



November 16, 2023

To: Legislative and Communications Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell Johnson", is written over the "From:" line.

Subject: Orange County Transportation Authority's 2023-24 State and Federal Legislative Platforms

Overview

Halfway through each legislative session, staff conducts a refresh to the Orange County Transportation Authority's State and Federal Legislative Platforms to ensure updates are provided on relevant issues that are anticipated to be of discussion for the upcoming year. The final drafts of the revised 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 State and Federal Legislative Platforms were reviewed and approved for further circulation by the Legislative and

Communications Committee (Committee) on October 19, 2023, and by the Board on October 23, 2023. 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 2024-25 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.

2023-24 OCTA State Legislative Platform

The final proposed revisions to the 2023-24 OCTA State Legislative Platform are summarized below. Language was edited, amended, or removed as necessary to ensure grammatical and stylistic integrity.

- Revisions are proposed to Subsection (c) under the section entitled, “Key Policy Issues in 2023-24” per direction from Director Foley with Committee concurrence. This is one of several principles created to expand on the importance of engaging with the state on issues pertaining to adaptation and resiliency. Specifically, this principle broadens the approach to support all efforts seeking to combat the environmental impacts occurring on transportation infrastructure throughout the County.
- Per direction from Director Foley with Committee concurrence, Subsection (d) is proposed to be added under the section entitled, “Key Policy Issues in 2023-24.” This principle underscores OCTA’s advocacy efforts specifically as it pertains to the pursuit of funding and need for administrative solutions, as necessary, to address environmental impacts along the rail corridor. For example, in the last year, OCTA had successfully advocated that the California Transportation Commission (CTC) should delegate authority to the Executive Director of the CTC to approve fund allocations for emergencies impacting publicly owned rail facilities. This aids in streamlining various approval processes and quickly allows local agencies to quickly draw down funding to respond to emergencies. With this principle, OCTA will be positioned to advocate for funding and any administrative solution deemed appropriate to support adaptation and resiliency efforts throughout the entire rail corridor.
- Per direction from Director Foley with Committee concurrence, Subsection (e) is proposed to be added under the section entitled, “Key Policy Issues in 2023-24.” The intention for this new principle is for OCTA to engage in potential activities regarding the management of sea level

rise and other environmental impacts occurring throughout the rail corridor with the possibility of pursuing funding for such activities.

- Subsection (f) under the section entitled, “Key Policy Issues in 2023-24” is proposed to be added. OCTA, alongside other member agencies of the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency, submitted a letter to the Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency to urge the State’s support in developing a long-term study related to potential track relocation. This issue is much greater than any one agency and requires significant state coordination. While local agencies will still be key stakeholders in informing such study, OCTA should continue to advocate for a strong state role in this effort.
- Revisions to Subsection (o) under the section entitled, “Key Policy Issues in 2023-24” are recommended. Last year’s budget provided \$4 billion for transit operations and capital projects, with \$2 billion being allocated in this budget and the remaining \$2 billion to be allocated in next year’s budget. There were also several accountability and responsibility measures associated with the funding. These proposed revisions reflect the need to protect these funds as they have been outlined in this year’s budget and that the remainder of the funding is provided in fiscal year 2024-25.
- Subsection (h) under the section entitled, “Transit Programs” is proposed to be added. Included in the State’s budget this year was the creation of and an appropriation for the Zero-Emission Roadmap. The roadmap is intended to identify the actions needed to meet California’s zero-emission goals, with minimal displacement of existing workers, specifically as it pertains to the transit sector. This will include gathering information related to jobs provided by existing buses, determining the skills gap that exists to operate and maintain the new zero-emission equipment, and developing a plan to aid in this transition. OCTA should be engaged to help inform this discussion to ensure a seamless and effective transition.
- Revisions to Subsection (f) under the section entitled, “Active Transportation” are included per direction from Director Foley. This principle adds that the pursuit of funding may be appropriate for OCTA to advocate for as it pertains to projects that could help increase safety of electric bicycle operation.
- A minor revision to Subsection (c) under the section entitled, “Employment Issues” is recommended to strike Family Medical Leave Act and replace it with the California Family Rights Act. This more accurately

aligns with California state law. The previous reference was to federal law.

- Revisions to Subsection (d) under the section entitled, "Transportation Security and Emergency Preparedness" are included. The California Transit Association is exploring an opportunity to expand current provisions that assesses a \$10,000 fine as it relates to committing assault or battery against a coach operator or ticket agent. Transit agencies are always looking at ways to increase the safety and security of their employees and passengers. Expanding this penalty to include all public transit employees could help in this effort by creating a deterrent of this behavior.

Sponsor Bills

OCTA often encounters specific legislative issues requiring sponsor legislation, prompting OCTA to take the lead in developing legislative language and securing an author. Staff is currently exploring the need for any potential sponsor bills that may be useful for the remainder of the session. Staff is recommending that should any need arise for a sponsor bill, it be considered by the Board through Committee at a later date.

2023-24 OCTA Federal Legislative Platform

The final proposed revisions to the 2023-24 OCTA Federal Legislative Platform are summarized below. Language was edited, amended, or removed as necessary to ensure grammatical and stylistic integrity.

- Revisions are proposed to Subsection (j) under the section entitled, "Key Policy Issues in 118th Congress" per direction with Committee concurrence to align with the State Legislative Platform. This is one of several principles created to expand on the importance of engaging with OCTA's federal partners on issues pertaining to adaptation and resiliency. Specifically, this principle broadens the approach to support all efforts seeking to combat the environmental impacts occurring on transportation infrastructure throughout the County.
- Per direction and Committee concurrence to align with the State Legislative Platform, Subsection (k) is proposed to be added under the Section entitled, "Key Policy Issues in 118th Congress." This principle underscores OCTA's advocacy efforts specifically as it pertains to the pursuit of funding and need for administrative solutions, as necessary, to address environmental impacts along the rail corridor. For example, in the last year, OCTA had successfully advocated that the CTC should

delegate authority to the Executive Director of the CTC to approve fund allocations for emergencies impacting publicly owned rail facilities. This aids in streamlining various approval processes and quickly allows local agencies to quickly draw down funding to respond to emergencies. With this principle, OCTA will be positioned to advocate for funding and any administrative solution deemed appropriate to support adaptation and resiliency efforts throughout the entire rail corridor.

- Per direction and Committee concurrence to align with the State Legislative Platform, Subsection (l) is proposed to be added under the section entitled, "Key Policy Issues in 118th Congress." The intention for this new principle is for OCTA to engage in potential activities regarding the management of sea level rise and other environmental impacts occurring throughout the rail corridor with the possibility of pursuing funding for such activities.
- Subsection (m) under the section entitled, "Key Policy Issues in 118th Congress" is proposed to be added. OCTA, alongside other member agencies of the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency submitted a letter to the Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency to urge the State's support in developing a long-term study related to potential track relocation. This issue is much greater than any one agency and requires significant federal and state coordination. While local agencies will still be key stakeholders in informing such study, OCTA should continue to advocate for a strong federal role in this effort.
- Revisions to Subsection (i) under the section entitled, "Transportation Funding" are recommended. Recent federal guidance has required some changes to the suballocation process as it pertains to certain federal funding programs. OCTA maintains its concerns with altering longstanding formula distribution practices within the State. However, OCTA staff continues to work diligently to ensure it receives its current formula share of federal funding and supports the reinstatement of the previous suballocation practice.

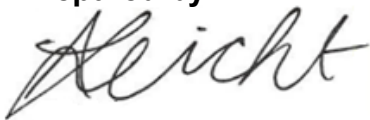
Summary

The 2023-24 OCTA State and Federal Legislative Platforms are presented for consideration and adoption.

Attachments

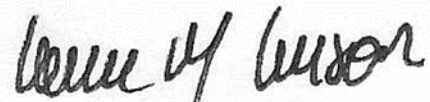
- A. Final Draft Orange County Transportation Authority 2023-24 State Legislative Platform
- B. Final Draft Orange County Transportation Authority 2023-24 Federal Legislative Platform

Prepared by:



Alexis Leicht
Government Relations Representative,
Government Relations
(714) 560-5475

Approved by:



Lance M. Larson
Executive Director,
Government Relations
(714) 560-5908