the Governor's office and Legislature to discuss policy issues affecting OCTA.
- Meet with members and staff of state agencies on issues that could impact the programming, delivery and funding of OCTA projects and services, including the California Transportation Commission; California State Transportation Agency; California Department of Transportation; California Air Resources Board.
- Track and attend meetings and actions by state agencies directly impacting transportation, including those associated with the Department of Finance; California Department of Tax and Fee Administration; Office of Planning and Research; California State Transportation Agency, Department of Transportation; California High-Speed Rail Authority; California Highway Patrol; California Department of Motor Vehicles; California Public Utilities Commission; California Environmental Protection Agency; and California Air Resources Board.

Objective 1 Deliverable:
- Electronic reports of issues that could affect OCTA projects or funding.

Objective 2: Notify OCTA of anticipated, newly introduced or amended state legislation and proposed regulations, which could impact OCTA.

- Provide bill number and brief summary of introduced or amended state legislation via e-mail.
- Provide information relative to legislative hearings.
- Provide information on bills' sponsors, supporters, and opponents.
- Advise OCTA of proposed transportation, environmental, employment, and safety related legislation and regulations which could impact OCTA and provide copies as requested.

Objective 2 Deliverables:
- Copies of legislation, committee analyses, and proposed regulations as requested.
- Electronic notification of introduced bills and amendments, with summaries.
- Notification of legislative hearings.

Objective 3: Advocate OCTA's legislative program and positions on legislation, proposed regulations, and funding and transportation programming priorities as adopted by the OCTA's Board· .

- Participate in the preparation of OCTA's legislative program by informing staff of upcoming legislative proposals, budget forecasts, and potential policy issues.
- Assist in securing authors and drafting language for sponsor bills.
- Assist in drafting amendments to legislation and regulations.
- Build coalitions to support OCTA's positions on significant legislation.
- Testify on behalf of OCTA on Board-adopted positions on legislation at committee and floor hearings, as appropriate.
- Provide copies of all written correspondence, testimony, and position papers given on behalf of OCTA.
- Schedule meetings with legislators, Governor's office, and state departments for OCTA Board and staff to advocate legislative and funding priorities.
- Participate in transit and transportation lobbying coalitions.
- Analyze and prepare advice on the proposed state budget as it relates to transportation, including, but not limited to, identifying decreases/increases in existing programs, new funding sources, and strategies to enhance transportation funding for OCTA.

Objective 3 Deliverables:
- Copies of all written correspondence, testimony, and position papers given on behalf of OCTA.
- Schedule of meetings with legislators, Governor, and administration.
- Budget analyses.

Objective 4: Provide written and oral reports.
- While the Legislature is in session, highlight significant transportation and related issues in Sacramento of importance to OCTA as needed.
- Submit a monthly written report of advocacy activities and accomplishments.
- As needed, present an in-person report to the Board or the Legislative and Communications Committee during a regular meeting. At least one in-person meeting should occur to develop legislative strategy.
- Once per month, participate via telephone in the Legislative and Communications Committee meeting or other designated committee of the Board.
- Maintain close contact with the Manager of State and Federal Relations on issues of importance.
- Provide electronic updates via e-mail to designated recipients on meetings of the Legislature, transportation issues of importance, press releases, and other issues of importance to OCTA.

Objective 4 Deliverables:

- Written reports highlighting significant transportation and related developments in Sacramento, as needed.
- Monthly written report of advocacy activities and accomplishments.
- As needed, oral presentations to the Board or Legislative and Communications Committee.
- As needed, an in-person legislative strategy session with Members of the Board.
- Monthly conference calls with the Legislative and Communications Committee or other designated committee.
- Electronic updates on issues of importance.

Objective 5: Maintain Sacramento office.

- Maintain an office in Sacramento, convenient to the State Capitol.
- Provide briefings at office prior to meetings at the Capitol.
- Have available an office for use by Board Members and staff while performing OCTA business in Sacramento.

Objective 5 Deliverable:

- Office in Sacramento.

Objective 6: Provide monthly invoices of services.

- Provide a written summary of meetings attended on behalf of OCTA.
- Provide a list of issues advocated during the month and status.

Objective 6 Deliverable:

- Monthly invoice that includes a written summary of meetings attended on behalf of OCTA and a list and status of the issues advocated for OCTA during the month.

OCTA

November 20, 2025

To: Legislative and Communications Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Performance Evaluation of Federal Legislative Advocate, Potomac Partners, DC

Overview

The firm Potomac Partners, DC provides federal legislative advocacy services for the Orange County Transportation Authority in Washington, D.C. A staff evaluation of the services provided this session is presented to the Board of Directors for consideration and further comment.

Recommendation

Receive and file the staff evaluation of the federal advocacy services of Potomac Partners, DC as an information item and provide any additional comments.

Background

Since 2003, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has contracted with Potomac Partners, DC (PPDC) for federal legislative advocacy services. On November 25, 2024, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) approved a contract with PPDC to provide federal advocacy and consulting services for an initial term of two years through December 31, 2026, with two, two-year option terms. The federal legislative advocacy and consulting services provided by PPDC are led by Richard Alcalde, Daniel Feliz, and Adam Cross.

Discussion

The evaluation of federal legislative advocacy services covers major issues addressed and general services provided by PPDC, mirroring the process also used to evaluate the state legislative advocacy services. Staff's evaluation of the services provided by PPDC is included in Attachment A. The major issues and general services provided by PPDC have been evaluated based on effort and outcome using a rating of excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

Staff has rated PPDC's efforts overall as "excellent" based on responsiveness, advancing OCTA's positions and policies, and assisting in building cooperative bipartisan relationships with members of Congress and the Administration. Staff has rated PPDC's outcomes overall as "very good" based on the outcomes of the issues discussed.

Next year, the expected focus of PPDC's advocacy for OCTA will include continued efforts related to surface transportation reauthorization, and advancing OCTA Board-adopted priorities. On the appropriations front, PPDC will continue efforts to seek appropriations for transportation programs consistent with authorized levels and maximize funding opportunities for OCTA projects and programs. Other issues will include permitting reform, addressing cost impacts to project delivery and capital purchases, and informing transportation policies proposed by the Administration. In addition, priorities for PPDC will include advancement of OCTA's positions on policy goals contained in the Board-adopted 2025-26 OCTA Federal Legislative Platform.

To assist the Board in fully evaluating PPDC, the federal legislative advocate's current scope of work is included as Attachment B.

Summary

An evaluation of federal legislative advocacy services performed by Potomac Partners, DC is presented to the Board of Directors for information and further comment.

Attachments

A. Staff Evaluation of Services Provided by Potomac Partners, DC for 2025
B. Scope of Work Federal Legislative Advocacy and Consulting Services

Prepared by:

Kristin Jacinto

Kristin Jacinto
Executive Director,
Government Relations
(714) 560-5754

ATTACHMENT A

Staff Evaluation of Services Provided by Potomac Partners, DC for 2025

The following narrative provides specific information with respect to major issues addressed by Potomac Partners, DC (PPDC) as the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) primary federal legislative advocate for 2025. Each issue has been evaluated based on effort and outcome using a rating of excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

Appropriations and Grant Funding Opportunities
Effort: Excellent; Outcome: Very Good

This year, Congress was unable to reach agreement on a fiscal year (FY) 2025 appropriations bill, instead opting for a full-year continuing resolution. This effectively negated all pending community project funding (CPF) and congressionally directed spending (CDS) requests for that year. PPDC has been successful in having two projects submitted – the Interstate 5 Improvement Project by Representative Kim (R-CA) and the Katella Bridge by Representative Correa (D-CA). As Congress entered negotiations for the FY 2026 appropriations bill, both the House and Senate continued to entertain requests for CPF and CDS requests. As part of this process, PPDC ensured OCTA projects and programs were included that were pending as part of the FY 2025, to the extent funding need continued to exist. This included the resubmittal of the Interstate 5 Improvement Project by Representative Kim. PPDC also worked with Representative Kim to submit an additional project – the State Route 55 Improvement Project (Interstate 5 to State Route 91). In addition, Representative Min (D-CA) submitted a CPF on behalf of OCTA for the deployment of advanced transportation controllers, and Representative Levin (D-CA) submitted a request for the Interstate 5 Improvement Project between Avenida Pico and the San Diego County line. While an appropriations bill has yet to be passed, the fact that PPDC was able to get these projects included in the draft omnibus bill demonstrates a high potential for successful inclusion in the final FY 2025 appropriations bill.

Related to discretionary grants, PPDC again led efforts to secure support from delegation members for projects pursued by OCTA. This included obtaining support from Representative Levin in maintaining full funding of the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant for the emergency work along the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor. As a broader effort, PPDC also maintained continuous contact with key Department of Transportation staff to maintain funding commitments to OCTA.

OCTA Policy Engagement
Effort: Excellent; Outcome: Excellent

The focus of this year was largely on informing surface transportation reauthorization legislation, focusing on OCTA priorities adopted by the Board of Directors, including resetting the distribution of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, permit streamlining, and increased formula funding. To advance these efforts, PPDC secured support via testimony or written materials from several delegation members as part of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I Committee) input process. This effort translated to language being submitted early for consideration and helped inform a delegation letter from Orange County members to Senator Padilla (D-CA) and Senator Schiff (D-CA) supporting similar action within the Senate. PPDC was able to have repeated, direct conversations with the T&I Committee staff drafting the bill, remaining nimble throughout the process as questions came up. This direct line of communication was invaluable to allow staff a greater understanding of the issue, while also informing broader conversations about increased formula funding. OCTA had a direct seat at the table through these conversations due to PPDC's relationships. Similarly, within the Department of Transportation, PPDC had opportunities to inform reauthorization priorities, highlighting this issue, in addition to other permitting challenges such as on the LOSSAN Rail Corridor.

To further education on this issue, PPDC secured a visit from Representative David Rouzer (R-NC), Chair of the House T&I Committee's Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, and member of the House T&I Committee's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials, to Orange County. Representative Rouzer and his staff were not only able to directly see OCTA projects of significance, including the Interstate 405 Improvement Project and work on the LOSSAN Rail Corridor, but were also able to hear directly about the STBG/CMAQ proposal while discussing the potential for additional formula transportation funding.

Beyond surface transportation reauthorization and the STBG and CMAQ issue, PPDC also led efforts to secure support on a variety of policy issues. This includes letters from delegation members, such as Representative Tran (D-CA) to seek a role for OCTA on the LA 2028 Olympics Games Mobility Executive group.

General Services
Effort: Excellent; Outcome: Very Good

In 2024, PPDC was again successful in securing necessary meetings requested by OCTA to advance policy priorities. This included meetings with Orange County delegation, congressional leadership, and committee staff to discuss surface transportation reauthorization, funding priorities, and permit challenges. These meetings occurred over four trips OCTA staff made to Washington, D.C. this year. In addition, PPDC arranged for the visit from Representative Rouzer.

As the new Administration began and released several policy directives within a truncated period of time, PPDC communicated regularly so OCTA understood background on rapidly changing policy priorities. This communication was critical to navigating OCTA responses.

PPDC continued work to keep relevant offices and staff in Washington, D.C. apprised of OCTA projects and priorities, including the Interstate 405 Improvement Project, OC Streetcar, and work along the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. Coordinated messaging with Metrolink was also made via PPDC to advance policies related to funding and surface transportation reauthorization.

PPDC also worked on several other issues on behalf of OCTA, including promptly responding to questions from federal delegation members and advising on new policy proposals. This included participating in meetings requested by Orange County delegation staff and in tracking policy proposals by committee staff.

Overall Rating
Effort: Excellent; Outcome: Very Good

PPDC's efforts overall are rated as excellent based on responsiveness, time dedicated to advocating for, and advancing of, OCTA's positions and policies, timeliness of information, assisting in building cooperative relationships with Congress and members of the Administration, and availability. PPDC's outcomes overall are rated as very good based on the outcomes of the issues discussed.

SCOPE OF WORK
FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND CONSULTING SERVICES

I. General

The federal legislative advocate team will need to address a series of issues and be organized around the federal goals and objectives of the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) Legislative Platform (Attachment 1). The primary issues and objectives are summarized as follows:

1. Secure a stable and reliable long term surface transportation reauthorization bill, and annual appropriations bills in accordance with current Legislative Platform and Board of Directors (Board)-approved project and program requests.

2. Advocate at the Congressional and Executive Branch levels for federal funding for OCTA projects and programs, including Community Project Funding (CPF) and Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS).

3. Advocate on behalf of OCTA's position on Southern California regional issues in Washington DC, including the 2028 Olympics, air quality mandates, regional goods movement and rail.

4. Seek to maximize funding for all OCTA modal programs in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill, seeking to protect OCTA's discretion in the use and programming of federal funds and maximizing funding on a formula basis.

5. Seek to streamline and accelerate the delivery of federally funded projects, mitigating any impacts from federal regulatory requirements.

6. Advocate for funding of compliance costs for any new federally mandated requirements.

7. Advocate for federal intercity passenger rail funding and permit streamlining for the San Luis Obispo-Los Angeles-San Diego (LOSSAN) corridor, including recommendations for the future protection of the corridor.

II. Coalition Activities

OCTA expects the federal legislative advocate(s) to build and sustain a strong federal coalition in support of OCTA.

1. OCTA Legislative Platform

    1.1 Provide input to and implement OCTA-developed funding strategies for transportation projects including bus transit, rail transit, highway, intelligent transportation systems projects, and any other projects and programs which may be appropriate to achieve OCTA mobility goals. This can include identifying funding options, informing funding guidance, obtaining support letters and submitting applications for CPF and CDS requests.

1.2 Recommend appropriate activities for OCTA Board members and OCTA staff at various stages of the legislative process.

1.3 Provide general political and advocacy advice to the OCTA.

2. Legislation, Regulations, and Policy

2.1 Notify OCTA of anticipated, newly introduced, or amended federal legislation, regulations, and administrative policy actions which could impact OCTA and provide a legislative analysis on how such action(s) may affect the interest of OCTA.

2.2 Working with OCTA, develop positions and tactics which implement OCTA's strategy objectives regarding the upcoming reauthorization of the surface transportation program.

2.3 Provide information and advice regarding upcoming congressional hearings which may impact policies and programs of OCTA.

2.4 Attend hearings and other public sessions of interest to OCTA.

2.5 Assist in the preparation of testimony before congressional committees, recommending opportunities to highlight OCTA programs and projects. Represent OCTA before committee members and staff, including but not limited to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Senate Committee on Banking and Urban Affairs, the Senate Commerce Committee and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

2.6 Assist in drafting legislative language, and other written materials deemed of interest to OCTA, to ensure that the goals and objectives of OCTA are fulfilled.

2.7 Assist in drafting responses to Federal Register notices and other federal public comment announcements.

2.8 Assist in preparation of appropriate written materials supporting OCTA legislative goals, including letters, talking points, bill summaries and position papers.

3. Liaison and Advocacy Activities

3.1 Orange County Congressional Delegation

3.1.1 Maintain frequent formal and informal contact with the Orange County delegation members and staff to represent and advocate OCTA policies and positions.

3.1.2 Recommend when OCTA Board Members and/or OCTA staff should be in direct contact with members of the Orange County delegation or their key legislative staff.

3.2 House and Senate

3.2.1 Maintain direct and frequent contact with key members and staff of appropriate Senate and House Committees to represent and advocate OCTA policies and positions.

3.2.2 Arrange meetings between key Members of Congress and OCTA personnel as appropriate in Washington, D.C. or Orange County. Provide logistical support for Washington, D.C. visits.

3.2.3 Recommend timing and nature of contacts with the Orange County delegation and other Members of Congress in Washington, D.C.

3.3 Executive Branch

3.3.1 Meet with and arrange meetings with appropriate White House officials and staff, as necessary, to represent and advocate OCTA policies and positions.

3.3.2 Meet with and arrange meetings with appropriate Department of Transportation officials and staff, and other federal agencies, as necessary, to represent and advocate OCTA policies and positions.

III. Administrative Coordination

OCTA expects the federal legislative advocates to continuously coordinate with OCTA Board, Chief Executive Officer and staff.

1. Administrative Coordination

1.1 Coordinate all activities with the OCTA State and Federal Relations Manager and Executive Director, Government Relations as appropriate.

1.2 Coordinate with members of the OCTA Board, as appropriate.

1.3 Coordinate with other OCTA consultants, as appropriate.

2. Administrative Reporting and Conferencing

2.1 Preparation of Materials, Conference Calls, Oral Reports, Written Reports, and Additional Assignments.

2.2 Participate via teleconferencing with the OCTA's Manager of State and Federal Relations, other OCTA staff, and other consultants as necessary.

2.3 Provide on-site and in-person oral reports to the Board and meet with appropriate OCTA staff at the OCTA headquarters in Orange, California, as needed. The number of on-site reports is not expected to exceed four (4) per year.

2.4 Submit a written monthly activity and status report, including key advocacy activities undertaken on behalf of OCTA during each month.

2.5 Undertake additional assignments that have been mutually agreed upon by both parties and are necessary to accomplish OCTA's objectives in Washington.

November 20, 2025

To: Legislative and Communications Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Status Report of State Legislation Enacted in 2025

Overview

At the conclusion of the 2025 state legislative session, 794 bills were signed into law by Governor Newsom and chaptered by the Secretary of State, while 123 bills were vetoed. A report containing an analysis of legislation relevant to the Orange County Transportation Authority is provided.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Discussion

2025 Legislative Session Adjourns

Following the State Legislature's adjournment, the Governor had until October 13, 2025, to either sign or veto all legislation submitted to his office. Of the 917 bills sent to the Governor this year, 123 bills were vetoed, or 13.4 percent of the total number of bills passed by the Legislature. The Governor acted on 289 fewer bills this year than last year.

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors, legislative staff, and advocates were successful in advancing many of OCTA's interests in 2025. A detailed summary of legislation relevant to OCTA is included as Attachment A. Among the bills considered this session were the following proposals:

Status of Legislation Considered in 2025 – Notable Bills Signed

AB 394 (Chapter 147, Statutes of 2025): Public transportation providers.
Position: Support

Sponsored by the California Transit Association (CTA), AB 394 enhances safety protections for public transportation employees, contractors, and riders by expanding enforcement tools available to transit agencies. The bill extends existing battery protections to include all public transportation employees, not just operators or drivers, ensuring that all workers involved in providing transit service receive equal protection under the law. It also authorizes transit agencies and their legal representatives to seek temporary restraining orders in cases of workplace violence, harassment, or threats, and allows state, local, and transit law enforcement to enforce those orders. By recognizing battery and stalking offenses against transit employees and strengthening agencies' ability to act against repeat offenders, AB 394 provides a clearer legal framework to safeguard transit workers and the public.

AB 1085 (Chapter 179, Statutes of 2025): License plates: obstruction or alteration.
Position: Support

AB 1085 expands existing law to explicitly prohibit the manufacture and use of tints, shades, and other materials designed to prevent visual or electronic recognition of vehicle license plates. The legislation establishes a fine of $1,000 per item manufactured or sold in violation of the law, with the goal of curbing the use of license plate-obscuring materials that allow drivers to evade toll collection and other automated enforcement systems, such as those used for express lanes and red-light cameras. OCTA supported AB 1085 because it directly addresses a persistent challenge affecting toll operations on the 91 Express Lanes and the 405 Express Lanes. Obstructed or unreadable license plates have resulted in toll revenue losses estimated at more than $200,000 annually on the 91 Express Lanes alone and have hindered enforcement efforts. By prohibiting the production and sale of license plate-blocking devices, AB 1085 provides OCTA and other toll agencies with a clear legal basis to deter violations and recover lost revenue.

AB 1207 (Chapter 117, Statutes of 2025) and SB 840 (Chapter 121, Statutes of 2025): Cap-and-Invest Reauthorization and Revenue Distribution.
Position: Monitor

AB 1207 renamed the Cap-and-Trade Program to Cap-and-Invest and also reauthorized the program through 2045. AB 1207 also updates emissions reduction and cap-and-invest rules to meet future climate targets and adjusts how industry and utility allowances are managed.

Beginning July 1, 2026, SB 840 establishes a new tiered framework for distributing Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) revenues based on cap-and-invest auction proceeds. The California High-Speed Rail Project will receive $1 billion off the top, followed by a $1 billion allocation for “Legislature Discretionary” purposes. Included in fiscal year 2026-27 is $125 million for transit passes through the Legislature Discretionary pot. At this time, details regarding eligible uses, accountability, and distribution among transit agencies remain unclear.

Remaining revenues will be directed to ongoing programs, including the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). Under this new structure, transit programs will receive fixed annual allocations rather than a percentage of total revenues, meaning funding will not increase if auction proceeds exceed projections and will be the first to be reduced during years of lower revenues. Under this structure, TIRCP will receive $400 million annually and LCTOP will receive $200 million annually. Additional discussions are anticipated over the next year to refine this distribution framework. It is important to note that OCTA uses TIRCP and LCTOP funding for important projects and programs, such as the OC Streetcar, the Coastal Rail Resiliency Project, and the Youth Ride Free Program. Left also unclear is how the funding provided through SB 125 (Chapter 54, Statutes of 2023), which was to be used for transit operations and capital and backfilled by the GGRF, will be provided under this framework.

<u>AB 1250 (Chapter 725, Statutes of 2025): Transit operators: paratransit: recertification of eligibility.</u>
Position: Monitor

AB 1250 requires transit operators to implement a simplified recertification process for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit riders whose disability and level of access to fixed-route transit are not expected to improve. Beginning January 1, 2027, agencies like OCTA must allow recertification through accessible remote methods such as telephone, mail, teleconference, or online forms, and conduct recertification only once every five years for eligible riders. This change is intended to reduce administrative burdens and make the process easier for riders with permanent disabilities. For OCTA, this could mean revising eligibility procedures, updating forms and systems, modifying contracts with third-party eligibility assessors, and ensuring compliance with accessibility and privacy requirements.

SB 71 (Chapter 742, Statutes of 2025): California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: transit projects.
Position: Support

Sponsored by CTA, SB 71 extends and refines existing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemptions for certain public transit, active transportation, and passenger rail projects. Current law provides these exemptions until January 1, 2030; SB 71 would extend them until January 1, 2040, with a sunset date of January 1, 2032, for projects serving low-emission rather than fully zero-emission vehicles. The bill broadens eligibility to include maintenance activities for passenger rail service improvements and prohibits the use of Tier 4 locomotives in projects that seek to use this exemption when located in air basins classified as serious, severe, or extreme nonattainment areas. To qualify for an exemption, projects must be located within existing public rights-of-way, avoid adding automobile capacity, and comply with requirements related to project cost thresholds, public meetings, labor standards, and housing protections.

SB 71 clarifies that project cost thresholds are based on the engineer's estimate at the time of approval, not the total project cost, and authorizes the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to adjust these thresholds according to inflation. It also requires that the governing body approve the use of the exemption in a public meeting, ensuring greater transparency, while preserving the option for agencies to pursue the standard CEQA process if desired. Under existing law, ambiguity around cost thresholds and inflation adjustments has created uncertainty for agencies seeking to use CEQA exemptions. The bill also expands CEQA streamlining authority to include smaller infrastructure improvements, such as bus shelters and lighting, that enhance safety, accessibility, and transit connectivity.

SB 79 (Chapter 512, Statutes of 2025): Housing development: transit-oriented development.
Position: Monitor

SB 79 establishes statewide standards to promote housing development near major transit stops by authorizing increased building height and density minimums, and by streamlining local approval processes for qualifying transit-oriented developments (TOD).

Under SB 79, "urban transit counties," defined as counties with at least 15 passenger rail stations, must apply the new TOD streamlining provisions to designated "transit-oriented development stops." These include major transit stations and stops served by heavy rail, light rail, bus rapid transit, or high-frequency commuter rail. While Orange County does not currently qualify as an urban transit county, the launch of OC Streetcar service will likely meet this threshold, as the law classifies streetcar service as "light rail." Once that occurs, Orange County will become subject to SB 79's TOD requirements.

The bill defines two tiers of TOD stops with varying development standards:

- Tier 1 TOD stops include those served by heavy rail or very high-frequency commuter rail (72 or more trains per day).
- Tier 2 TOD stops encompass light rail, streetcar, or high-frequency commuter rail (48 or more trains per day) services.

Metrolink service in Orange County may meet Tier 1 thresholds depending on how frequency is measured statewide. However, SB 79 leaves ambiguity in how to count trains by stop or line, and further guidance is expected. OC Streetcar stops will clearly fall under Tier 2 TOD definitions.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) will play a central role in implementation by issuing statewide technical guidance, reviewing local compliance plans, and working with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to map TOD zones and their proximity tiers. These maps will determine which parcels qualify for streamlined housing development under the new law. Beginning in 2027, cities that deny eligible projects in high-resource areas could face penalties under the Housing Accountability Act.

SB 79 also authorizes transit agencies to adopt "agency transit-oriented development zoning standards" for land they own near stations, allowing them to set minimum densities and land uses consistent with state policy. OCTA currently does not plan to exercise this authority but will continue monitoring state and regional guidance. Once the OC Streetcar begins operation, OCTA may need to coordinate with HCD, SCAG, and local jurisdictions to ensure compliance with SB 79's implementation framework. This includes identifying affected station areas, evaluating local zoning consistency, and assessing potential impacts to agency-owned parcels.

<u>SB 364 (Chapter 313, Statutes of 2025): Outdoor advertising displays: permits: new alignments.</u>
Position: Support

SB 364 provides a targeted clarification to the Outdoor Advertising Act to ensure a more efficient permitting process for outdoor advertising displays along newly aligned interstate and primary highways. The bill prohibits the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) from denying or delaying the acceptance of a permit application for a new advertising display solely because a highway project has not yet been formally accepted as complete, provided that the section of highway is already open to public vehicular travel within 1,000 feet of the proposed display location.

Under existing Caltrans regulations, permit applications for new advertising displays could not be processed until a highway alignment project was fully accepted as complete. This requirement often created unnecessary delays in cases where new highway segments were already open and operational but had not yet received final administrative acceptance. SB 364 closes this procedural gap by allowing advertising permit applications to move forward as soon as a new alignment is open to the public, ensuring that infrastructure already in service is not hindered by bureaucratic timing. The bill maintains all existing safety, environmental, and regulatory oversight requirements under the Outdoor Advertising Act while aligning permit timelines more closely with real-world project delivery. By clarifying when Caltrans must accept and process permit applications, SB 364 promotes timely coordination between public infrastructure completion and private sector investment along new highway corridors.

<u>SB 707 (Chapter 327, Statutes of 2025): Open meetings: meeting and teleconference requirements.</u>
Position: Monitor

SB 707 updates the Ralph M. Brown Act by introducing new teleconferencing requirements, enhanced accessibility for members of the public, and detailing eligibility rules for members of legislative bodies to participate remotely. The bill expands teleconferencing options, allowing Board Members with disabilities to participate remotely as a reasonable accommodation without posting an agenda or providing public access to their location, consistent with recent Attorney General guidance. It preserves the traditional teleconferencing allowances that requires public access at each remote site but also extends the “alternative teleconferencing” framework introduced during the pandemic. Under this system, members may participate remotely for “just cause” or emergency circumstances, such as illness, medical needs, family care, or official travel, with limits on how many times this option may be used each year.

The bill also allows certain advisory and multijurisdictional bodies to meet remotely if doing so promotes access, diversity, or participation across large service areas. In addition, SB 707 strengthens public accessibility requirements by requiring agencies to offer remote public comment via phone or video, provide closed captioning where available, maintain accessible meeting webpages, and translate agendas into languages spoken by at least 20 percent of the jurisdiction’s limited English proficient population. It further clarifies compensation and conduct rules and mandates that all members receive copies of the Brown Act.

SB 707 takes effect July 1, 2026, and will directly affect OCTA as its Board qualifies as an eligible legislative body.

Additional Bills of Interest – Vetoed

AB 986 (Muratsuchi, D-Torrance): State of emergency and local emergency: landslides and climate change.
Position: Support

AB 986 sought to expand the definition of events qualifying for a state or local emergency under the California Emergency Services Act to include landslides. The bill was introduced in response to recurring landslides in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, which sponsored the measure to ensure that local governments could more clearly declare and respond to geologic hazards under the state's emergency framework.

AB 986 aimed to provide clarity that landslides, often triggered by sea-level rise, heavy rainfall, or coastal erosion, qualified as emergency conditions, enabling faster access to state and federal resources. Although prompted by issues in Los Angeles County, AB 986 also aligned with challenges faced in Orange County, particularly along the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor in the City of San Clemente, where repeated slide activity has disrupted passenger and freight rail operations. The bill would have strengthened the legal basis for emergency declarations, helping transportation agencies expedite permits, secure funding, and mobilize stabilization efforts to protect vital infrastructure. Governor Newsom vetoed AB 986, explaining that the bill was unnecessary because existing law already grants the Governor broad authority to declare emergencies in response to "conditions of disaster or extreme peril," which includes landslides and similar hazards. The Governor cautioned that specifically adding "landslide" as a separate category could unintentionally narrow this authority by implying that unlisted events are ineligible for emergency declarations.

SB 512 (Perez, D): District elections: initiatives.
Position: Monitor

Sponsored by the Self-Help Counties Coalition, SB 512 sought to clarify that any tax approved by initiative adhere to the same spending limitations, accountability standards, and transportation expenditure plan process that apply when enacted through traditional authority. The Governor vetoed SB 512, explaining that courts have already affirmed jurisdictions' existing authority to use the initiative process for imposing transportation-related sales taxes, making the bill unnecessary.

Summary

A report containing an analysis of legislation enacted in 2025 affecting OCTA is provided.

Attachment

A. Orange County Transportation Authority 2025 End of Year Legislative Report

Prepared by:

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ATTACHMENT A

ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
2025 END OF YEAR LEGISLATIVE REPORT

LEGISLATION ENACTED

I. Active Transportation

AB 544 (Davies, R-Oceanside): Electric bicycles: required equipment.
(Chapter 36, Statues of 2025)
AB 544 requires any electric bicycle to be equipped with a red reflector or a solid/flashing red light with a built-in reflector on the rear that is visible from 500 feet to the rear when directly in front of lawful upper beams of headlamps on a motor vehicle. AB 544 also expands citation requirements. Specifically, it states that if the violation involves an electric bicycle, and the citation was due to lacking the required equipment, the individual must complete an electric bicycle safety course to further avoid penalties.

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. While AB 544 does not directly pertain to OCTA, understanding its impacts could facilitate clearer communication with local governments when electric bicycle inquiries arise.*

AB 545 (Davies, R-Oceanside): Vehicles: electric bicycles.
(Chapter 37, Statues of 2025)
AB 545 prohibits a person from selling an application that can modify the speed capability of an electric bicycle.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. While AB 545 does not directly pertain to OCTA, understanding its impacts could facilitate clearer communication with local governments when electric bicycle inquiries arise.*

AB 965 (Dixon, R-Newport Beach): Vehicles: electric bicycles.
(Chapter 65, Statues of 2025)
AB 965 prohibits the sale of a class 3 electric bicycle to a person under 16 years of age and makes a violation of that prohibition an infraction punishable by a fine of up to $250.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. While AB 965 does not directly pertain to OCTA, understanding its impacts could facilitate clearer communication with local governments when electric bicycle inquiries arise.*

II. Artificial Intelligence

AB 853 (Wicks, D-Oakland): California AI Transparency Act.
(Chapter 674, Statutes of 2025)
AB 853 delays the implementation of the California AI Transparency Act from January 1, 2026 to August 2, 2026, and expands the law to strengthen content authenticity and disclosure requirements for artificial intelligence (AI) and digital media. Beginning January 1, 2027, large online platforms such as social media or file-sharing services must detect and display provenance data that identifies whether content was created or altered using generative AI or a digital capture device. These platforms must also preserve embedded authenticity data and provide users with clear information about a piece of content's origin and modification history. Starting January 1, 2028, manufacturers of cameras, smartphones, and other devices capable of capturing photos, video, or audio must embed latent disclosures in captured content that include the manufacturer name, device model, and creation date and time. Additionally, platforms hosting generative AI models will be prohibited from knowingly offering systems that fail to include required disclosures.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *While AB 853 primarily applies to AI developers, online platforms, and device manufacturers, its transparency and disclosure standards may affect how public agencies use or distribute AI-generated content. OCTA may need to ensure compliance if using AI-generated or modified images, videos, or audio are used in public communications, advertising, or digital media.*

AB 979 (Irwin, D-Thousand Oaks): California Cybersecurity Integration Center: artificial intelligence.
(Chapter 285, Statutes of 2025)
AB 979 directs the California Cybersecurity Integration Center within the Office of Emergency Services to develop a California AI Cybersecurity Collaboration Playbook by January 1, 2027. The playbook will guide state agencies and partners in managing cybersecurity risks associated with AI and promote stronger collaboration between the cybersecurity and AI sectors. The playbook must be created in consultation with the Office of Information Security and the Government Operations Agency and will draw upon federal requirements, industry standards, and best practices, including those developed by the Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative. It will include mandatory and voluntary mechanisms for information sharing about AI-related cyber threats and vulnerabilities and establish confidentiality protections for shared information.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *While AB 979 primarily applies to state-level cybersecurity entities, it may influence future cybersecurity and AI information-sharing frameworks that include local and regional agencies.*

SB 53 (Wiener, D-San Francisco): Artificial intelligence models: large developers. (Chapter 138, Statutes of 2025)
SB 53 establishes statewide requirements for developers of large-scale AI models, known as “frontier models.” The law requires these developers to disclose safety and security measures, risk mitigation strategies, and testing outcomes for systems that could pose significant societal or infrastructure risks. It also includes whistleblower protections for employees reporting safety concerns and preempts local governments from adopting separate AI regulations to maintain a consistent statewide framework. SB 53 further creates CalCompute, a new state entity that will provide public-sector access to advanced computing resources and support state oversight of AI systems.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA**:** *While SB 53 primarily regulates AI developers, it is relevant to OCTA as the agency increasingly integrates AI-based tools, such as ChatGPT and similar systems into its work processes.*

SB 243 (Padilla, D-El Centro): Companion chatbots.
(Chapter 677, Statutes of 2025)
SB 243 establishes new safety and transparency requirements for operators of companion chatbot platforms, AI systems that simulate human-like, emotionally responsive interactions. The bill requires operators to clearly disclose to users that they are interacting with an AI system rather than a human. For users known to be minors, operators must display reminders at least every three hours that the chatbot is not human and encourage breaks in use. The bill also requires operators to maintain and publicly disclose protocols to prevent chatbots from generating suicidal ideation, self-harm, or sexually explicit content involving minors. Beginning July 1, 2027, operators must report annually to the Office of Suicide Prevention on their safety protocols and response systems. Individuals harmed by violations of these requirements may bring civil actions for damages or injunctive relief.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. While SB 243 primarily applies to AI-driven companion chatbot platforms used for social or emotional engagement, OCTA should be mindful of its provisions when deploying AI-based tools for customer service or communications.*

III. Audits, Records, Reports, and Litigation

AB 538 (Berman, D-Palo Alto): Public works: payroll records.
(Chapter 616, Statutes of 2025)
AB 538 requires awarding agencies of public work projects to obtain certified payroll records from contractors upon a public request if those records are not already in the agency’s possession. Contractors must provide the requested records within ten days of

receiving written notice, or they may face penalties enforced by the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *The bill increases administrative responsibilities for awarding agencies like OCTA when responding to public payroll record requests. OCTA may need to coordinate more closely with contractors to ensure timely submission of certified payroll records to maintain compliance and avoid project delays.*

SB 580 (Durazo, D-Los Angeles): Attorney General: immigration enforcement policies.
(Chapter 580, Statutes of 2025)
SB 580 requires the Attorney General to develop and publish new statewide model policies governing interactions between state and local agencies and federal immigration authorities. The policies, due by July 1, 2026, must be consistent with federal and state law and are intended to limit cooperation with immigration enforcement to the fullest extent possible. By January 1, 2027, all state and local agencies must implement these model policies or adopt equivalent policies. The bill also requires the Attorney General to issue guidance, audit criteria, and training recommendations for databases operated or managed by state and local agencies to ensure that information within those systems is not used for immigration enforcement purposes, except as required by law.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA may need to review and update its internal policies and staff procedures to align with the Attorney General's forthcoming model standards by the January 1, 2027, implementation deadline.*

SB 827 (Gonzalez, D-Long Beach): Local agency officials: training.
(Chapter 661, Statutes of 2025)
SB 827 expands mandatory ethics training requirements for local agency officials to include department heads and similar administrative officers. The bill shortens the deadline for newly appointed officials, starting January 1, 2026, to complete their first ethics training from one year to six months. It also requires agencies to post online information on how to request training records. In addition, the bill establishes a new requirement that all local agency officials receive at least two hours of fiscal and financial training every two years. This training must cover topics such as budgeting, auditing, debt management, and safeguarding public funds. Agencies may partner with professional providers or associations to deliver training and must maintain participation records for at least five years.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA will need to ensure that all Board Members, executives, and designated staff complete both ethics and fiscal training within the specified timelines and* *that training records are maintained and accessible online. These changes align with OCTA's existing governance and transparency practices, requiring only minor administrative adjustments.*

IV. Employment Terms and Workforce Development

AB 406 (Schiavo, D-Santa Clarita): Employment: unlawful discrimination: victims of violence.
(Chapter 148, Statutes of 2025)
AB 406 provides technical clean-up to California's leave and anti-discrimination protections for employees who are victims of violence or who have family members who are victims. Specifically, the measure restores previous Labor Code provisions for alleged violations occurring on or before December 31, 2024, confirming those are to be processed under the Labor Commissioner, while confirming that, going forward, enforcement will be handled by the Civil Rights Department under the Government Code.

Urgency Bill – Effective Immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *Overall, the impact is technical in nature, primarily involving policy alignment.*

AB 889 (Hadwick, R-Jackson): Prevailing wage: per diem wages.
(Chapter 626, Statutes of 2025)
AB 889 makes changes to the calculation of prevailing wage requirements by eliminating the ability of the Director of Industrial Relations to grant exemptions from the annualization rule, which requires employer benefit contributions to be calculated across all hours worked on both public and private projects. It revokes all prior exemptions issued before January 1, 2026, and allows employers to take full credit for contributions to defined contribution pension plans with immediate participation and vesting. Employers must provide records verifying proper calculation of benefit credits or risk denial of credit by the Labor Commissioner.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For information purposes only.*

AB 1286 (Boerner, D-Solana Beach): Political Reform Act of 1974: prospective employment.
(Chapter 186, Statues of 2025)
Under the Political Reform Act of 1974, elected public officials are required to file statements disclosing their investments in property on the date they assume office, income received during the 12 months before assuming office, and they must file subsequent statements at intervals specified by regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission and upon leaving office. AB 1286 would additionally require elected public

officials to disclose arrangements for prospective employment. This is defined as a prospective employer's offer of employment being accepted by the prospective employee via verbal or written acceptance. AB 1286 clarifies that these requirements also pertain to public officials who are appointed or nominated.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

AB 1398 (Valencia, D-Anaheim): Workers' compensation.
(Chapter 640, Statutes of 2025)
AB 1398 amends disclosure requirements within the workers' compensation system. The bill requires all interested parties, including physicians, attorneys, employers, claims administrators, and service providers, to provide written disclosure of any financial interest when submitting a claim for payment for referred services. The disclosure must be made to the third-party payer or entity receiving the claim. Violations are subject to misdemeanor penalties, civil fines, and potential professional disciplinary action.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

AB 1510 (Committee on Public Employment and Retirement): Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority: employee relations.
(Chapter 454, Statutes of 2025)
AB 1510 clarifies the legal process for appealing or enforcing decisions made by the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) in labor disputes involving the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). Under prior law, PERB had jurisdiction to resolve unfair labor practice cases involving VTA employees, but procedures for seeking judicial review or enforcement of those decisions were not explicitly defined. This bill closes that gap by allowing any party to a PERB case, such as VTA, a union, or an employee, to file a petition for judicial review (a writ of extraordinary relief) in the district court of appeal within 30 days of PERB's final decision.

The bill also allows PERB itself to seek enforcement of its orders in a superior or appellate court if a party fails to comply and no timely appeal is filed. In such cases, courts are limited to confirming procedural compliance rather than reconsidering the merits of PERB's ruling. The measure is narrowly tailored to apply only to VTA, recognizing the agency's unique governance structure and workforce size.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *While AB 1510 applies only to VTA, it could serve as a procedural precedent for other large transit agencies if similar legislation is proposed in the future.*

SB 294 (Reyes, D-San Bernardino): The Workplace Know Your Rights Act.
(Chapter 667, Statutes of 2025)
SB 294 establishes the *Workplace Know Your Rights Act*, requiring employers to provide employees with annual written notice of their rights under state and federal labor and constitutional laws. Beginning February 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, employers must distribute a stand-alone notice outlining key worker protections, including rights related to workers' compensation, immigration enforcement notifications, union organizing, and interactions with law enforcement. Employers must also provide this notice to new hires upon employment and to any authorized union representatives each year.

The Labor Commissioner is directed to create a model template notice by January 1, 2026, and to update it annually. By July 1, 2026, the Labor Commissioner must also produce two educational videos, one for employees explaining their rights and one for employers explaining compliance obligations. These materials must be available in multiple languages.

Additionally, the law requires employers to offer employees an opportunity to designate an emergency contact to be notified in the event of an arrest or detention at the worksite, with compliance required by March 30, 2026. Employers who fail to comply may face civil penalties of up to $500 per employee per violation, with higher penalties for violations related to emergency contact notifications. Retaliation against employees for exercising their rights under this law is expressly prohibited.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA will need to ensure compliance with these provisions.*

SB 301 (Grayson, D-Walnut Creek): County Employees Retirement Law of 1937: employees.
(Chapter 749, Statutes of 2025)
SB 301 clarifies that counties and districts participating in the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL) may not exclude any employee, group, or classification from membership in their retirement system, except for those already defined as "excludable officers and employees" under existing law. Excludable positions include those deemed temporary, seasonal, intermittent, or part-time only, as determined by the retirement board, or those otherwise excluded under specified provisions of CERL.

The bill declares that this clarification is declaratory of existing law, meaning it does not create new requirements but reaffirms current obligations to ensure consistency in public employee retirement coverage across counties and districts.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA employees are members of the Orange County Employees Retirement System (OCERS), which operates under CERL. No operational or financial* *impacts are anticipated, but OCTA should remain aware of this clarification to ensure continued compliance and consistency with state retirement law.*

SB 513 (Durazo, D-Los Angeles): Personnel records.
(Chapter 654, Statutes of 2025)
SB 513 expands existing labor law to clarify that personnel records related to employee performance include education and training records. Employers who maintain such records must ensure they include the following information:

- Employee name
- Training provider name
- Duration and date of training
- Core competencies taught, including equipment or software skills
- Resulting certification or qualification

The bill maintains the existing employee right to inspect and copy personnel records within 30 days of a written request (extendable to 35 days by agreement). It also establishes that failure to provide access may result in a $750 penalty, injunctive relief, and attorney's fees. Violations are classified as an infraction under the Labor Code.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *SB 513 will require OCTA to update its internal personnel recordkeeping procedures*

SB 521 (Gonzalez, D-Long Beach): Public employment: disqualification.
(Chapter 92, Statues of 2025)
Under current law, a person can be disqualified from public employment for five years if the employee is convicted of any felony involving bribes, embezzlement of public money, theft of public money, or conspiracies to commit any of the previously mentioned crimes arising directly out of their official duties. Public employment is defined in this bill as any person employed at will for the purpose of providing services to an elected public officer who takes public office or is reelected to public office. SB 521 expands existing law to include felonies involving a conflict of interest. In addition, the disqualification expands to a city manager or city attorney position if they are convicted of any of the above-described felonies.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

SB 590 (Durazo, D-Los Angeles): Paid family leave: eligibility: care for designated persons.
(Chapter 772, Statutes of 2025)
SB 590 expands California's Paid Family Leave (PFL) program to cover time off to care for a "designated person", someone related by blood or whose association is the

equivalent of a family relationship, beginning July 1, 2028. When a worker first claims PFL to care for a designated person, they must identify that person and attest under penalty of perjury to the nature of the relationship. The bill does not change the existing PFL benefit structure.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA may need to update internal leave coordination and HR policies to ensure consistency between the state's PFL program and job-protected leave under the CFRA, which already includes "designated person" coverage.*

SB 853 (Committee on Labor, Public Employment and Retirement): Public employees' retirement.
(Chapter 239, Statutes of 2025)
SB 853 makes technical and administrative updates to California's public retirement laws governing the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) and CERL, which includes OCERS. The bill aligns provisions with the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA) by clarifying how final compensation is determined for members with service in multiple systems, specifying how absences are treated for calculating pensionable earnings, and limiting certain post-2013 benefit enhancements. It also strengthens employer reporting requirements for retired annuitants by authorizing monthly penalties for agencies that fail to report reemployed retirees or pay data in a timely manner.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA participates in OCERS and is therefore subject to CERL. SB 853 does not change benefit formulas or contribution rates but reinforces employer reporting responsibilities and clarifies how final compensation is determined for employees covered under PEPRA.*

V. Environment, Resiliency, and Adaptation

AB 571 (Quirk-Silva, D-La Palma): California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: Gypsum Canyon Veterans Cemetery
(Chapter 158, Statutes of 2025)
AB 571 provides an exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for any activity or approval necessary to complete the Gypsum Canyon Veterans Cemetery in Orange County, provided specified conditions are met, including the project location that had been analyzed as part of a 2005 environmental document. This authority remains in effect until January 1, 2030.

Urgency Bill – Effective immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes.*

AB 697 (Wilson, D-Suisun City): Protected species: authorized take: State Route 37 project.
(Chapter 438, Statutes of 2025)
AB 697 provides limited authorization for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to permit the incidental take of certain fully protected species connected to improvements along State Route 37 between Sonoma County and Solano County. The project corridor crosses environmentally sensitive marshland home to several fully protected species, including the salt-marsh harvest mouse, California Ridgway's rail, California black rail, and white-tailed kite. CDFW may issue an incidental take permit for these species only if the project meets all California Endangered Species Act (CESA) requirements, avoids take to the maximum extent possible, and includes a comprehensive monitoring and adaptive management plan that satisfies state conservation standards. The authorization also applies to incidental take that may occur during implementation of approved mitigation or conservation activities.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. Although specific to State Route 37, AB 697 signals how future transportation and flood resilience projects in ecologically sensitive areas may balance construction needs with species protections, an approach potentially relevant to long-term regional transportation planning and mitigation strategies in Orange County.*

AB 996 (Pellerin, D-San Jose): Public Resources: sea level rise plans.
(Chapter 286, Statutes of 2025)
AB 996 refines implementation of California's sea level rise planning requirements for local governments within the coastal zone or under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). The bill allows the California Coastal Commission (CCC) or BCDC to accept existing sea level rise information or plans previously prepared by local governments to meet all or part of the required content for a sea level rise plan, avoiding duplication of effort. It also encourages local governments to engage in voluntary early consultation with the CCC by January 1, 2029, to ensure local coastal programs or amendments are complete and ready for review before the 2034 compliance deadline.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

AB 1207 (Irwin, D-Thousand Oaks): Climate change: market-based compliance mechanism: extension.
(Chapter 117, Statutes of 2025)
AB 1207 extends California's cap-and-trade system, formally rebranded as the cap-and-invest program, through 2045. The bill creates the California Climate Mitigation Fund,

which will receive proceeds from the sale of additional allowances offered at the program's "price ceiling." These funds will be used for household rebates and investments aimed at reducing energy costs. It also strengthens California Air Resources Board's (CARB) oversight by requiring regular legislative reporting, scoping plan updates, and progress assessments on emissions targets.

Urgency Bill – Effective Immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *Extending cap-and-invest through 2045 seeks to provide stability to funding generated from the system, such as for the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), which directly benefit transit agencies.*

AB 1319 (Schultz, D-Burbank): Protected species: California Endangered Species Act.
(Chapter 638, Statutes of 2025)
AB 1319 strengthens state protections for endangered species and wildlife. It makes it unlawful in California to import, export, transport, sell, or purchase any fish, wildlife, or plant taken or sold in violation of federal or other state laws, with penalties of up to $50,000 and forfeiture of seized materials. The bill also directs the CDFW to automatically add species to a list of "provisional candidate species" if the federal government decreases protections under CESA, ensuring California maintains comparable safeguards. These provisions remain in effect until January 1, 2032.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *AB 1319 could affect OCTA projects that intersect with habitat areas or species protected under state or federal law. By requiring automatic state-level protections when federal standards are reduced, AB 1319 may influence permitting timelines, mitigation planning, and biological assessments for future transportation and infrastructure projects. OCTA should continue to coordinate closely with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to ensure compliance with evolving species protection requirements.*

SB 71 (Wiener, D-San Francisco): California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: transit projects.
(Chapter 742, Statutes of 2025)
SB 71 extends and refines existing CEQA exemptions for certain public transit, active transportation, and passenger rail projects. Current law provides these exemptions until January 1, 2030; SB 71 would extend them until January 1, 2040, with a sunset date of January 1, 2032, for projects serving low-emission rather than fully zero-emission vehicles. The bill broadens eligibility to include maintenance activities for passenger rail service improvements and prohibits the use of Tier 4 locomotives in projects located in air basins classified as serious, severe, or extreme nonattainment areas. To qualify for an exemption, projects must be located within existing public rights-of-way, avoid adding

automobile capacity, and comply with requirements related to project cost thresholds, public meetings, labor standards, and housing protections. SB 71 clarifies that project cost thresholds are based on the engineer's estimate at the time of approval, not the total project cost, and authorizes the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to adjust these thresholds according to inflation. It also requires that the governing body approve the use of the exemption in a public meeting, ensuring greater transparency, while preserving the option for agencies to pursue the standard CEQA process if desired.

OCTA Position – Support

Impact on OCTA: *SB 71 provides greater clarity and flexibility for projects like the OC Connect active transportation project, which is a four-mile trail linking Downtown Garden Grove, Downtown Santa Ana, the Santa Ana River Trail, and the countywide 66-mile OC Loop bikeway. Under existing law, ambiguity around cost thresholds and inflation adjustments has created uncertainty for agencies seeking to use CEQA exemptions. SB 71 resolves these issues by defining cost thresholds at the time of project approval and indexing them for inflation, helping OCTA and other agencies plan projects with confidence. Additionally, the bill broadens CEQA streamlining authority to include other infrastructure improvements, such as bus shelters and lighting, that enhance safety, accessibility, and transit connectivity.*

SB 695 (Cortese, D-San Jose): Transportation: climate resiliency: projects of statewide and regional significance.
(Chapter 781, Statutes of 2025)
SB 695 requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in consultation with the California Transportation Commission and the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), to identify and prioritize projects of statewide and regional significance that improve the state's resilience to climate-related and natural disasters. Beginning July 1, 2026, and every year thereafter, Caltrans must develop a prioritized list of highway projects that enhance safety, strengthen climate adaptation, and support the economy.

Projects will receive higher priority if they provide multiple benefits, such as improving goods movement, enhancing public safety, increasing climate resilience (e.g., flood or wildfire mitigation), or supporting electrical grid reliability. Caltrans must submit an annual report to the Legislature by January 1, 2027, detailing the prioritized project list.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *This bill may indirectly impact OCTA through Caltrans' statewide project prioritization process, as the annual list could influence future funding opportunities, programming decisions, or statewide investment strategies related to climate-resilient transportation infrastructure.*

SB 840 (Limon, D-Santa Barbara): Greenhouse gases: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: studies.
(Chapter 121, Statutes of 2025)
As part of reauthorizing the state's cap-and-invest program, effective January 1, 2026, SB 840 replaces percentage-based distributions from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) with set annual Budget Act appropriations guided by a tiered priority structure. To implement this shift, SB 840 establishes an annual expenditure plan that will be appropriated in three tiers:

- Tier 1 ($233 million) is funded first and includes one-time appropriations for the following:
  - To replace funding State Responsibility Area fire prevention fee – $90 million
  - For the Green Manufacturing Program – $140 million
  - To establish a Legislative Counsel Climate Bureau – $3 million
- Tier 2 ($2.0 billion) includes:
  - High-Speed Rail – $1 billion to support the Initial Operating Segment and Phase I Blended System identified in the 2012 Business Plan. Funding may be used for property acquisition and construction, environmental review and design, other capital costs such as track, stations, and systems, and repayment of prior project loans.
  - Legislature Discretionary – $1 billion, which for FY 2026-27 includes:
    - Transit passes – $125 million
    - Seed funding for a University of California Climate Research Center – $25 million
    - Rebuilding of Topanga Park – $15 million
    - For an entity chosen by the Legislature to support climate technology innovation and research – $85 million
- Tier 3 ($1.98 billion) includes annual appropriations as follows, if sufficient funding is available. If GGRF revenues are not available, these amounts may be reduced:
  - Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities – $800 million
  - TIRCP – $400 million
  - AB 617 (Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017) Community Air Protection – $250 million
  - LCTOP – $200 million
  - CAL FIRE – $200 million
  - Safe Drinking Water – $130 million

SB 840 also requires CARB to study carbon offsets by December 31, 2026, update all compliance offset protocols by January 1, 2029, and conduct five-year reviews thereafter to evaluate the effectiveness of carbon offset programs, including environmental integrity, verification standards, and their role in achieving statewide greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

Urgency Bill – Effective Immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *Starting July 1, 2026, TIRCP ($400 million) and LCTOP ($200 million) shift from percentage-based continuous appropriations to fixed funding targets. In down-revenue years, Tier 3 amounts, including the TIRCP and LCTOP, may be reduced if GGRF revenues generated cannot cover all commitments. While these new funding targets are intended to provide greater funding stability, previous funding cycles have not consistently reached the $400 million and $200 million levels for TIRCP and LCTOP, respectively, adding uncertainty about the state's ability to sustain these targets over time. Funding guidelines for the transit pass program ($125 million) under the Legislature Discretionary line are still unknown. At the proposed funding level, $125 million statewide is expected to have limited impact on substantially increasing transit ridership, and uncertainty remains regarding accountability measures, eligible uses, and how funds will be distributed amongst transit agencies. The California Transit Association (CTA) is expected to assist the Legislature and Administration in shaping the program's structure and distribution framework.*

In recent budgets, the State has also used GGRF dollars to backfill SB 125 (Chapter 54, Statutes of 2023) transit commitments, ensuring funds were available for the TIRCP Cycle 6 and SB 125 formula allocations despite General Fund constraints. These were one-time budget actions to maintain previously approved transit investments. SB 840 does not account for or extend such backfills or repayment. OCTA should continue to advocate for the full funding of SB 125 transit commitments to ensure stability for ongoing and future capital and operating projects.

VI. Funding

AB 417 (Carrillo, D-Palmdale): Local finance: enhanced infrastructure financing districts: community revitalization and investment authorities.
(Chapter 260, Statutes of 2025)
AB 417 updates and simplifies what the local governments, including cities, counties and special districts, must follow when creating or managing Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts and Community Revitalization and Investment Authorities, which are two tools local governments use to fund community improvements like infrastructure, parks, affordable housing, and small business recovery. The bill streamlines the process for these districts to update their plans, add new partners, and file required reports by reducing procedural steps and shortening timelines. It broadens eligibility so more communities can qualify, allows other local agencies to join later if they wish, and expands the types of projects that can be supported, including those focused on general economic recovery rather than just coronavirus (COVID-19)-related needs. AB 417 also reduces the number of required public hearings from three to two and ensures that public notices are accessible by requiring translations into other commonly spoken languages.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

AB 761 (Addis, D-San Luis Obispo): Monterey-Salinas Transit District: sales and special taxes.
(Chapter 706, Statutes of 2025)
AB 761 updates the authority by which the Monterey-Salinas Transit District may seek a local sales tax measure. Starting January 1, 2026, it may ask voters to approve a local sales tax, if two-thirds of its board supports putting the measure forward, rather than receiving the concurrence of a majority of its member jurisdictions. The bill also allows the district, with voter approval before January 1, 2035, to raise up to a quarter of a percent local sales tax even if that increase would push the county above the current two percent limit on local measures. This extra quarter of a percent would not count toward the cap. If voters do not approve such a measure by 2035, the additional taxing authority will expire.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

AB 1223 (Nguyen, D-Elk Grove): Local Transportation Authority and Improvement Act: Sacramento Transportation Authority.
(Chapter 724, Statutes of 2025)
AB 1223 expands the Sacramento Transportation Authority's (STA) powers under the Local Transportation Authority and Improvement Act. The bill allows STA to use local transportation sales tax revenues for projects that support infill or transit-oriented development, including improvements to water, stormwater, and utility infrastructure in areas identified by local governments and included in regional plans that advance greenhouse gas reduction goals. The bill also permits STA to propose a transportation sales tax that applies to only part of Sacramento County, rather than requiring countywide voter approval. Any such partial-area measure must receive at least a two-thirds vote of STA's governing board and majority approval from voters within the proposed area.

Additionally, AB 1223 authorizes STA to issue bonds to finance high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes or other toll facilities within Sacramento County. These bonds may be repaid using toll revenues or other available funding sources, such as sales tax or grant funds. Before issuing bonds tied to toll revenues from facilities operated by the Capital Area Regional Tolling Authority (CARTA), STA must enter into an agreement with CARTA and obtain approval of a toll facility expenditure plan.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *While AB 1223 applies specifically to Sacramento County, it introduces several policy concepts that could influence future regional transportation funding models statewide. The bill's authorization for sub-county sales tax measures and coordination between sales tax authorities and tolling entities could serve as a precedent for other* *transportation agencies seeking flexible revenue options. OCTA may monitor these developments to assess potential implications for local sales tax renewal strategies and regional toll revenue coordination in Orange County.*

SB 42 (Umberg, D-Santa Ana): Political Reform Act of 1974: public campaign financing: California Fair Elections Act of 2026
(Chapter 245, Statutes of 2025)
Under current law, the Political Reform Act of 1974 prohibits public officers or candidates from using or accepting public funds for campaigns. SB 42 would remove that prohibition except when the funds are earmarked for education, transportation, or public safety. Specifically, this legislation will allow local and state governments to establish voluntary public financing systems, subject to criteria and spending limits. This will require voter approval, appearing on the ballot on November 3, 2026.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes. If approved by voters, local agencies could be asked to consider participation or funding mechanisms for public campaign financing programs established under this authority. Given the exemption pertaining to funds earmarked for transportation, it is expected to have limited impact on OCTA.*

SB 63 (Wiener, D-San Francisco): San Francisco Bay area: local revenue measure: public transit funding.
(Chapter 740, Statutes of 2025)
SB 63 creates a new public transit revenue measure district across Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties, governed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Board of Directors. It authorizes a single regional sales tax measure for the November 3, 2026, ballot: one-half percent in Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, and San Mateo, and one percent in San Francisco, for 14 years.

Revenues would be dedicated largely to transit operations at Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (Muni), Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit), Caltrain, ferry services, and small bus operators, with set shares for fare programs, accessibility, and wayfinding/priority projects. The measure also directs funds to county transportation entities for transit and roadway repaving on transit corridors. The measure also allocates a portion of funds directly to county transportation agencies, the Alameda County Transportation Commission, Contra Costa Transportation Authority, San Mateo County Transit District, and VTA, to finance public transit improvements and roadway repaving projects on corridors served by fixed-route transit.

The bill requires a two-phase “financial efficiency review” of BART, Muni, AC Transit, and Caltrain; the first phase identifies cost-saving measures already implemented since 2020 and early strategies to improve service and customer experience using existing resources. The second phase expands the analysis to propose long-term cost-reduction strategies and a regional development and financing plan for agency-owned property.

The second phase and agency implementation plans proceed only if voters approve the tax. It establishes maintenance-of-effort rules, an oversight committee, and a limited adjudication process that can temporarily withhold a portion of funds if an operator fails to meet adopted standards.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *This bill is notable as a regional model for transit operating support tied to efficiency reviews, uniform ballot timing, preset revenue splits, and accountability tools. Outcomes from the Bay Area's 2026 measure, including fare integration efforts, operator implementation plans, and the use of adjudication to enforce standards, should be monitored. Monitoring will help OCTA assess potential precedents that might influence state policy discussions or revenue frameworks.*

SB 333 (Laird, D-San Luis Obispo): Transactions and use taxes: San Luis Obispo Council of Governments.
(Chapter 750, Statutes of 2025)
SB 333 authorizes the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) to levy a transactions and use tax, commonly known as a local sales tax, of up to one percent for general or specific transportation purposes, if approved by voters between January 1, 2026, and January 1, 2032. The bill allows SLOCOG to exceed the existing two percent cap on combined local sales tax rates established under state law.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

VII. Planning

AB 1007 (Rubio, D-West Covina): Land use: development project review.
(Chapter 502, Statutes of 2025.)
Under existing law, the Permit Streamlining Act establishes time limits for state and local agencies to act on development projects. Typically, a lead agency must approve or disapprove a project within 180 days after certifying an environmental impact report or 60 days if the project is exempt from CEQA. Existing law also provides a shorter timeframe for certain housing development projects, requiring a responsible agency to approve or disapprove the project within 90 days after the lead agency's approval or receipt of a complete application, whichever is later. AB 1007 builds on this exception by further shortening the timeframe from 90 days to 45 days. However, the State Water Resources Control Board, regional water quality control boards, and the CCC remain subject to the 90-day timeline due to their specialized permitting authority.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *AB 1007 primarily affects local land use review timelines but may indirectly influence OCTA's coordination with cities on transit-supportive housing and* *mixed-use developments that progress more quickly under the expedited approval process.*

AB 1275 (Elhawary, D-Los Angeles): Regional housing needs: regional transportation plan.
(Chapter 593, Statutes of 2025.)
AB 1275 modifies the process and timing for determining each region's existing and projected housing needs. Existing law requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), in consultation with councils of governments (COG), to determine regional housing needs at least two years before a scheduled housing element revision. This bill extends that timeline to three years to provide COGs and local jurisdictions with more time for data collection, modeling, and coordination with regional transportation and land use planning. For the upcoming housing element cycle, HCD must begin consultation at least 38 months prior to the scheduled revision, except for specified smaller COGs. For upcoming cycles, regions with revisions due in 2027 keep the two-year rule, while those due in 2028 or early 2029 follow a 32-month lead time. The intent is to better ensure consistency between housing projections with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) within the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: For informational purposes. AB 1275 primarily affects regional housing planning timelines but may indirectly support improved coordination between housing, transportation, and sustainability planning through the Southern California Association of Governments' long-range regional efforts.

SB 78 (Seyarto, R-Murrieta): Automated traffic enforcement system programs.
(Chapter 782, Chapters of 2025)
SB 78 requires Caltrans to prepare a report to the Legislature that evaluates current efforts and potential opportunities to streamline the processes and procedures for the delivery of safety enhancement projects on the state highways system. Specifically, this report must include a review of factors that affect the timing of safety enhancement projects, evaluations of project delivery methods, recommendations for enhancing interagency coordination and procurement strategies to streamline delivery of projects, and a summary of existing and planned Caltrans initiatives to streamline safety projects delivery. The report must be submitted on or before January 1, 2027.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA should collaborate with Caltrans to inform recommendations to be included in the report, which could create opportunities for project streamlining.*

SB 79 (Wiener, D-San Francisco): Housing development: transit-oriented development.
(Chapter 512, Statutes of 2025)
Creates statewide by-right standards for multifamily housing within one-half mile of designated transit stops, setting minimum unit counts, density, height, and residential floor-area ratio by distance and transit tier. Requires on-site affordability, demolition and anti-displacement protections, and specified labor standards. Qualifying projects are eligible for ministerial streamlining and are deemed consistent under the Housing Accountability Act. Authorizes transit agencies to adopt Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zoning standards for agency-owned parcels near their stations. Directs HCD and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to implement mapping and compliance procedures. Most provisions apply July 1, 2026, with enhanced Housing Accountability Act penalties beginning January 1, 2027. Jurisdictions may adopt compliant local TOD alternative plans.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *The bill may lead to denser development around OCTA stations and stops. Additionally, cities and counties may update zoning and development standards in response to HCD and MPO guidance, potentially altering land use and design conditions around OCTA facilities and/or creating added scrutiny on transit and rail service levels and station placement. OCTA may be consulted during local planning processes or in developing local TOD alternative plans. Monitoring implementation will be essential to ensure consistency between transit planning, access management, and development activity near OCTA's assets.*

SB 358 (Becker, D-Menlo Park): Mitigation Fee Act: mitigating vehicular traffic impacts.
(Chapter 515, Statutes of 2025.)
SB 358 updates the Mitigation Fee Act, which governs how local agencies impose fees on development projects to mitigate vehicular traffic impacts. Under prior law, housing developments could qualify for reduced traffic impact fees if they provided either the minimum parking required by local ordinance or limited on-site parking and were located within one-half mile of convenience retail or located within a transit priority area. SB 358 revises these criteria by removing convenience retail uses and instead requires the development to be located within one-half mile from three or more of the following: grocery store, public park, community center, pharmacy, medical clinic or hospital, public library, K–12 school, licensed childcare facility, or restaurant. It also updates parking limits of one space for units with up to two bedrooms and two spaces for units with three or more bedrooms. The bill also eliminates the option for agencies to impose proportionally reduced fees if only some criteria are met. Additionally, any agency findings disputing reduced trip generation must now be supported by substantial evidence in the project record before or during project approval.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes.*

SB 415 (Reyes, D-San Bernardino): Planning and zoning: logistics use developments: truck routes.
(Chapter 316, Statutes of 2025)
SB 415 is clean-up legislation related to AB 98 (Chapter 723, Statutes of 2024), which established statewide standards for warehouse and logistics developments to address traffic, air quality, and community health impacts from heavy-duty truck activity. SB 415 resolves ambiguities in AB 98 by refining key definitions, standardizing compliance timelines, and establishing clear enforcement procedures. Jurisdictions must establish designated truck routes by 2028, or by 2026 in areas with high warehouse concentrations, to reduce truck traffic in residential neighborhoods. Jurisdictions without existing or approved logistics uses by January 1, 2025, are exempt until they approve their first project, at which time routing rules must be adopted within two years.

The bill also requires local authorities (cities and counties) to post signage for truck routes, parking, and idling, and to make routing maps publicly available in geographic information systems format. Logistics operators must communicate their approved routing plans both internally and externally, though enforcement measures are no longer required as part of the plan. By January 1, 2027, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) must provide commercial vehicle enforcement training to local law enforcement, and jurisdictions adopting routing ordinances must designate at least one trained officer. Jurisdictions that fail to comply may be subject to court action by the Attorney General, with fines of up to $50,000 every six months.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes. The bill primarily affects local land use and goods movement planning but may intersect with OCTA's regional goods movement and air quality coordination efforts and provide insight on increased traffic levels on arterials and other infrastructure on designated truck routes.*

SB 486 (Cabaldon, D-Napa): Regional housing: public postsecondary education: changes in enrollment levels: California Environmental Quality Act.
(Chapter 517, Statutes of 2025)
SB 486 requires regional and local housing planning efforts to account for changes in enrollment at California's public universities. The bill directs metropolitan planning organizations to consider enrollment growth at University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) campuses when identifying areas sufficient to house the region's population in their SCS. It also requires the Department of Finance, when developing population and household projections for housing needs assessments, to incorporate UC and CSU enrollment forecasts. The CSU must, and the UC is requested to, provide enrollment projections and travel data to regional councils of governments to support the development of housing allocation methodologies.

SB 486 further amends CEQA streamline certain campus development projects by exempting the UC and CSU from conducting a “no project” alternative analysis in environmental impact reports if specific conditions are met, namely, that the project supports state enrollment goals and aligns with local transportation and land use planning.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *Increased university enrollment projections may influence long-range transportation demand and land use planning in future SCS and RTP updates. While SB 486 primarily affects regional planning processes, its integration of higher education data could indirectly inform OCTA’s long-term planning and transit service coordination near academic institutions.*

SB 586 (Jones, R-Escondido): Off-highway electric motorcycles.
(Chapter 588, Statutes of 2025)
SB 586 updates the Vehicle Code to recognize and regulate off-highway electric motorcycles. The bill defines these vehicles as off-highway motorcycles designed primarily for off-road use, powered exclusively by an electric motor that does not require a motor number, equipped with handlebars for steering control, a straddle seat provided by the manufacturer, and two wheels, but without pedals. By classifying off-highway electric motorcycles as off-highway motor vehicles, the bill subjects them to the same rules, identification requirements, and safety standards that apply to other off-highway vehicles, including registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles and compliance with existing operational laws.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

SB 671 (Cervantes, D-Riverside): Pedestrian crossing signals.
(Chapter 326, Statues of 2025)
SB 671 requires newly installed or replaced traffic-actuated signals detect bicycles and motorcycles and include leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) and accessible pedestrian signals (APS) where those local agencies are operating state-owned signals. SB 671 additionally requires APS pushbuttons or touch-free APS at new pedestrian crossings on state highway projects and mandates that existing state-owned signals be cataloged in the Caltrans management system for future reviews. LPIs must be implemented during scheduled operational reviews, and local agencies must report their implementation of LPIs at state-owned intersections they manage.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA should coordinate with Caltrans in order to meet compliance of installing these devices where necessary.*

SB 720 (Ashby, D-Sacramento): Automated traffic enforcement system programs. (Chapter 782, Statues of 2025)
SB 720 creates an optional new framework, known as the Safer Streets Program, that any city or county may adopt to use automated systems for enforcing traffic signal violations through a civil rather than criminal process. Under this program, violations are considered civil offenses that do not add points to a driver's record. Fines begin at $100 and can increase for repeat offenses. Appeals are handled administratively with a $25 filing fee, and cities are allowed to have local agency staff, not necessarily law enforcement, review violations. All funds collected must be directed to local street safety improvements instead of general revenue. The program also includes strict requirements for equity, privacy, and transparency, such as publishing a community impact report, providing public notice, and prohibiting the use of facial recognition technology.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA should monitor implementation of such programs and potential impact it could have on funding for local streets and roads.*

VIII. Public Meetings

SB 470 (Laird, D-Santa Cruz): Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act: teleconferencing. (Chapter 222, Statues of 2025)
Under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, meetings of a state body can be held through a teleconference setting if certain requirements are met. Requirements include that the state body post agendas at all teleconference locations, teleconference locations to be identified in the agenda of the meeting or proceeding, and that each teleconference location be accessible to the public. The agenda must provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the state body directly at each teleconference location, and that at least one member of the state body be physically present at the location specified in the notice of the meeting. SB 470 will extend the authorization to teleconference alongside the previously mentioned provisions from January 1, 2026 until January 1, 2030.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

SB 707 (Durazo, D-Los Angeles): Open meetings: meeting and teleconference requirements.
(Chapter 327, Statutes of 2025)
SB 707 updates the Ralph M. Brown Act by introducing new teleconferencing requirements, enhanced accessibility for members of the public, and expanded opportunities for members of legislative bodies to participate remotely under specific conditions. A key component of the bill allows members of a legislative body with a disability to participate remotely as a reasonable accommodation, without the traditional requirements to post an agenda or allow the public to access their remote location. This

codifies recent Attorney General guidance and recognizes that physical attendance can create barriers for some public officials. Importantly, SB 707 does not eliminate the traditional teleconferencing method that has long existed under the Brown Act. Agencies may still use this standard approach, which requires posting the meeting agenda at each teleconference location, allowing public access at each site, and enabling members of the public to comment in person at those locations.

The bill also recasts and extends the “alternative teleconferencing” framework that was first introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing remote participation under “just cause” and emergency circumstances. The definition of “just cause” now encompasses a contagious illness, medical or mental health needs, official travel for a state or local agency, family medical issues, military service, or caring for an immunocompromised family member. Members using this option must participate via audio and video, disclose who is present in their remote location, and notify the legislative body as early as possible. SB 707 limits how many times per year a member can use these provisions.

New rules are also created for “eligible subsidiary bodies,” defined as purely advisory groups that cannot take final legislative or financial action. These bodies may hold remote meetings if doing so promotes access and diversity, but the parent agency must first adopt findings supporting that determination and renew them every six months. Likewise, “eligible multijurisdictional bodies,” such as cross-county agencies or joint powers authorities, may use teleconferencing when members are located more than 20 miles from the meeting site, provided a quorum participates from a physical public location.

Beyond teleconferencing, SB 707 establishes extensive new public participation and accessibility requirements for “eligible legislative bodies,” which include OCTA. These agencies must offer remote public comment via two-way phone or video platforms, provide closed captioning where available, and adopt formal procedures for restoring service after an outage. They must also translate meeting agendas into all languages spoken by at least 20 percent of the jurisdiction’s population with limited English proficiency, and they must provide reasonable assistance to members of the public who wish to offer or receive translation. In addition, agencies must create an accessible public meetings webpage containing agendas, calendars, and instructions for participating in meetings. The legislation also makes several smaller changes, such as prohibiting legislative bodies from adjusting their compensation at special meetings, requiring local agencies to distribute the Brown Act to all members, and clarifying that rules on disruptive behavior extend to remote participants.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *SB 707 will have a direct effect on OCTA, as its Board qualifies as an eligible legislative body. Starting on July 1, 2026, OCTA must offer the public remote access to all Board and committee meetings via phone or audiovisual platforms and adopt formal procedures for restoring service in case of outages. OCTA will also need to translate meeting agendas into qualifying languages within its jurisdiction and provide reasonable assistance for interpretation during meetings.*

For Board and committee members, the law maintains access to the traditional teleconferencing method but introduces new, more flexible options for remote attendance under defined "just cause" and emergency circumstances. OCTA will need to update its Board policies, technology systems, and public outreach procedures to ensure compliance.

IX. Public Works and Procurement

AB 289 (Haney, D-San Francisco): State highway work zone speed safety program. (Chapter 684, Statutes of 2025)
Authorizes Caltrans, through January 1, 2032, to operate up to 35 automated speed safety systems in state highway construction and maintenance zones. Violations are civil only, with tiered fines, mandatory public notice and a 60-day warning period at launch, strict privacy rules, and an administrative review and appeal process ($25 court filing fee). Citation revenue is continuously appropriated to Caltrans for program administration; remaining funds support CHP's Construction and Maintenance Zone Enhanced Enforcement. Caltrans must publish guidelines and report annually on safety outcomes and program metrics.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. Operational impacts to OCTA are limited to project-level coordination and communication.*

AB 390 (Wilson, D-Suisun City): Vehicles: highway safety.
(Chapter 58, Statutes of 2025)
AB 390 expands California's "Move Over or Slow Down" law. Current law requires drivers to change lanes or slow down when approaching a stationary Caltrans vehicle with flashing lights. This bill extends that requirement to all highway maintenance vehicles and to any stationary vehicle displaying flashing lights when stopped adjacent to the highway. The rule does not apply if the vehicle is protected by a barrier. A violation would be an infraction punishable by a fine of up to $50.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes. This may have indirect benefits for OCTA's freeway service patrol program, bus operations, and contracted maintenance staff working along county roadways.*

AB 978 (Hoover, R-Folsom): Department of Transportation and local agencies: streets and highways: recycled materials.
(Chapter 443, Statutes of 2025)

AB 978 makes permanent the requirement that local agencies responsible for streets and highways allow the use of recycled materials, such as reclaimed asphalt pavement, recycled aggregate, fly ash, and returned plastic concrete, at levels no lower than those permitted by Caltrans in its standard specifications. Previously, this requirement was set to expire in 2027; the bill removes the sunset date, making it ongoing. Additionally, the bill allows contractors bidding on local public works projects to request written justification if a local agency determines that using recycled materials at Caltrans' levels is not feasible.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

AB 1014 (Rogers, D-Ukiah): Traffic safety: speed limits.
(Chapter 287, Statues of 2025)
Existing law establishes various default speed limits for vehicles on highways and authorizes a local authority to lower the speed limit by five miles per hour (mph) from the nearest five mph increments of the 85th percentile speed so long as it meets certain circumstances such as a portion of a highway being designated as a safety corridor or a portion of a highway is adjacent to any land or facility that generates high concentrations of bicyclists/pedestrians. AB 1014 provides Caltrans the same authority, on a highway that is not a freeway, to respond to safety concerns.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

SB 272 (Becker, D-Menlo Park): San Mateo County Transit District: job order contracting: pilot program.
(Chapter 310, Statutes of 2025)
SB 272 authorizes the San Mateo County Transit District to conduct a job order contracting pilot program to streamline procurement for repair, remodeling, and repetitive construction work. The program caps each individual job order at $1 million and total awards under a single contract at $5 million for the initial 12-month term, with the option for two annual extensions up to a combined $10 million. Contracts must be competitively bid, comply with applicable collective bargaining and project labor agreements, and pay prevailing wages. The district must prepare independent cost estimates before issuing job orders to ensure cost control and submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2030, evaluating the pilot's effectiveness. The authorization for the pilot program sunsets on January 1, 2032.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

SB 364 (Strickland, R-Huntington Beach): Outdoor advertising displays: permits: new alignments.
(Chapter 313, Statutes of 2025)
SB 364 modifies the Outdoor Advertising Act to prevent delays in the permitting process for new outdoor advertising displays along newly realigned interstate or primary highways. The bill prohibits Caltrans from denying or delaying acceptance of a permit application solely because a highway project has not been formally accepted as complete, provided that the section of highway is already open to the public for vehicular travel within 1,000 feet of the proposed display location. This change allows permit processing to move forward once a new highway alignment is operational for public use, even if administrative acceptance by Caltrans is still pending.

OCTA Position – Support

Impact on OCTA: *Some cities in Orange County have encountered delays under current practice when seeking to place signage along newly opened highway segments, even when those segments were already serving the public. SB 364 helps address these concerns by allowing permit applications for displays and signage to move forward as soon as the roadway is open for public use. The bill improves coordination and efficiency between local jurisdictions and Caltrans, supporting the timely placement of signage along new or realigned highway corridors.*

SB 809 (Durazo, D-Los Angeles): Employees and independent contractors: construction trucking.
(Chapter 659, Statutes of 2025)
SB 809 establishes the Construction Trucking Employer Amnesty Program, allowing eligible construction contractors to reclassify misclassified construction drivers as employees. The bill clarifies that vehicle ownership alone does not determine independent contractor status and affirms that employees who use their own vehicles for work must be reimbursed for related expenses, including upkeep and depreciation.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. SB 809 primarily affects construction trucking firms that contract with public agencies.*

X. Rail

AB 377 (Tangipa, R-Fresno): High-Speed Rail Authority: business plan: Merced to Bakersfield segment.
(Chapter 81, Statutes of 2025)
AB 377 requires the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), as part of its 2026 Business Plan, to include a detailed funding plan for the Merced to Bakersfield segment. The plan must provide an updated estimate of the segment's funding gap, a strategy for addressing that gap, and an assessment of potential delays and mitigation options should

any funding fail to materialize. The CHSRA must also evaluate options for initiating early service on the Merced to Bakersfield segment, including cost and schedule estimates, and assess the likelihood of each proposed funding source.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

SB 30 (Cortese, D-San Jose): Diesel-powered on-track equipment: decommissioning: resale and transfer restrictions.
(Chapter 735, Statutes of 2025)
SB 30 prohibits public transit agencies and other public entities that own diesel-powered locomotives or other rail equipment from selling, donating, or transferring that equipment for continued use once it has been decommissioned and replaced with lower-emission alternatives. The intent is to prevent decommissioned diesel-powered rail equipment from being used elsewhere, where it could contribute to air pollution.

The bill provides exemptions for equipment that meets federal emissions standards (Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4) or produces equivalent emission levels. It also allows transfers if the diesel engine is removed prior to the sale or donation. Any transfer meeting these exemptions must be approved by the public entity at a public hearing.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA is a member agency of Metrolink and the managing agency of the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency, both of which could be affected by SB 30's restrictions. The bill may influence how decommissioned diesel locomotives or other on-track equipment are handled when replaced with cleaner technologies such as hybrid or zero-emission alternatives. While SB 30 aligns with ongoing state and regional goals to reduce rail emissions, it may require coordination among Metrolink member agencies and LOSSAN partners to ensure compliance with decommissioning and resale restrictions when transitioning to lower-emission fleets.*

SB 544 (Laird, D-Monterey): Railroad crossings: permit applications: review.
(Chapter 224, Statutes of 2025)
SB 544 revises California's process for reviewing and approving railroad crossing projects under the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). It creates an "exempt railroad crossing application" option that allows projects with clear public benefits and no opposition to move through an expedited review, reducing delays for routine or low-risk improvements such as signal upgrades or warning device replacements. The bill also standardizes what must be included in applications, providing clearer expectations and reducing the likelihood of revisions. SB 544 requires that approvals for exempt projects be publicly noticed and open for comment, enhancing transparency and coordination with cities, rail operators, and the community.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes. The new "exempt railroad crossing application" process could help shorten CPUC review times for future grade separation or safety improvement projects. The bill's standardized application requirements will also make it easier for OCTA and its partner agencies to prepare consistent, complete submissions for crossing modifications connected to local rail or streetcar infrastructure.*

XI. Safety and Security

AB 370 (Carrillo, D-Palmdale): California Public Records Act: cyberattacks. (Chapter 34, Statutes of 2025)
Existing law requires public agencies to respond to Public Records Act requests within ten days, with an allowance for an additional 14-day extension in cases of "unusual circumstances." AB 370 expands what qualifies as unusual circumstances to include cyberattacks or other emergencies that directly impair an agency's access to its electronic records or systems. When such conditions occur, an agency may invoke the 14-day extension by providing written notice to the requester explaining the reason for the delay and the expected date for its determination.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes. Provides limited schedule flexibility for CPRA responses when a cyber incident or qualifying emergency directly affects OCTA's ability to access electronic records.*

AB 382 (Berman, D-Palo Alto): Pedestrian safety: school zones: speed limits. (Chapter 555, Statues of 2025)
Under current law, a prima facie speed limit of 25 mph is enforced when in proximity to school buildings and/or grounds. AB 382 reduces the prima facie speed limit to 20 mph in a school zone, which is defined as an area of a highway within 500 feet of school grounds in any direction, beginning January 1, 2031. This will apply under any of the following conditions: when a school speed limit sign has flashing beacons, states children are present or is limited to specified hours. AB 382 also maintains local authorities' ability to set speed limits as low as 15 mph in residential districts near schools and 25 mph when approaching school zones from 500 to 1,000 feet away, without prior restrictions.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. OCTA bus drivers adhere to all posted speed limits regardless of location.*

AB 394 (Wilson, D-Suisun City): Public transportation providers.
(Chapter 147, Statutes of 2025)
AB 394 expands who is protected when assaults happen in and around public transit. Statute already includes provisions for battery against bus and rail operators and their passengers. This bill extends those protections to any employee or contractor of a public transportation provider (as well as the provider itself), so assaults on mechanics, cleaners, fare inspectors, station agents, contracted security, etc., can carry the same enhanced penalties, with offenses punishable by up to one year in county jail and a fine of up to $10,000. The bill also tightens the workplace-violence restraining order statute so transit agencies (including joint powers authorities) statewide and collective bargaining representatives can more clearly seek temporary restraining orders and longer injunctions on behalf of workers when there's harassment, threats, stalking, or battery tied to the workplace.

OCTA Position – Support

Impact on OCTA: *AB 394 gives OCTA stronger tools to protect its workforce and riders. First, more OCTA personnel and contractors are explicitly covered by the higher criminal penalties for battery on transit, which should improve deterrence and help law enforcement and prosecutors charge these cases appropriately. Second, it clarifies OCTA's standing, as an employer and as a transit operator, to seek workplace violence restraining orders when a repeat offender targets our system or staff, allowing OCTA and labor representatives to act faster and with clearer legal footing.*

AB 438 (Hadwick, R-Jackson): Authorized emergency vehicles.
(Chapter 152, Statutes of 2025)
AB 438 expands the authority of the CHP Commissioner to issue authorized emergency vehicle permits. Under prior law, permits could only be issued for certain vehicles used for emergency response, such as those owned by fire departments, public utilities, or police agencies. This bill adds vehicles owned by county, city, or city-and-county offices of emergency services to the list of eligible vehicles, allowing them to operate as authorized emergency vehicles when used by public employees responding to disasters.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

AB 440 (Ramos, D-San Bernardino): State bridges and overpasses: suicide prevention.
(Chapter 262, Statutes of 2025)
AB 440 requires Caltrans, by July 1, 2028, to identify best practices for suicide deterrent measures on state bridges and overpasses, considering input from local jurisdictions and to consult with the California Department of Public Health, behavioral health experts, and other stakeholders.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA may be asked to provide input as part of Caltrans' consultation process and could incorporate identified best practices into future infrastructure projects where appropriate.*

SB 446 (Hurtado, D-Bakersfield): Data breaches: customer notification.
(Chapter 319, Statues of 2025)
Under current law, individuals and/or businesses that conduct business in California, of which owns or licenses computerized data that includes personal data, are to disclose breach of security systems following discovery or notification of the breach of the data to a resident of California whose unencrypted personal information was compromised without unreasonable delay. SB 446 requires such data breach disclosures to be made within 30 calendar days of a breach discovery or notification. However, SB 446 further authorizes individuals and/or businesses to delay disclosure to accommodate the needs of law enforcement if necessary.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA should ensure in case of a data breach appropriate notice be provided within 30 days of discovery to all OCTA customers, as applicable.*

XII. State Budget

AB 104 (Gabriel, D-Encino): Budget Act of 2025.
(Chapter 77, Statutes of 2025)
AB 104 serves as a follow-up to the fiscal year 2025–26 budget bill, amending various provisions to appropriate additional funds and make technical adjustments.

A particularly notable provision of AB 104 authorizes up to $1.75 billion in state general fund loans to local entities, split as follows:

- Up to $1 billion for eligible local entities within Los Angeles County, including the County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Office of Education, cities, special districts, school districts, and community college districts, to support public recovery and rebuilding efforts related to the January 2025 wildfires.
- Up to $750 million for transit operators outside Los Angeles County, specifically including the BART, Muni, Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, and AC Transit. These loans are intended to sustain transit operations during the state's fiscal realignment period and are contingent upon the enactment of future legislation establishing loan terms and repayment mechanisms.

Under AB 104, these loans must be fully repaid under clearly defined repayment schedules with guaranteed mechanisms to ensure repayment, such as future fare revenue or a regionally approved funding measure. The bill also specifies that the loan authority for Bay Area transit operators becomes operative only if future legislation enacts a long-term regional funding measure to stabilize transit operations and improve financial sustainability.

Urgency Bill – Effective Immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *AB 104 provides insight into the State's broader strategy to address regional transportation and transit funding shortfalls through temporary state-backed loan programs and potential regional revenue measures. While OCTA is not directly included among the eligible entities, the precedent set by these emergency loans could shape future statewide transit stabilization efforts and funding models. OCTA will monitor subsequent budget trailer legislation for potential inclusion of Southern California transit entities or additional funding provisions that could influence regional transportation coordination, capital project financing, or emergency recovery resources.*

AB 149 (Committee on Budget): Public resources trailer bill.
(Chapter 106, Statutes of 2025)
AB 149 makes a broad set of public resources policy changes. For the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games (Games) delivery, AB 149 refines environmental streamlining. Activities tied to bidding, hosting/staging, and funding the Games remain exempt from CEQA. The bill adds a targeted CEQA exemption for temporary facilities that are fully removed and sites restored within six months after the Games. It requires public notice of confirmed competition venue location changes and clarifies that other applicable protections, such as sensitive habitat, still apply. Separately, temporary Games developments along the coast are deemed "temporary events" and exempt from local coastal development permits through December 31, 2028, with an expectation to avoid and minimize coastal resource impacts where feasible.

Urgency Bill – Effective Immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *The 2028 Games provisions could affect OCTA's special event planning and regional coordination. This is particularly important to monitor as Orange County has two Games venue locations, the Honda Center in the City of Anaheim and Trestles Beach in the City of San Clemente/San Onofre State Beach in San Diego County.*

SB 105 (Wiener, D-San Francisco): Budget Acts of 2021, 2023, 2024, and 2025.
(Chapter 104, Statutes of 2025)
SB 105 serves as the Budget Bill Jr. for the 2025-26 fiscal year, making adjustments and supplemental appropriations to the main Budget Act of 2025. The bill includes key provisions that directly impact transit funding and commitments made in previous budget negotiations.

SB 105 appropriates $368 million from the GGRF to CalSTA for the TIRCP. Of this amount, $180 million is dedicated to Cycle 6 of the competitive TIRCP, and $188 million is allocated to the Formula TIRCP established by SB 125.

SB 105 also extends until January 10, 2026, the timeframe for the State to consider a general fund loan or other financing options to provide short-term financial assistance to local transit agencies in the Bay Area, for possible inclusion in the fiscal year 2026–27 Governor's Budget. The bill clarifies that any such financial assistance must include full repayment of the principal, an applicable interest rate, a defined repayment schedule, and a guaranteed repayment mechanism to ensure fiscal accountability. This provision builds upon direction established in the 2025 Budget Act, which first authorized the state to explore temporary financial support for transit operators facing post-pandemic revenue challenges.

Urgency Bill – Effective Immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *SB 105 reinforces the state's commitment to ongoing public transit investments through the continued allocation of TIRCP and Formula TIRCP funding, which remain key sources of capital support for major transit agencies across California. These funds will help maintain funding commitments OCTA has made for zero-emission bus infrastructure, rail modernization, and other emission-reduction initiatives. The extension of the Bay Area transit loan framework does not directly apply to OCTA but reflects the state's broader consideration of strategies to stabilize local transit systems. This policy direction may inform future discussions about financial assistance or recovery mechanisms for Southern California transit operators.*

SB 128 (Committee on Budget & Fiscal Review): Transportation.
(Chapter 16, Statutes of 2025)
SB 128 enacts technical and programmatic adjustments across transportation and driver licensing programs while also including key provisions related to planning for the Games. Specifically, for the Games, SB 128 temporarily authorizes Caltrans and local agencies to dedicate exclusive or preferential use of High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), HOT, and other lanes to vehicles displaying a distinctive decal or identifier issued by the Games' organizing committee. These decals will designate vehicles operating on the Games Route Network (GRN) to facilitate safe and efficient travel for athletes, officials, and support personnel. Caltrans and the CHP will jointly approve the design and issuance of the decals, which will be valid only during the designated Games period.

The bill appropriates $1,000 from the State Highway Account to Caltrans to fund projects in support of the GRN and authorizes the Department of Finance to increase this amount by up to $20 million upon legislative notification to fund Games-related transportation projects and lane-management activities.

Urgency Bill – Effective Immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *SB 128 provides the State with enhanced administrative and operational flexibility ahead of the 2028 Games, which are expected to influence traffic operations across Southern California. OCTA will be directly affected by the creation of the GRN, particularly when managed-lane reassignments intersect with Orange County freeways, express lanes, or HOV lanes. OCTA will coordinate with Caltrans, LA28, and regional transportation partners on implementation.*

SB 153 (Committee on Budget & Fiscal Review): Transportation Budget Trailer Bill. (Chapter 109, Statutes of 2025)
SB 153 serves as the transportation budget trailer bill and makes a series of statutory and budget-related changes to transportation and regulatory programs. Among other provisions, this bill:

- Includes a technical clean-up amendment to clarify that the hold harmless provision, which uses pre-COVID-19 revenue numbers for calculation purposes, continues to apply to LCTOP, just as it does to the State Transit Assistance and State of Good Repair programs. Although Caltrans has been implementing the hold harmless provision for LCTOP as intended, this amendment formally codifies that intent and ensures no changes to current funding disbursement practices.
- Grants the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) and other public operators under contract with LA Metro temporary authority to provide charter bus service for the 2026 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup in Los Angeles County, under conditions ensuring fair competition and adherence to labor agreements.
- Grants similar temporary charter authority to Bay Area transit operators, including VTA and others providing service within the greater San Francisco Bay Area, for the same 2026 FIFA World Cup period.
- Appropriates $132.175 million from the Air Pollution Control Fund for CARB's Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project, exempting program guidelines from the Administrative Procedure Act to expedite deployment.

Urgency Bill – Effective Immediately

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *SB 153 ensures administrative clarity and continuity for LCTOP, preserving the hold harmless provision that protects OCTA's LCTOP allocations from year-over-year volatility in statewide revenue collections. The bill results in no changes to OCTA's expected disbursements or reporting obligations. Other provisions, such as the temporary 2026 FIFA World Cup charter authorities, are localized and not directly* *applicable to Orange County, though OCTA should monitor statewide implementation for precedent or administrative changes relevant to regional transit coordination.*

XIII. Tolling

AB 1085 (Stefani, D-San Francisco): License plates: obstruction or alteration. (Chapter 179, Statutes of 2025)
AB 1085 expands current law to explicitly prohibit the production and use of items such as tints, shades, and other materials designed to prevent visual or electronic recognition of license plates. The legislation establishes a fine of $1,000 per item manufactured or sold in violation of the law. Its purpose is to curb the use of license plate-obscuring materials that allow drivers to evade toll collection and other automated enforcement systems, such as those used for express lanes and red-light cameras.

OCTA Position – Support

Impact on OCTA: *AB 1085 directly addresses a persistent challenge affecting toll operations on the 91 Express Lanes and the 405 Express Lanes. Obstructed or unreadable license plates have caused toll revenue losses, estimated at more than $200,000 annually for the 91 Express Lanes alone, and hinder enforcement efforts. By prohibiting the production and sale of license plate–blocking devices, AB 1085 provides OCTA and other toll agencies with a clear legal basis to deter violations and recover lost revenue. It also assists law enforcement in investigations where vehicle identification is essential, such as hit-and-run incidents.*

AB 1114 (Avila Farias, D-Concord): Emergency vehicles: fee and toll exemptions. (Chapter 87, Statutes of 2025)
Under existing law, an emergency vehicle displaying public agency identification, such as fire department, sheriff, or police are exempt from paying tolls so long as they provide documentation to the toll facility that it was responding to an emergency or enter into agreements establishing procedures for exempt travel. AB 1114 extends this exemption to private ambulances when they are responding to or returning from emergency calls if proper procedures are followed as aforementioned. It specified that an ambulance corporation chief executive would be authorized to certify emergency use of such toll facilities.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA should be aware that private ambulance companies may request to enter into agreements to operate in the 91 or 405 Express Lanes and be exempt from paying the toll.*

XIV. Transit

AB 1250 (Papan, D-San Mateo): Transit operators: paratransit: recertification of eligibility.
(Chapter 725, Statutes of 2025)
AB 1250 requires all public transit operators that provide paratransit services and receive Transportation Development Act funding, by January 1, 2027, to create a streamlined process for recertifying the eligibility of individuals with permanent disabilities. The streamlined process must allow recertification by telephone, mail, teleconference, or online submission and may only request basic verification information, such as contact details, mobility device updates, and any changes in disability status. Recertification for eligible riders will occur every five years.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *This bill will require OCTA and other transit operators to adjust their paratransit eligibility recertification procedures to comply with new state standards. OCTA's OC ACCESS eligibility process may need to be modified to include a streamlined option for riders with permanent disabilities, potentially reducing administrative burdens and improving customer convenience. Implementation will likely require updates to eligibility forms, recordkeeping systems, and staff training prior to the 2027 compliance deadline.*

SB 359 (Niello, R-Rancho Cordova): Use fuel tax law: diesel fuel tax law: exempt bus operation.
(Chapter 217, Statutes of 2025)
Under current law, public transit operators like transit districts, authorities, or cities are exempt from diesel and use-fuel taxes for their bus operations. SB 359 expands that exemption to include counties that own and operate a local transit system.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes. The intent of this bill was to ensure this exemption could be used by Placer County.*

XV. Transportation Electrification/Energy

AB 1423 (Irwin, D-Thousand Oaks): Transportation electrification: electric vehicle charging stations: payment methods.
(Chapter 192, Statutes of 2025)
Under existing law, electric vehicle charging stations that charge a fee cannot require users to pay a subscription or hold a membership, though they may offer such programs if nonsubscribers can pay via contactless credit/debit card and either a toll-free number or short message system option. Previously, the California Energy Commission could not change these payment requirements until 2028. AB 1423 removes that requirement,

allowing the Commission to modify, add to, or remove accepted payment methods sooner, as needed to reflect new technologies or cost considerations.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes.*

SB 237 (Grayson, D-Walnut Creek): Oil spill prevention: gasoline specifications: suspension: California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: County of Kern: transportation fuels assessment: coastal resources.
(Chapter 118, Statutes of 2025)
SB 237 makes several changes to oil spill prevention, pipeline safety, and environmental review, and includes provisions affecting California's transportation fuel supply. The bill authorizes the Governor, in consultation with CARB and the California Energy Commission (CEC), to temporarily suspend seasonal gasoline volatility limits when fuel prices spike, allowing higher-volatility gasoline to stabilize supply. It also directs the CEC to evaluate the cost, supply, and feasibility of alternative fuel specifications and explore a potential regional "westwide" fuel standard for western states.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *The transportation fuel provisions in SB 237 could affect statewide fuel supply and pricing, which directly influence OCTA's fuel costs for operations. The CEC's forthcoming assessment of alternative fuel specifications and a potential regional fuel standard could also affect long-term pricing and availability of transportation fuels.*

XVI. Other Legislation

AB 875 (Muratsuchi, D-Torrance): Vehicle removal.
(Chapter 168, Statues of 2025)
AB 875 expands peace officers and/or traffic enforcement employee's authority in cases of removing a vehicle by authorizing officers to tow vehicles with fewer than four wheels if it can exceed over 20 mph with the assistance of an electric motor and is operated by an unlicensed driver. AB 875 also allows officers to remove a vehicle if it is a Class 3 electric bicycle that is ridden by someone under the age of 16. AB 875 also permits local governments to charge fees covering administrative and storage costs related to removing these vehicles. Vehicles must be returned to their owners after at least 48 hours if certain conditions, including payment of costs, are met. Further conditions include that, if a peace officer removes a vehicle, the agency can require proof that the violator completed an electric bicycle safety course before releasing it.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only. While AB 875 does not directly pertain to OCTA, understanding its impacts could facilitate clearer communication with local governments when electric bicycle inquiries arise.*

AB 1340 (Wicks, D-Oakland): Transportation network company drivers: labor relations.
(Chapter 335, Statutes of 2025)
AB 1340 establishes the Transportation Network Company Drivers Labor Relations Act, creating a new framework that allows application-based drivers for companies such as Uber and Lyft to organize and bargain collectively over pay, benefits, safety, and working conditions. The law gives drivers the right to select a representative to negotiate directly with companies through a formal, state-supervised process. PERB oversees this system, handling elections, bargaining procedures, unfair labor practices, and approval of industrywide “sectoral agreements” that set minimum standards across the transport network companies (TNC) industry. The law preserves drivers’ status as independent contractors under Proposition 22 (2020) and prohibits any agreement from reducing the minimum pay or benefits already guaranteed by that measure.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *OCTA may wish to monitor the implementation of this law and any early agreements for potential effects on first- and last-mile programs, Mobility-as-a-Service pilots, and partnerships.*

AB 1141 (Lee, D-Milpitas): Contra Costa Transit District: Board of Directors: election: compensation.
(Chapter 66, Statues of 2025)
AB 1141 reforms the election and compensation composition of the Contra Costa Transit District’s Board of Directors. The current Board of Directors is comprised of seven directors, one from each ward, and two elected at large. AB 1141 eliminates the two existing directors elected at large. Additionally, the Board of Directors’ compensation will be adjusted based upon the percentage increase in the California Consumer Price Index from the previous calendar year and will become effective until the new fiscal year following adoption of adjustment. The change will go into effect after the next regular election.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *For informational purposes only.*

SB 371 (Cabaldon, D-Napa): Transportation network companies: insurance coverage.
(Chapter 314, Statutes of 2025)
SB 371 updates insurance requirements and reporting standards for TNCs such as Uber and Lyft. The bill lowers the minimum uninsured motorist and underinsured motorist coverage from $1 million to $60,000 per person and $300,000 per incident for the period when a passenger is in the vehicle and makes the TNC responsible for maintaining this coverage. It directs the CPUC and the Department of Insurance to jointly study whether these coverage levels are appropriate and report their findings to the Legislature by

December 31, 2030. The bill also requires the CPUC's annual reports to include new data beginning in 2026 on automobile accidents involving TNCs, related insurance claims, and the average fares paid by riders in specified six-month periods between 2025 and 2026.

OCTA Position – Monitor

Impact on OCTA: *The changes in insurance coverage and data reporting for TNCs may affect how these companies operate within Orange County and coordinate with OCTA's transit services. OCTA will monitor implementation for potential impacts on first- and last-mile connections, rider safety, and integration of TNCs into the regional transportation network.*

OCTA

November 20, 2025

To: Legislative and Communications Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Orange County Transportation Authority's 2025-26 State and Federal Legislative Platforms

Overview

Halfway through each legislative session, staff conducts a refresh of the Orange County Transportation Authority's State and Federal Legislative Platforms to ensure updates are incorporated on relevant issues that are anticipated to be of discussion for the upcoming year. The final drafts of the revised 2025-26 Orange County Transportation Authority State and Federal Legislative Platforms are submitted for consideration and adoption by the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors.

Recommendations

A. Adopt the revised final draft of the 2025-26 State and Federal Legislative Platforms.

B. Direct staff to distribute the adopted platforms to elected officials, advisory committees, local governments, affected agencies, the business community, and other interested parties.

Background

At the beginning of each legislative session, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) adopts updated legislative platforms to guide OCTA's state and federal advocacy activities for the duration of the upcoming session. With each session covering a two-year period, revisions to the legislative platforms are presented to the Board of Directors (Board) midway through the sessions to reflect any significant changes since adoption by the Board. Official OCTA legislative positions not directly addressed by the legislative platforms will be brought to the Board for separate action during the legislative sessions.

The initial drafts of the 2025-26 State and Federal Legislative Platforms were reviewed and approved for further circulation by the Legislative and

Communications Committee on October 16, 2025, and by the Board on October 27, 2025. After receiving additional feedback, the State and Federal Legislative Platforms have been refined further and are included as Attachments A and B. The recommended revisions are designated by underline and strikethrough text.

When developing the 2027-28 State and Federal Legislative Platforms next year, a more widespread input solicitation process will occur, with outreach to interested groups, stakeholders, and individuals to allow for a more comprehensive update for the next legislative session.

2025-26 OCTA State Legislative Platform

The final proposed revisions to the 2025-26 OCTA State Legislative Platform are summarized below. Language was edited, amended, or removed as necessary to ensure grammatical and stylistic integrity.

Staff proposes two principles related to anticipated recommendations from the California State Transportation Agency's Transit Transformation Task Force final report, established under SB 125 (Chapter 54, Statutes of 2023). The task force was charged with evaluating and recommending strategies to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and financial stability of California's transit network.

New platform language was added to monitor potential legislative proposals to modify the Transportation Development Act and ensure that any efforts to establish a replacement framework are both effective and appropriate. Any opportunities to modernize performance metrics or streamline administrative processes should be pursued in a manner that does not negatively affect existing funding structures, local discretion, or agency responsibilities. Similarly, proposed language emphasizes the importance of maintaining local flexibility in service planning and fare coordination to minimize unnecessary state involvement.

Another proposed revision expresses support for extending the Federal State Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP) approval period to help prevent delays in project delivery arising from federal transportation conformity requirements and the timing of emissions modeling updates. In 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency determined that the South Coast Air Quality Management District had outstanding contingency obligations under the Clean Air Act, prompting coordination among the district, the California Air Resources Board, and federal partners to maintain progress while technical issues were addressed. Because the Emission Factors model, known as EMFAC, must receive federal approval for use in conformity analyses, any delay in that process can affect the ability to finalize regional determinations and advance new transportation projects.

The current FSTIP is effective through 2028, but state law requires a new update in 2027 that depends on timely federal conformity approval. Many emissions reductions within state and local control are already reflected in existing plans, meaning future conformity findings may rely more heavily on federal measures, creating potential scheduling risk for project authorization. To maintain continuity if approval timelines are extended, the platform supports legislative authority for the California Department of Transportation and the California Transportation Commission to extend the existing program document, similar to the temporary extension authorized under SB 1291 (Chapter 715, Statutes of 2020). This approach would help preserve funding eligibility and delivery schedules for major highway and transit improvements while conformity work is completed.

Finally, new principle is recommended related to the implementation of SB 79 (Chapter 512, Statutes of 2025), which authorizes housing density in areas served by certain levels of transit service. The platform directs staff to support legislation to amend SB 79 by updating definitions and making other changes as needed to ensure continued community support for transit projects. This will be done in close alignment with OCTA's partner agencies. OCTA will remain engaged with local jurisdictions and the State throughout implementation to ensure that these new policies complement regional mobility and operational goals.

Sponsored Legislation

The 2025-26 State Legislative Platform identifies one area in which OCTA intends to pursue sponsor legislation. Specifically, OCTA plans to sponsor legislation to revise its governing statute to allow the operation of a charter bus service to support major regional events, including the 2026 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. Under existing law, OCTA's enabling legislation limits the agency's authority to provide fixed-route transit services within Orange County and expressly excludes charter bus operations. As a result, OCTA does not currently have the authority to operate charter service, even in situations where doing so would relieve congestion and support regional mobility. To provide this service, OCTA would require statutory authorization similar to what was recently granted to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) for the same purpose. In addition to state statutory authorization, OCTA would also need to obtain federal approval from the Federal Transit Administration in the form of a charter bus service waiver.

The need for this legislation is time-sensitive, as the FIFA World Cup begins next year. OCTA is working with regional partners to plan a service between the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center and SoFi Stadium to help manage transportation demand during tournament events. Providing this flexibility would allow OCTA to assist in safely and efficiently moving passengers to and from event venues while maximizing the use of its existing fleet and workforce. This legislative effort would ensure that OCTA has the same level of authority as other large California transit agencies, such as LA Metro and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, which have received statutory approval to provide charter bus services for the FIFA World Cup. Staff anticipates working with the Legislature to advance this proposal early in the 2026 legislative session to ensure the authorization is in place ahead of the FIFA World Cup.

<u>2025-26 OCTA Federal Legislative Platform</u>

The final proposed revisions to the 2025-26 OCTA Federal Legislative Platform are summarized below. Language was edited, amended, or removed as necessary to ensure grammatical and stylistic integrity. Overall, only one change was necessary to update the Federal Legislative Platform.

Specially, staff recommends adding language pertaining to supporting efforts to streamline U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulatory and permitting processes to accelerate the delivery of critical transportation projects, particularly those that involve coastal or environmental work. OCTA has worked closely with the USACE on emergency stabilization and protection efforts along the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor. These emergency actions highlighted challenges with existing USACE procedures that can delay urgent work needed to protect vital infrastructure. Additionally, OCTA has encountered complications related to the determination of the mean high tide line when placing protective sand or other materials along the coastline. These jurisdictional uncertainties can significantly slow project implementation, even when the work is necessary to maintain safe and reliable transportation services.

By improving coordination and expediting review and permitting timelines, the USACE can better support local and regional agencies in delivering timely resilience and safety projects that protect public assets and ensure the continuity of critical rail operations.

Summary

The 2025-26 OCTA State and Federal Legislative Platforms are presented for consideration and adoption.

Attachments

A. Orange County Transportation Authority 2025-26 State Legislative Platform
B. Orange County Transportation Authority 2025-26 Federal Legislative Platform

Prepared by:

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Orange County Transportation Authority 2025-26
State Legislative Platform

With over three million residents, Orange County is the third most populous county in California and the sixth most populous county in the nation. Orange County is one of the most densely populated areas in the country and is served by one of the nation's busiest transit systems. The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) serves as the primary agency responsible for transportation planning in Orange County. OCTA manages a multimodal transportation system, overseeing a range of services including buses, Metrolink commuter rail, paratransit, and freeway improvements, as well as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, ensuring diverse mobility options for residents and visitors.

The 2025-26 State Legislative Platform serves as a framework document to guide OCTA's legislative, regulatory, and administrative activities in the coming legislative session. The Key Policy Issues section offers guidance on the policy issues that will likely be the focus of the upcoming legislative session. The later sections present guiding policy statements for other major issue areas that may arise during the session. Positions on individual items not directly in this document will be brought to the OCTA Board of Directors for formal action.

Key Policy Issues in 2025-26

A number of significant transportation issues are expected to be discussed in the 2025-26 legislative session. OCTA will focus its advocacy efforts on the following principles.

a) Support transportation funding investments and policy flexibilities that allow OCTA to provide essential, multimodal mobility improvements and services in order to meet the mobility needs of Orange County;

b) Seek support for adaptation and resiliency efforts related to the environment for critical transportation infrastructure;

c) Encourage State leadership, in conjunction with local collaboration, in developing long-term studies related to potential track relocation in the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor;

d) Support efforts to maximize OCTA's share of transportation and transit funding, especially through distribution formulas and more equitable competitive funding processes;

e) Support workforce development and training policies that allow OCTA to hire and retain personnel ready to implement the next generation of mobility, including training the workforce for zero-emission vehicles, without creating unfunded mandates;

f) Oppose policies that would circumvent existing transit operator funding eligibility requirements;

g) Support efforts to ensure local control is maintained in policy decisions made by local transportation agency boards in delivering, funding, and operating transportation programs and projects;

h) Inform the State's Transit Transformation Task Force, created pursuant to SB 125 (Chapter 54, Statutes of 2023), in order to seek improvements to the Transportation Development Act and make recommendations related to transit funding, cost drivers, strategies for workforce retention, and ridership;

i) Seek to ensure OCTA's projects and programs related to the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games are eligible for any related funding assistance, incentives, project delivery tools, and/or regulatory relief;

j) Support efforts to mitigate costs associated with the development, testing, purchase, and operation of zero-emission transit buses, including an alternative electricity rate structure, tax incentives, and other forms of financial assistance;

k) Monitor progress of the Sustainable Communities Task Force and potential reforms to implementation of SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008)~~.~~**;**

l) Monitor potential legislative proposals to modify Transportation Development Act performance metrics and assess options for replacement frameworks to ensure effective and appropriate performance evaluation and funding eligibility;

m) Oppose efforts that would reduce local flexibility, or impose top-down transit service or fare coordination models without full consultation and agreement of affected local agencies;

n) Support legislation to amend the implementation of SB 79 (Chapter 512, Statutes of 2025) by updating definitions and making other changes as needed to ensure continued community support for transit projects;

o) Support efforts to extend the Federal Transportation Improvement Program approval period to prevent project delivery delays resulting from federal air quality conformity requirements.

SPONSORED LEGISLATION

Each year, OCTA may concern sponsoring legislation to clarify or address various transportation policy topics that require additional attention. This year, the following policy will require sponsoring legislation:

Sponsor legislation to revise OCTA governing statute to allow operation of a charter bus service to support the 2026 Fédération Internationale de Football Association World Cup and the 2028 Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Orange County Transportation Authority 2025-26
State Legislative Platform

I. CAP-AND-INVEST

Previously known as Cap-and-Trade, Cap-and-Invest has been reauthorized through 2045. The Cap-and-Invest agreement includes a tiered structure to facilitate revenue distribution depending on auction proceeds. The California High-Speed Rail Project would receive $1 billion off the top and then another funding set aside of $1 billion has been provided for “Legislature Discretionary.” Following those funding commitments, funding is then allocated to traditional ongoing appropriations, which includes important transit programs, such as the Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). Because these programs are to be allocated set amounts each year rather than a percentage of the proceeds, these programs will no longer grow if revenues are higher than anticipated and will be the first to be reduced if revenues do not meet expectations. Over the next year, it is anticipated that there will be further negotiations to refine the revenue distribution structure. To that end, OCTA will advocate for the following:

a) Protect transit funding provided under Cap-and-Invest to ensure TIRCP and LCTOP are maintained and funded at levels consistent with prior budget allocations to ensure continued certainty for programs and projects;

b) Ensure that funding for transit, originally provided through SB 125 and later backfilled through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund in future budget cycles, is fully preserved and allocated in accordance with previous budget appropriations;

c) Monitor Cap-and-Invest funding for the California High-Speed Rail Project and promote prioritization of bookend projects within allocation decisions;

d) Encourage regional parity in distribution of any discretionary funding in Cap-and-Invest.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

In order to ensure that the State’s environmental regulations are implemented in an equitable manner, which will both help to reduce emissions and encourage the development of necessary infrastructure to serve California’s growing population, OCTA will:

a) Support efforts to ensure local flexibility in meeting the State’s greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, including project mitigation requirements;

b) Support streamlined environmental review and permitting processes for transportation projects and programs to avoid potentially duplicative and unnecessary analysis, while still maintaining traditional environmental protections;

c) Work with air agencies and other stakeholders to ensure that air quality determinations and policies do not constrain funding availability or otherwise undermine OCTA's ability to deliver transportation improvements;

d) Monitor the State's transition to zero-emission vehicle technology to ensure that any corresponding policies adequately address the impact to long-term transportation funding stability;

e) Oppose lengthening the California Environmental Quality Act process in a manner that would delay mobility improvements;

f) Oppose efforts to restrict road and highway construction by superseding existing broad-based environmental review and mitigation processes;

g) Oppose policies that would limit lead agency discretion in the management and oversight of lands set aside for environmental mitigation purposes while promoting advance mitigation planning programs;

h) Monitor efforts to create a statewide model related to vehicle miles traveled in order to ensure that local modeling is taken into account;

i) Support efforts related to separate and distinct sand nourishment permits.

III. TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

OCTA will monitor the status of transportation funding in California, promoting the continued stability of existing programs and efforts to address future funding deficiencies to meet transportation infrastructure needs. Given that the State is anticipated to experience a continued deficit, OCTA will work to protect funding dedicated for transportation purposes, including appropriations made in the fiscal year 2025-26 Budget Act for transit operations and capital projects. Key actions include:

a) Oppose unfunded mandates for transportation agencies, transit providers, and local governments in providing transportation improvements and services;

b) Oppose cost shifts or changes in responsibility for projects funded by the State to local transportation entities;

c) Support efforts to treat the property tax of single-county transit districts the same as multi-county districts and correct other Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund inequities between like agencies;

d) Support the constitutional protection of all transportation funding resources;

e) Support protecting or expanding local decision-making in programming transportation funds;

f) Oppose efforts to reduce local prerogative over regional program funds;

g) Support efforts to involve county transportation commissions in the development and prioritization of State Highway Operation and Protection Program projects;

h) Oppose redirecting or reclassifying transportation revenue sources, including earned interest, for anything other than their intended purposes;

i) Support the implementation of federal transportation programs in an equitable manner that promotes traditional funding levels, programming roles, and local discretion in allocation decisions;

j) Oppose policies that significantly increase costs, threatening OCTA's ability to deliver projects and provide transit service;

k) Support removing the barriers for funding transportation projects, including allowing local agencies to advance projects with local funds when state funds are unavailable due to budgetary reasons, and allowing regions to pool federal, state, and local funds in order to limit lengthy amendment processes and streamline project delivery time;

l) Support flexibility in the application of "disadvantaged" and "low-income" communities to ensure that transportation funding flows to each region's most impacted areas, allowing OCTA to best meet the needs of its local communities;

m) Support dedicated funding for transit operations, preferably through an ongoing formulaic approach;

n) Support efforts to reform SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) to improve the technical processes underpinning target setting and plan development, while also ensuring the reforms do not impact existing transportation funding distribution or eligibilities, or restrict the ability for transportation agencies to implement their projects or programs;

o) Protect existing transit operations and capital funding while monitoring the implementation of the accountability provisions associated with the funding and inform clarifying legislation as needed;

p) Oppose linking, reprioritizing, or aligning local and state transportation funding with policies that could significantly hinder a local agency's ability to deliver transportation programs and projects;

q) Support efforts to maintain the promises self-help counties have made to taxpayers in the implementation of local sales tax measures and oppose mandating specific uses of future sales tax revenues;

r) Oppose policies that change existing formula funding structures to redistribute funds in a way that would inhibit a local agency from delivering critical transportation projects and programs.

IV. FISCAL REFORMS & ISSUES

In recent years, the Legislature and Governor have worked collaboratively during the budget process to pass funding bills in a timely manner. Given that the State continues to report lower revenues than projected, uncertainties over future funding levels remain. Therefore, OCTA will:

a) Monitor the study and development of alternative transportation funding proposals, including the State's road charge pilot program and ensure that efforts are made to address concerns related to equity, privacy, and public support of such proposals;

b) Oppose levying new and/or increase in gasoline taxes or user fees, including revenue increases on fuel consumption categorized as charges, fees, revenue enhancements, or similar classifications. Consideration of such efforts shall occur when a direct nexus is determined to exist between revenues and transportation projects, and additional revenues are to be controlled by the county transportation commission;

c) Oppose efforts to decrease the voter threshold requirement for local tax measures for transportation purposes;

d) Oppose increases to administrative fees charged by the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration on the collection of local sales tax measures;

e) Support policies that ensure all users of the State's transportation system pay their "fair share" to maintain and improve the system;

f) Support efforts to restore equitable generation and disbursement of sales tax revenues that support the Local Transportation Fund;

g) Support the retention of existing and future local revenue sources;

h) Support reinstating the state sales tax exemption for the purchase of zero-emission buses.

V. STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), substantially amended by SB 45 (Chapter 622, Statutes of 1997), is a programming document that establishes the funding priorities and project commitments for transportation capital improvements in California. SB 45 placed decision-making authority with the regions by providing project selection for 75 percent of the funding in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). This funding is distributed to counties based on an allocation formula. The remaining 25 percent of the funds are programmed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). OCTA will seek to ensure that the regional focus of the program is preserved. Key provisions to be sought by OCTA include:

a) Support maintaining the current STIP formula, which provides 75 percent of STIP funding to the locally-nominated RTIP and 25 percent to the ITIP;

b) Support equitable allocations of transportation funding, such as the north/south formula distribution of county shares and ITIP allocations;

c) Support efforts to allow a mode-neutral STIP;

d) Support increased flexibility for the use of STIP funds to support alternative projects, including, but not limited to, transit and goods movement improvement projects.

VI. TRANSIT PROGRAMS

OCTA will continue with its focus on providing safe, reliable, and efficient transit services in Orange County. Although transit has received significant funding infusions over the past decade, uncertainty remains regarding the long-term sustainability of funding availability and eligibility. OCTA will make every effort to minimize additional state obligations to transit operations which lack a sufficient and secure revenue source. To that end, OCTA will focus on the following:

a) Advocate for a continued strong state role in providing funding for transit operations rather than shifting responsibility to local transportation entities. No additional requirements should be created for operation levels beyond existing capacity, unless agreed to by that entity or otherwise appropriately funded;

b) Seek additional funding for paratransit operations and transit accessibility capital improvements that support persons with disabilities and senior citizens;

c) Support efforts to encourage and incentivize the interoperability of transit and rail systems within California;

d) Support limiting the liability of transit districts for the location of bus stops *(Bonanno v. Central Contra Costa Transit Authority)*;

e) Support incentives for transit-oriented development projects (i.e., authorize extra credit toward housing element requirements for these developments), including incentives for development;

f) Support funding and incentives to develop free- or reduced-fare transit programs without impacting existing programs or creating unfunded mandates;

g) Encourage policies and guidance that incentivize public transit ridership.

VII. RAIL PROGRAMS

Metrolink is Southern California's commuter rail system that links residential communities to employment and activity centers. Orange County is served by three Metrolink lines: the Orange County Line, the Inland Empire-Orange County Line, and the 91/Perris Valley Line. In support of these routes, OCTA owns 48 miles of rail right-of-way in Orange County on which Metrolink operates. OCTA serves as the primary construction lead for major capital improvements on this right-of-way, supported by OCTA's rail capital budget.

In addition, the state-supported Pacific Surfliner intercity passenger rail service, operated by Amtrak and managed by the LOSSAN Agency, provides passenger rail service between San Luis Obispo and San Diego. OCTA has served as the managing agency for the LOSSAN Agency since 2013, providing administrative and management support.

OCTA is also advancing the OC Streetcar Project, the county's first modern streetcar line. Running between the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove, it will serve as a vital new connection to regional rail and bus services and is scheduled to begin revenue service in 2026.

While the status and future of these programs is uncertain, OCTA will be watchful to ensure that funding for these rail systems does not impact other transportation funding sources. Key advocacy efforts will emphasize the following:

a) Support policies that encourage commercial, commuter-based development around passenger rail corridors that includes permanent job creation;

b) Monitor and evaluate plans and progress of high-speed rail;

c) Support efforts to provide resources for safety improvements on the rail network in Southern California, including for the implementation, operation, and maintenance of Positive Train Control safety technology;

d) Support studying the policies, funding options, and need for rail/highway grade separations, including any impact on existing state highway and transit funding sources;

e) Support policies that facilitate the development and construction of needed infrastructure projects that support modernization, connectivity, and general system-wide improvements to California's rail network;

f) Monitor and inform efforts seeking to make reforms to rail planning, governance structure, or operations;

g) Seek funding and other administrative solutions, such as permit streamlining, to support adaptation and resiliency efforts throughout the rail corridor;

h) Seek support, funding, and streamlining to manage and address sea level rise, beach erosion, landslides, and other environmental impacts along the rail corridor.

VIII. ROADS & HIGHWAYS

OCTA's commitment to continuously improve mobility in Orange County is reflected through a dynamic involvement in such innovative highway endeavors as the ownership of the 91 Express Lanes and the use of design-build authority on the State Route 22 project and Interstate 405 Improvement Project. OCTA will continue to seek new and innovative ways to deliver road and highway projects to the residents of Orange County and, to that end, OCTA will focus on the following:

a) Support new and existing alternative project delivery methods, such as design-build, public-private partnership authority, construction manager/general contractor authority, and progressive design build, through expanding mode and funding eligibility while also allowing the appropriate balance of partnership between the State and local agencies;

b) Support authorizing local agencies to advertise, award, and administer contracts for state highway projects;

c) Oppose duplicative reporting mandates and efforts to impose additional requirements, beyond what is required in statute, on lead agencies awarding contracts using alternative project delivery mechanisms;

d) Support streamlining of the Caltrans review process for projects without compromising environmental safeguards;

e) Support policies that improve signal synchronization programs in order to facilitate street signal coordination, prioritization, and preemption, as well as encouraging the use of intelligent transportation system measures;

f) Support management and integration of express lanes to promote consistent and seamless user experience;

g) Support studying the development and safe operation of autonomous vehicles and related technologies;

h) Support preserving local discretion and flexibility in the development of the congestion management program.

IX. TOLLED & MANAGED LANES

OCTA's commitment to continuously improve mobility in Orange County is reflected through a dynamic involvement in such innovative highway endeavors, including both the ownership of the 91 Express Lanes, a ten-mile toll facility on State Route 91, extending from State Route 55 to the Orange/Riverside County Line, and the 405 Express Lanes, which operates two lanes in each direction from State Route 73 to the Interstate 605.

Because many agencies are discussing the increased use of managed lane facilities, there remains a need to advocate for local flexibility and input. To ensure the continued success of the 91 Express Lanes, the 405 Express lanes, and for toll policy moving forward, OCTA will:

a) Oppose efforts to divert revenues from toll facilities for purposes not directed by the responsible governing board;

b) Support policies that allow OCTA, and its partners, to efficiently operate and maintain the 91 Express Lanes and the 405 Express Lanes;

c) Support efforts to preserve local flexibility in the administration of toll lanes and encourage the State to work with OCTA on operating policies to ensure seamless system operation;

d) Oppose the construction or operation of toll facilities that are inconsistent with local long range transportation plans;

e) Oppose the construction or operation of toll facilities that fail to respect existing local transportation projects and funding programs;

f) Support customer privacy rights while maintaining OCTA's ability to effectively communicate with customers and operate the 91 and 405 Express Lanes;

g) Support the use of innovative means to enhance toll agency enforcement efforts;

h) Support collaborative solutions to high-occupancy vehicle lane degradation that protect local funding, have regional transportation agency support, and avoid transportation funding diversion;

i) Support efforts to improve the interoperability of the different toll systems across the State in order to ensure fair and efficient toll operations while affirming user privacy protections;

j) Inform discussions related to revising toll evasion penalties, toll exemptions, and other changes to enforcement strategies and mechanisms in order to maintain local control, opposing efforts that will hinder the ability to meet congestion management and financing requirements;

k) Support policies that protect the process prescribed in AB 194 (Chapter 687, Statutes of 2015), which authorizes regional transportation agencies to develop and operate toll facilities, and ensure it is maintained in its application on future toll facilities.

X. GOODS MOVEMENT

The twin Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are considered two of the nation's busiest ports, vital to California's economy and the surrounding region because goods are shipped to and through the surrounding counties. While the State's goods movement system is the most robust in the nation, it is continually challenged by competing goods movement systems in other states. In order to continue to compete and engage in the global marketplace, California must continue to enhance its goods movement system, while at the same time be cognizant of taking the necessary actions to mitigate any negative impacts to local communities. Key positions include:

a) Support improvements to facilitate the movement of intrastate, interstate, and international trade beneficial to the State and Orange County's economy;

b) Support policies that will aid in the development, approval, and construction of projects to expand goods movement capacity and reduce congestion;

c) Ensure that control of goods movement infrastructure projects and funding is retained at the local level;

d) Seek mitigation for the impacts of goods movement on local communities;

e) Pursue ongoing, stable sources of funding for goods movement infrastructure;

f) Support additional funding and policy reforms to aid in expediting transportation projects to address supply chain concerns;

g) Ensure any effort to establish a container fee program dedicates funding to projects that mitigate the impact port activity may have on local communities, informed by input from local and regional agencies.

XI. ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation projects and programs, which encourage greater mobility through walking and bicycling, have grown in popularity due to the environmental, health, and cost savings benefits. OCTA continues to study, plan, and fund active transportation projects and programs as part of its mission to provide Orange County with an efficient and multi-modal transportation system. Key positions include:

a) Support policies to increase the visibility and safety of users engaged in active transportation;

b) Support creative use of paths, roads, flood channels, and abandoned rail lines using existing established rights-of-way to promote bicycles trails and pedestrian paths, in coordination with any local agency with jurisdiction over those properties;

c) Support funding and programs or policies that encourage the safe operation of an integrated multimodal system, which includes the interaction between roadways, rail lines, bikeways, and pedestrian ways, and the users of those facilities;

d) Support streamlined active transportation funding programs;

e) Seek funding and support policies and projects to increase safety requirements related to the utilization of electric bicycles.

XII. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

In recent years, there have been many efforts to reorganize or restructure transportation programs and local agency responsibilities. OCTA will continue to monitor policies that would significantly affect the way in which it operates, with a focus on maintaining local control and continued partnerships in order to advocate for the following principles:

a) Support preserving the role of county transportation commissions, as consistent with existing law, in the administration of transportation programs;

b) Oppose proposals that reduce the rights and responsibilities of county transportation commissions in planning, funding, and delivering transportation programs;

c) Oppose policies that unnecessarily subject projects to additional reviews and project selection approvals that could adversely affect delivery timelines and processes;

d) Support partnerships with alternative mobility providers that allow for adequate information sharing while also respecting the planning efforts of local agencies;

e) Support efforts to increase the flexibility of funds used for motorist service programs.

XIII. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

As a public agency and one of the largest employers in Orange County, OCTA balances its responsibility to the community and the taxpayers to provide safe, reliable, cost-effective service with its responsibility of being a reasonable, responsive employer. Key advocacy positions include:

a) Oppose efforts to impose state labor laws on currently exempt public agencies;

b) Oppose policies that circumvent the collective bargaining process;

c) Oppose policies adversely affecting OCTA's ability to efficiently and effectively deal with labor relations, employee rights, benefits, including pension benefits, the California Family Rights Act, and working conditions, including health, safety, and ergonomic standards for the workplace;

d) Support efforts to reform and resolve inconsistencies in the workers' compensation and unemployment insurance systems, and labor law requirements that maintain protection for employees and allow businesses to operate efficiently;

e) Support workforce development policies that facilitate a more efficient talent acquisition process;

f) Support policies that encourage ridesharing, teleworking, vanpool, and related congestion relief programs for Orange County commuters.

XIV. TRANSPORTATION SECURITY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

As natural and man-made disasters continue to threaten transportation systems around the world, significant improvements have been, and continue to be, carried out to enhance the safety, security, and resilience of transportation infrastructure in the United States. As Orange County's bus provider and a Metrolink partner, OCTA understands the importance of ensuring the safety and security of our transportation network and protecting our customers. OCTA maintains a partnership with the Orange County Sheriff's Department to provide OCTA Transit Police Services for the bus and train systems in Orange County and continues to be actively involved in a variety of state and regional preparedness exercises in support of first responders. The development of a new Transit Security and Operations Center is also underway to enhance security efforts and further the resiliency of the Orange County transit system.

Additional safety and security measures require additional financial resources. Consequently, OCTA's advocacy positions will highlight:

a) Support state homeland security and emergency preparedness funding and grant programs to local transportation agencies to alleviate financial burden placed on local entities;

b) Support policies that balance retention mandates of video surveillance records to reflect current reasonable technological and fiscal capabilities;

c) Support technological advances in order to increase the safety of public transportation passengers and operators;

d) Support policies that aim to enhance transit services and the overall safety and security of transit riders, public transit employees, and on-road vehicles while avoiding undue burden on transportation agencies to implement unfunded safety measures.

XV. ADMINISTRATION/GENERAL

General administrative issues arise every session that could impact OCTA's ability to operate efficiently. Key positions include:

a) Oppose policies adversely affecting OCTA's ability to efficiently and effectively contract for goods and services, conduct business of the agency, and limit or transfer the risk of liability;

b) Support efforts to provide greater protection of OCTA's computer and information security systems;

c) Support establishing reasonable liability for non-economic damages in any action for personal injury, property damage, or wrongful death brought against a public entity based on principles of comparative fault;

d) Support consistent campaign contribution limits as applied to both elected and appointed bodies;

e) Monitor proposed changes related to the Ralph M. Brown Act, and other statutes governing public meetings, including the expanded use of technology;

f) Support equitable policies to ensure that the inclusive public engagement, planning, and delivery of mobility improvements best serve all residents of Orange County;

g) Oppose policies that create undue burden on transportation procurement practices or restrict ability to maintain local governing board award authority;

h) Oppose efforts that create duplicative reporting requirements.

Orange County Transportation Authority 2025-26
Federal Legislative Platform

With over three million residents, Orange County is the third most populous county in California and the sixth most populous county in the nation. Orange County is one of the most densely populated areas in the country and is served by one of the nation's busiest transit systems. The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) serves as the primary agency responsible for transportation planning in Orange County. OCTA manages a multimodal transportation system, overseeing a range of services including buses, Metrolink commuter rail, paratransit, and freeway improvements, as well as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, ensuring diverse mobility options for residents and visitors.

The 2025-26 Federal Legislative Platform serves as a framework document to guide OCTA's statutory, regulatory, and administrative goals and objectives in Washington, D.C. The Key Policy Issues section offers guidance on the policy issues that will likely be the focus of the 119th Congress, and the later sections present guiding policy statements for the other major issues that may arise. Positions on individual items not directly addressed in this document will be brought to the OCTA Board of Directors for formal action.

Key Policy Issues in the 119th Congress

A number of significant transportation issues will be discussed in the 119th Congress. OCTA will focus its advocacy efforts on the following principles:

a) Support transportation funding investments and policy flexibilities that allow OCTA to provide essential, multimodal mobility improvements, and services in order to meet the mobility needs of Orange County;

b) Request annual appropriations at least consistent with authorized funding levels and advanced appropriations provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) are maintained in order to meet our county's critical infrastructure needs;

c) Oppose efforts to redirect, reduce, or eliminate existing transportation funding programs, ensuring funding OCTA receives from IIJA is maintained;

d) Oppose rescissions or other arbitrary funding cuts to transportation programs;

e) Ensure that Highway Trust Fund (HTF) revenues continue to be used for transit expenditures for capital and operations, including any new revenue;

f) Ensure that air quality determinations and policies do not constrain funding availability or otherwise undermine OCTA's ability to deliver transportation improvements;

g) Ensure that Orange County is eligible for funding provided to meet air quality standards for the South Coast Air Basin and oppose efforts that would impact the use of transportation funding;

h) Seek support for adaptation and resiliency efforts related to the environment for critical transportation infrastructure;

i) Encourage federal leadership, in conjunction with state and local collaboration, in developing long-term studies related to potential track relocation in the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor;

j) Support the authority to secure direct funding for Orange County projects;

k) Support efforts to preserve local flexibility in the administration of toll lanes and use of toll revenues;

l) Support efforts to ensure local control is maintained in policy decisions made by local transportation agency boards in delivering, funding, and operating transportation programs and projects;

m) Seek to ensure OCTA's projects and programs related to the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles are eligible for any related funding assistance or incentives, project delivery tools, and/or regulatory relief.

I. TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Current federal law does not require the appropriation of authorized HTF dollars. Therefore, the annual appropriations process will continue to play an important role in funding OCTA's programs and projects. OCTA will continue to advocate for the largest possible amount and share of appropriations funding to ensure adequate resources to meet the infrastructure needs of Orange County.

OCTA will continue to aggressively pursue discretionary funding for transportation projects within the statutory and regulatory requirements of funding programs and the current funding status of OCTA's capital program. Other funding priorities for OCTA include:

a) Support sustainable transportation funding levels that allow OCTA to continue to improve mobility in and around Orange County;

b) Support funding for the Capital Investment Grants program to allow for an expansion of bus and rail transit projects;

c) Ensure that federal funding is available for capital purposes to the extent not needed for direct operating costs;

d) Support funding, with increased flexibility, for safety and security grant programs in order to protect Orange County's transportation system, including highways, transit operations and facilities, rail lines, and related software systems;

e) Support funding for commuter and intercity passenger rail corridors in Orange County;

f) Support funding to develop training information programs to instruct on the use of new technology and address workforce needs at transit and transportation agencies;

g) Advocate for Inflation Reduction Act funding to support transit and transportation programs;

h) Seek responsible revenue solutions to fund future transportation projects without adversely affecting an agency's ability to provide services;

i) Advocate for full funding of transportation programs without placing new limitations or conditions on the distribution of funds that would impede the delivery of infrastructure projects.

II. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

The IIJA (Pub. L. No. 1147-58) authorized over $567 billion over five years for programs. With the IIJA as law, OCTA has focused much of its advocacy efforts on implementation efforts that allow state and local government agencies to move forward with a federal partner on critical transportation projects. Now with the IIJA set to expire on September 30, 2026, OCTA will dually prioritize implementation while also advocating for its priorities related to enacting long-term reauthorization legislation. In 2025, the OCTA Board approved a set of guiding principles to inform reauthorization discussions, which are included in the appendix. Those notwithstanding**,** OCTA will advocate for the following policies:

a) Support the greatest possible share of funding for California and OCTA, focusing on increasing formula funds;

b) Support increased flexibility in transportation funding programs to promote greater local decision-making in the planning process;

c) Ensure a long-term partnership with the federal government that helps OCTA address transit capital and operating revenue needs;

d) Oppose unfunded federal mandates that further reduce the resources of state and local transportation agencies;

e) Oppose policies that undermine or limit local control over land use decisions;

f) Ensure fair suballocations of funding to account for additional costs, increased administrative responsibilities, and the potential for increased liabilities to which the agency may be subject;

g) Oppose limitations or other arbitrary conditions on discretionary transportation grant programs that prevent an equitable distribution of transportation resources;

h) Support policies that encourage ridesharing, teleworking, vanpool and related congestion relief programs for Orange County commuters;

i) Oppose any effort to further reduce transportation funding for OCTA or California, advocating for a fair and equitable share;

k) Support efforts to reinstate the state suballocation process regarding the distribution of federal formula funding;

l) Support funding to address the current vulnerabilities on the LOSSAN Rail Corridor to prevent future service disruptions;

III. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

In the 119th Congress, OCTA will continue to support the implementation of the IIJA while finding ways to complement the programs and provisions authorized under federal law. During this time, OCTA will advocate for the following issues:

a) Pursue continued eligibility of Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program funding for operating expenses associated with any fixed-guideway or eligible bus projects;

b) Support expanded use of alternative delivery methods for federally-funded transportation projects;

c) Support expedited review and payments to local agencies and their contractors for project development, right-of-way acquisition, and construction activities;

d) Support efforts to authorize, fund, and streamline the delivery of bicycle and pedestrian projects in Orange County;

e) Advocate for policies to encourage, when possible, a complete streets approach to multimodal project planning in order to expedite project delivery;

f) Support flexibility and increased local decision-making authority regarding the operation of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in order to reduce or eliminate the unintended consequences resulting from Section 166 of the Federal Highway Act or any similar policy regulating degradation of HOV lanes;

g) Encourage cooperation between local, state, and federal partners to mitigate or eliminate any policy that places burdensome requirements on operators related to degradation of facilities and performance;

h) Support streamlining and greater flexibility of Federal Buy America requirements including increased clarification on market availability and technical feasibility of the Build America, Buy America Act requirements created in the IIJA to prevent any unintended disruption to projects and programs;

i) Support efforts to clarify roles and responsibilities related to toll enforcement policies to allow for interoperability between toll facilities while affirming user privacy;

j) Encourage policies on the planning, delivery, and operation of tolling projects that are aligned with the flexibility provided in California State law;

k) Support inclusive public engagement, planning, and delivery of mobility improvements that best serve all the residents of Orange County;

l) Support a collaborative approach to understanding the capital infrastructure and operational needs of local and state transportation agencies, as well as private sector partners, in the testing, development, demonstration, deployment, and operation of autonomous and connected vehicle technologies, while encouraging policies that ensure their safe implementation.

IV. FISCAL REFORMS & ISSUES

Transportation infrastructure projects are critical drivers in job creation and business development. Legislative and regulatory proposals can impact the ability of transportation agencies to deliver these infrastructure projects. Expediting project delivery serves as a key tool for driving economic growth and stimulating activity. Regarding these developments, OCTA will:

a) Oppose policies that would divert revenues generated by locally-approved sales taxes to programs and projects that are not included in the sales tax ordinance;

b) Support removing barriers to the release of transportation funding, including allowing local agencies to advance projects with local funds in order to limit lengthy processes that delay project delivery;

c) Support expansion, streamlining, and further development of innovative project finance methods, including the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan program;

d) Support fiscally-sound proposals to adequately address the HTF’s structural deficit, including initiatives to address the impact of low- and zero-emission vehicles on transportation funding;

e) Support tax policies that reduce costs or provide additional flexibility in OCTA's financial and operational activities;

f) Support a stable source of proposed future revenues that provides adequate resources for future transportation needs;

g) Oppose subjecting public transportation providers to gas tax liability or other fees that increase operating costs;

h) Support efforts to ensure that all users of the national transportation system pay their "fair share" to maintain and improve the system;

i) Support additional funding and regulatory flexibility to facilitate the use of alternative mobility providers;

j) Support regulatory efforts that would allow for joint procurement processes.

V. RAIL PROGRAMS

Metrolink is Southern California's commuter rail system that links residential communities to employment and activity centers. Orange County is served by three Metrolink lines: the Orange County Line, the Inland Empire-Orange County Line, and the 91/Perris Valley Line. In support of these routes, OCTA owns 48 miles of rail right-of-way in Orange County on which Metrolink operates. OCTA serves as the primary construction lead for major capital improvements on this right-of-way, supported by OCTA's rail capital budget.

In addition, the state-supported Pacific Surfliner intercity passenger rail service**,** operated by Amtrak and managed by the LOSSAN Agency, provides passenger rail service between San Luis Obispo and San Diego. OCTA has served as the managing agency for the LOSSAN Agency since 2013, providing administrative and management support.

OCTA is also advancing the OC Streetcar Project, the county's first modern streetcar line. Running between the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove, it will serve as a vital new connection to regional rail and bus services and is scheduled to begin revenue service in 2026.

While the status and future of these programs is uncertain, OCTA will be watchful to ensure that funding for these rail systems does not impact other transportation funding sources. Key advocacy efforts will emphasize the following:

a) Support funding for rail safety programs, including funding for operation and maintenance of Positive Train Control (PTC) safety technology and other safety enhancements;

b) Support efforts to ensure that any alternative safety technology is interoperable with, and contains the same safety benefits as, the PTC system implemented on passenger rail corridors in Southern California;

c) Support the availability of technical resources, such as wireless spectrum, to fully implement rail safety technology;

d) Oppose increasing the current rail passenger liability cap and work with regional partners to ensure that any changes to the cap take into account the limited resources of passenger rail providers;

e) Seek funding and other solutions, such as permit streamlining, to support adaptation and resiliency efforts throughout the rail corridor;

f) Seek support, funding, and project streamlining to manage and address sea level rise, beach erosion, landslides, and other environmental impacts along the rail corridor.

VI. TRANSIT PROGRAMS

OCTA will continue with its focus on providing safe, reliable, and efficient transit services in Orange County. Federal transit funding is provided on both a formula and competitive basis. Discretionary funding under the IIJA has been highly competitive for transit programs. As future demand for transit funding increases due to environmental regulations and increased capital and operations costs put further strain on existing resources, creating more opportunities for predictable transit funding will continue to be a priority for OCTA. Specifically, OCTA will focus on the following:

a) Encourage policies and guidance that incentivize public transit ridership;

b) Support funding and incentives to develop free- or reduced-fare transit programs without impacting existing programs or creating unfunded mandates;

c) Monitor policies regarding zero-emission transit fuels to ensure they remain technology neutral;

d) Support reinstating and expanding of tax incentives for using compressed natural gas, hydrogen, and other zero-emission transit fuels;

e) Support efforts to create a more competitive marketplace for transit buses to help drive down costs and strengthen the supply chain.

VII. GOODS MOVEMENT

The twin Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are considered two of the nation's busiest ports. The maintenance, improvement, and modernization of our region's goods movement infrastructure must continue to be a national priority if our region is to remain competitive with the rest of the world and responsive to the consumer needs of Southern California. Even though the IIJA continued to provide funding for goods movement projects and programs, revenue streams remain insufficient to fund the projects needed to offset the costs of moving these goods considering the many years of underinvestment. OCTA's advocacy efforts regarding goods movement will continue to emphasize the following:

a) Pursue new, stable, dedicated, and secure sources of funding for goods movement infrastructure;

b) Ensure that the benefits of newly-funded projects also take into account mitigation factors to impacted communities;

c) Support a collaborative approach, including engaging with private sector partners, in developing and implementing the needed sustainable goods movement infrastructure programs and projects;

d) Support regionally significant grade separation projects that improve the flow of goods and people throughout Southern California;

e) Support local control of goods movement infrastructure and freight mobility projects;

f) Support additional funding and policy reforms to aid in expediting transportation projects to address supply chain concerns;

g) Ensure eligibility for funding and programs is available to all transportation modes that benefit regional goods movement.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION SECURITY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

OCTA continues cooperative efforts with neighboring transit agencies, Urban Area Security Initiative partners, state and federal homeland security and emergency preparedness grant partners, and local jurisdictions to enhance the security and resiliency of Orange County's transportation system. OCTA will pursue the following priorities to ensure that the agency's safety, security, and emergency preparedness needs are met:

a) Support increased funding for training, increased security, and emergency preparedness improvements with adequate flexibility to ensure that local agencies can effectively use the resources to also support all modes of transportation;

b) Support a funding distribution that considers all risk threats, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters, as estimated by the Department of Homeland Security, in cooperation with state and local officials;

c) Support programs that facilitate cooperation with security and emergency preparedness officials to refine and improve information exchange protocols, emergency preparedness systems, and regional data coordination;

d) Support efforts to provide funding incentives and policy flexibility to facilitate programs to provide safe working conditions for coach operators and transit personnel;

e) Support efforts to provide sufficient funding for transit agencies to implement physical security, mandated employee screenings, and cybersecurity directives while also incorporating transit agency technical expertise in developing regulatory guidelines and procedures.

IX. ENVIRONMENTAL & ENERGY ISSUES

Federal environmental policies affecting OCTA include the National Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Therefore, policies to further develop environmental and energy-efficient goals will likely have an impact on OCTA's operations. With such proposals in mind, OCTA will:

a) Seek funding to comply with state and local environmental standards;

b) Support expedited review for project development, right-of-way acquisition, and construction activities without impairing substantive environmental requirements;

c) Ensure adequate funding and flexibility in the application of resiliency, natural infrastructure, or other climate-related policies to the delivery of mobility improvements, as opposed to mandates that would constrain transportation resources;

d) Support efforts related to separate and distinct sand nourishment permits;~~.~~

e) Support streamlining U.S. Army Corps of Engineers processes to expedite transportation projects.

X. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

OCTA must also monitor several other administrative requirements, including new and expanded regulatory definitions that may affect the agency's operations. As such, OCTA will:

a) Support expedited and improved federal reporting and monitoring requirements to ensure efficiency and usefulness of data while also eliminating redundant state and federal requirements;

b) Oppose regulatory proposals that unreasonably subject OCTA to burdensome bureaucratic requirements or increased operational costs, making it harder to deliver projects and improve mobility in Orange County;

c) Oppose policies adversely affecting the agency's ability to effectively address labor relations, employee rights, benefits, and working conditions, such as health, safety, and ergonomic standards;

d) Oppose policies that limit state or local pension benefit reforms.

Orange County Transportation Authority 2025-26
Federal Legislative Platform

APPENDIX

Principles for Surface Transportation Reauthorization Legislation

1. Develop a fiscally sound, innovative solution to the Highway Trust Fund's structural revenue deficit that ensures long-term sustainability for both highway and transit funding. The solution should be based on a fair-share, user-pays approach that ensures all users contribute to the maintenance and improvement of transportation infrastructure. It should also maintain the historical commitment to transit funding from the Highway Trust Fund, reduce volatility in transportation resources, and support forward-looking strategies.

2. Protect and preserve the LOSSAN Rail Corridor as a critical, interregional transportation asset vital to national defense, goods movement, economic vitality, and regional mobility. Secure dedicated funding and permit streamlining to quickly address infrastructure vulnerabilities, ensuring the corridor remains resilient against disruptions that could impact military readiness, supply chain efficiency, and passenger rail connectivity along one of the nation's most strategically significant rail corridors.

3. Prioritize the use of formula funding with sufficient flexibility to respect the unique nature of regional transportation agencies in the Southern California Association of Governments region.

4. Support reinstating the suballocation process to county transportation commissions to ensure federal formula funds are proportionally distributed. Restoring this process will empower local and regional agencies to direct investments where they are most needed, ultimately leading to more efficient use of funds, project delivery, and greater overall impact on transportation infrastructure and mobility.

5. Ensure that funding new infrastructure programs do not replace or adversely affect the delivery of transportation funding that has been traditionally used by the Orange County Transportation Authority.

6. Support maintaining dedicated federal transit funding, including the historic 80-20 highway-transit funding split, and ensuring transit agencies have the flexibility needed to effectively operate, maintain, and improve services.

7. Prevent impediments to infrastructure investments and funding because of issues beyond an agency's control, such as air quality attainment.

8. Expedite and improve the efficiency of environmental reviews for infrastructure projects by streamlining requirements, reducing redundancies, and supporting reciprocity between the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, while providing additional funding to accelerate state and federal review processes. Additionally, support adjusting federalization thresholds to prevent unnecessary oversight of smaller projects and improve efficiency, expanded use of exemptions for various classes of projects, and use of programmatic reviews.

9. Improve the federal grant process by streamlining Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs), standardizing application requirements, and enhancing predictability to reduce administrative burdens and accelerate funding delivery. Establish merit-based criteria, prioritize efficiency and economic development, introduce structured annual grant cycles, and implement a fast-track approval process for critical project components. Additionally, allow abridged resubmissions for previously unsuccessful applications and ensure NOFOs are concise and accessible to agencies with limited resources. Avoid imposing overly complex reporting requirements that create unnecessary compliance burdens.

10. Promote a transparent and fair discretionary grant process that ensures local control and balanced regional distribution, free from arbitrary limits, unreasonable matching requirements, or other policies that would discourage federal funding from flowing to Orange County.

11. Provide stable, long-term funding and policy support for passenger and freight rail to enhance federal investment in key rail corridors, streamline project delivery, improve safety, and strengthen rail's role in goods movement and national defense.

12. Advocate for strategic federal investment in transportation infrastructure and streamlined project delivery to support Orange County's role in the successful execution of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. Ensure that federal policies facilitate permitting efficiency, workforce readiness, and partnerships that enhance Orange County's transportation network and global competitiveness while minimizing disruptions to daily operations

13. Support fair and flexible tolling policies based on user-pay principles. Any federal oversight should respect regional decision-making, and the unique transportation needs of differing regions. Toll revenues should continue to be prioritized for debt service, a reasonable return on private investment, and the costs related to operation and maintenance of the facility, while also authorizing

excess revenues to be used for transportation investments, consistent with state laws.

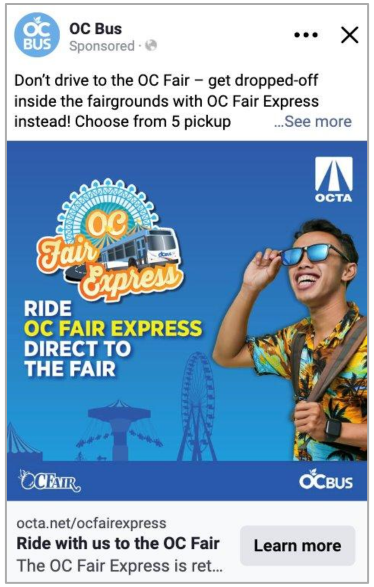
14. Support the preservation of tax-exempt financing for surface transportation projects, ensuring public agencies retain the ability to issue and refinance tax-exempt debt.

Marketing and Communications Update

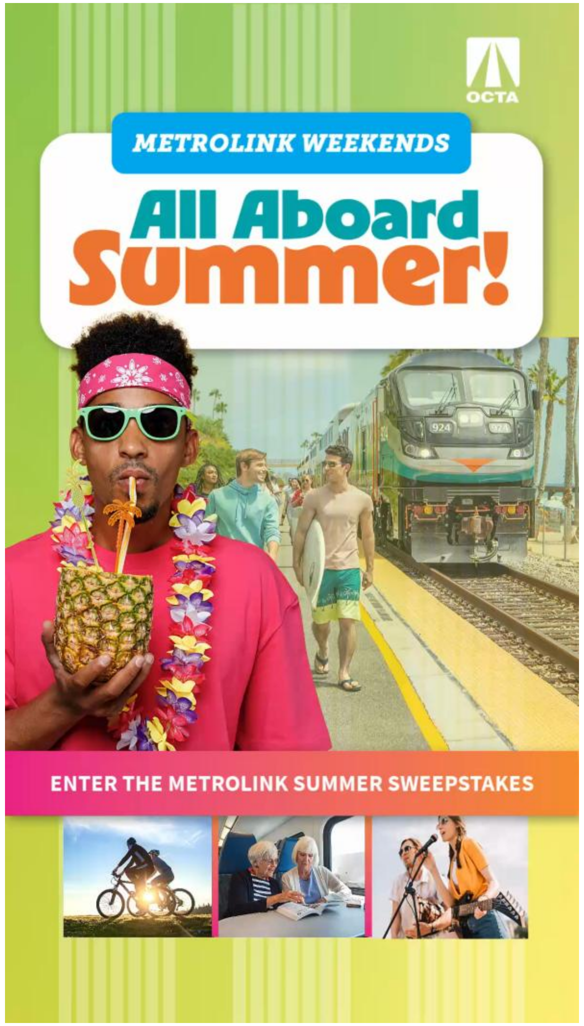
July through November 2025

Orange County Transportation Authority

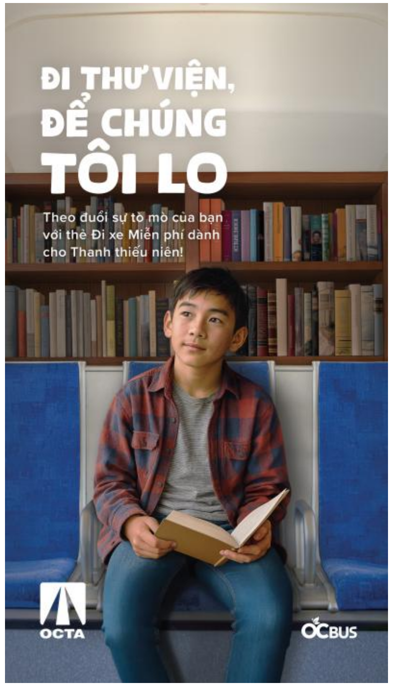
OC Bus: OC Fair Express

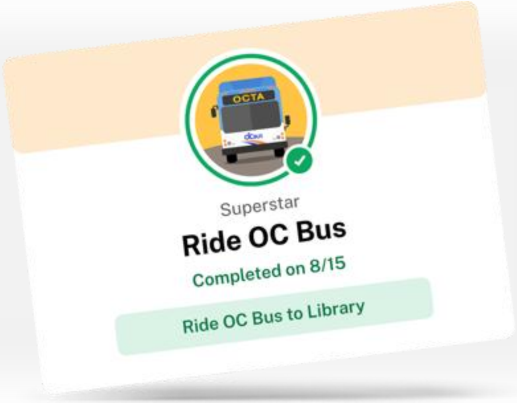


Summer Transit Marketing



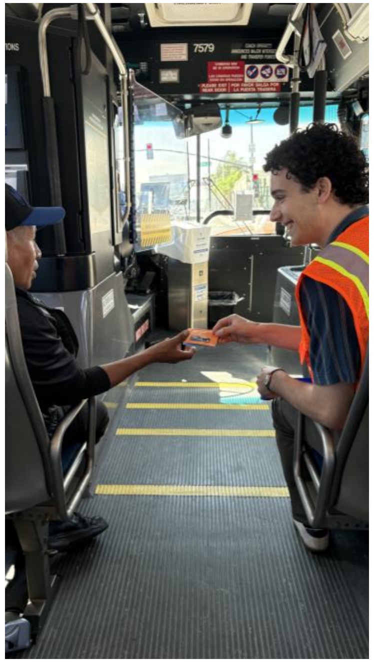
OC Bus: Your Route to Education

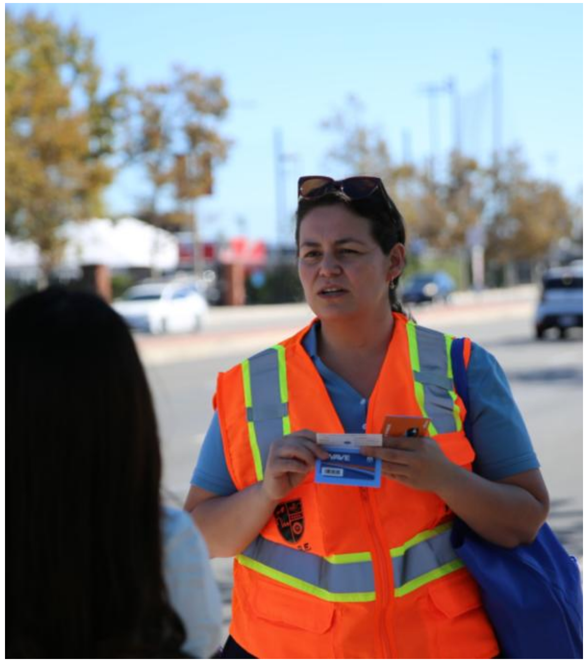


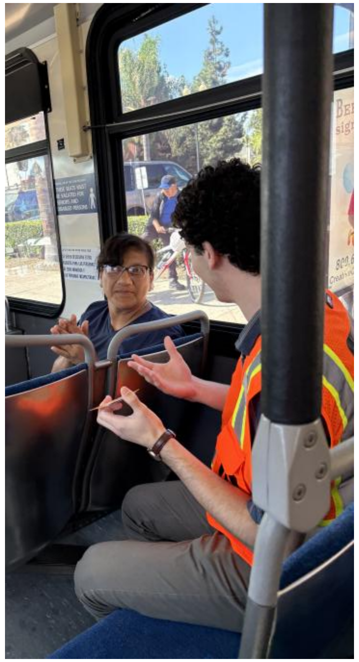


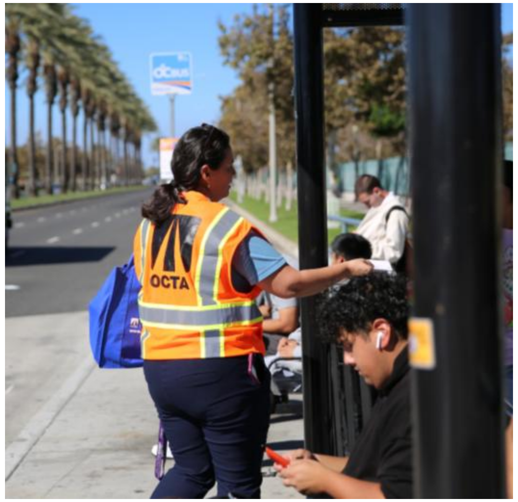
OC Bus: Wave Launch

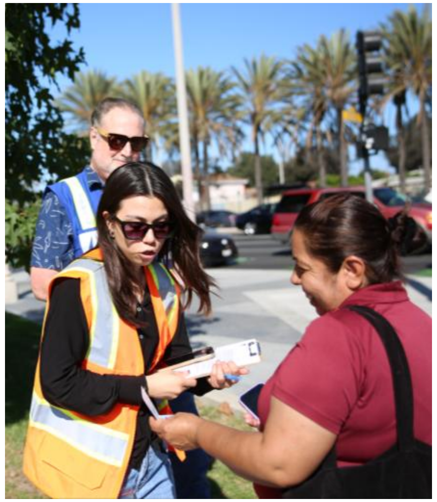
OC Bus: Wave Launch

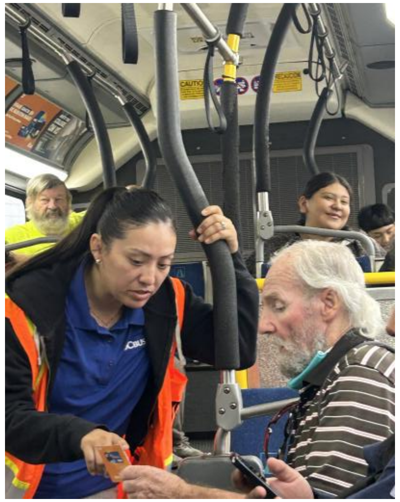


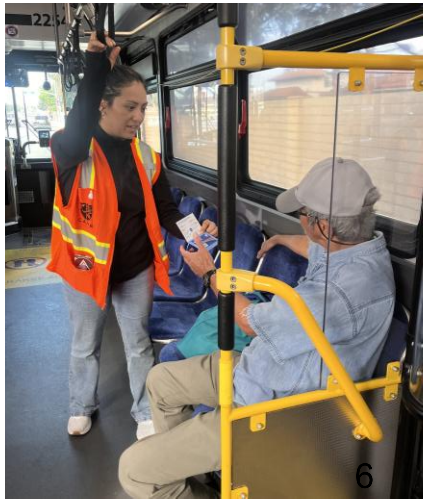




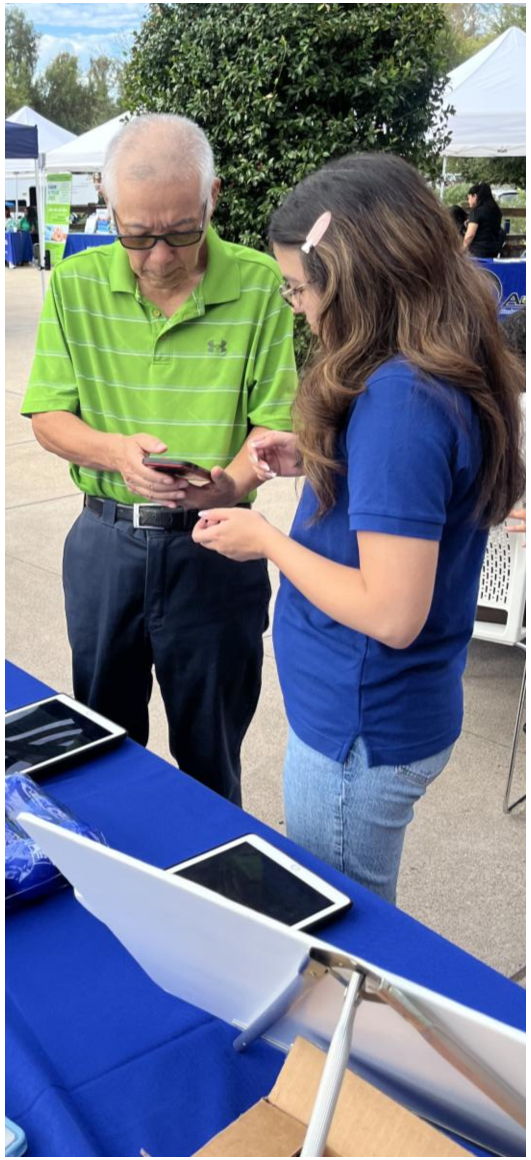








OC Bus: Wave Launch



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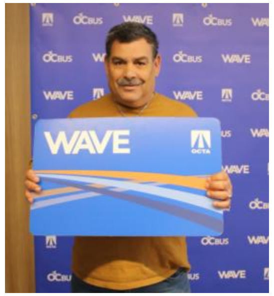

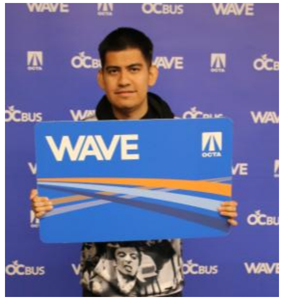

Rideshare Week Promotion

Thank You