



**March 19, 2026**

**To:** Legislative Committee  
**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer  
**Subject:** State Legislative Status Report

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

**Overview**

The Orange County Transportation Authority provides regular updates to the Legislative Committee on policy issues directly impacting its overall programs, projects, and operations. This report includes recommended support positions on two bills: one that would establish a statewide safety requirement for school/campus electric bicycle parking, and the other bill that would create a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group to develop recommendations to streamline permitting for coastal resilience projects. The report also provides informational updates on a bill relating to axle weight limits for zero-emission transit buses, a bill that proposes amendments to the SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) regional transportation planning framework, a summary of the recent Senate Transportation Subcommittee on Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Resiliency, and an overview of the California Department of Transportation's recent organizational and policy changes intended to elevate transit and rail within the department.

**Recommendations**

- A. Adopt a SUPPORT position on AB 1569 (Davies, R-San Juan Capistrano), which would establish safety requirements for school-campus electric bicycle parking.
- B. Adopt a SUPPORT position on AB 2051 (Wicks, D-Oakland), which would establish the Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group.

**Discussion**

AB 1569 (Davies, R-San Juan Capistrano): pupil safety: electric bicycle (e-bike) parking: safety program.

AB 1569 would require, commencing with the 2027–28 school year, that a local education agency (LEA) that allows pupils in kindergarten through 12th grade to

park an e-bike on campus, must require pupils to complete the e-bike safety and training program developed by the California Highway Patrol (CHP), or a related safety course prescribed by a local government or the local law enforcement authority having jurisdiction over the school, if available. The bill further requires a pupil to submit proof of completion of one of the prescribed courses to their school prior to parking an e-bike on campus.

An LEA (defined as a school district or county office of education) that adopts an e-bike safety policy on or before January 1, 2027 would be exempt from the requirements. The bill establishes the following requirements commencing with the 2027–28 school year:

- An LEA allowing kindergarten through 12th grade students to park an e-bike on campus must require completion of the CHP e-bike safety and training program, or a related safety course, if available, as prescribed by a local government or the local law enforcement authority having jurisdiction over the school.
- A student must submit proof of completion from one of the prescribed courses to their school before parking an e-bike on campus.
- An LEA that has adopted a policy related to e-bike safety on or before January 1, 2027, would be exempt from the requirements.

E-bike usage has increased significantly throughout Orange County, particularly among youth riders, and a 2023 study published in Surgery Open Science found that children aged ten to 13 account for nearly 44 percent of reported e-bike injuries. The higher speeds and longer travel distances enabled by e-bikes increase the importance of structured safety education to improve rider awareness, traffic law compliance, and safe operating behavior, particularly in high-traffic school environments. A SUPPORT position on AB 1569 is consistent with the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) 2025–26 State Legislative Platform principle to “seek funding and support policies that enhance safety requirements related to the utilization of electric bicycles”. A thorough analysis and copy of the text of this legislation is included as Attachment A.

AB 2051 (Wicks, D-Oakland): public resources: Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group.

AB 2051 would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, in consultation with the Secretary for Environmental Protection, to convene a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group (Working Group) to develop a statewide Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap (Roadmap) for projects along the California coast and in the San Francisco Bay. The Roadmap, due to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2028, would identify administrative reforms and potential legislative changes to streamline and accelerate permitting for coastal resilience projects.

The Working Group must include representatives from federal, state, and local agencies, including key permitting and resource agencies such as the California Coastal Commission, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Lands Commission, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Ocean Protection Council, and the State Water Resources Control Board. The bill directs the Working Group to evaluate improvements such as streamlined completeness determinations, coordinated interagency review timelines, unified applications, expanded use of regional and programmatic permits, standardized mitigation approaches, delegated approvals, potential consolidated permitting models, and strategies to address regulatory workforce shortages that contribute to permitting delays.

The bill also requires the California Coastal Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission to convene a Coastal Resilience Permit Advisory Group by April 1, 2027. The Advisory Group is intended to support the Working Group by providing stakeholder input on proposed permitting reforms and must include representatives from state agencies, including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), local governments subject to coastal planning requirements, California ports, local transportation and wastewater agencies, California Native American tribes, and other stakeholders, including business, housing, environmental, environmental justice, and fishing interests.

For OCTA, this is particularly relevant as OCTA owns and maintains over 40 miles of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor within Orange County, including seven miles located directly along the coast. This corridor supports intercity passenger rail, commuter rail, and freight operations critical to regional mobility, economic activity, and national defense. Coastal erosion, bluff instability, sea level rise, and extreme weather events continue to threaten segments of the corridor, particularly in the City of San Clemente, where repeated landslides and bluff failures have resulted in prolonged service disruptions and costly emergency stabilization efforts.

While OCTA has secured substantial state and federal funding for long-term stabilization and resilience improvements, project delivery timelines are significantly affected by overlapping permitting requirements, multi-agency review processes, inconsistent mitigation standards, and staffing constraints at regulatory agencies. Similar permitting challenges can affect transportation infrastructure projects more broadly within the coastal zone where state and federal jurisdiction overlaps.

By establishing a structured process to evaluate administrative streamlining opportunities and recommend targeted reforms, AB 2051 may improve coordination, consistency, and timeline predictability for resilience projects affecting the LOSSAN Rail Corridor and other transportation facilities in coastal areas. The inclusion of local transportation agencies on the Advisory Group provides a potential opportunity for OCTA to help ensure that rail corridor

protection and adaptation projects are clearly recognized within the coastal resilience framework.

This bill is sponsored by the Bay Planning Coalition and the Bay Area Council. A SUPPORT position is consistent with OCTA's 2025–26 State Legislative Platform principle to "Seek funding and other administrative solutions, such as permit streamlining, to support adaptation and resiliency efforts throughout the rail corridor." A thorough analysis and copy of the text of this legislation is included as Attachment B.

AB 1944 (Lee, D-Milpitas): zero-emission transit buses: axle weight.

Sponsored by the California Transit Association (CTA), with the support of bus manufacturers and several transit agencies, AB 1944 would extend and phase down axle weight allowances for zero-emission transit buses procured between January 1, 2027, and December 31, 2031. The bill provides additional time for newly procured zero-emission buses to transition to the current 22,000-pound single-axle curb weight requirement by establishing stepped compliance thresholds through 2031, before fully reverting to the 22,000-pound limit beginning January 1, 2032.

Under existing law, transit buses are generally limited to a maximum gross weight of 20,500 pounds on any one axle, with higher limits authorized for certain articulated and zero-emission transit buses depending on procurement date. For articulated and zero-emission transit buses procured on or after January 1, 2022, the current maximum curb weight on any one axle is 22,000 pounds. At the same time, transit agencies are required to comply with the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation, which mandates a transition to 100 percent zero-emission bus purchases and a fully zero-emission fleet by 2040. Zero-emission bus technologies, including battery-electric and hydrogen fuel cell buses, can weigh more than conventional diesel buses due to onboard energy storage systems and related equipment, which may affect axle weight distribution, especially as batteries and other equipment are added to extend the range the buses can reach.

AB 1944 would permit a maximum axle curb weight of up to 25,000 pounds for zero-emission transit buses procured in 2027, up to 24,000 pounds for those procured in 2028 and 2029, and up to 23,000 pounds for those procured in 2030 and 2031, before returning to 22,000 pounds in 2032. The bill does not modify overall federal highway weight limitations and does not authorize operation in excess of applicable interstate standards.

For OCTA, AB 1944 may be relevant to ongoing implementation of the ICT regulation and long-term zero-emission fleet planning. Axle weight limitations can influence vehicle specifications, procurement timelines, and deployment strategies as manufacturers continue refining zero-emission bus platforms. This item is provided for informational purposes only, and staff will continue to monitor

the bill as it moves through the legislative process. CTA is working closely with the California State Association of Counties and League of California Cities as it moves the bill forward to ensure any concerns can be addressed. A copy of the text of this legislation is included as Attachment C.

SB 1087 (Cabaldon, D-Napa): transportation planning: sustainable communities strategies: Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program: local planning grants.

SB 1087 is a bill sponsored by the four largest metropolitan planning organizations (MPO), including the Southern California Association of Governments, with the intent to pursue comprehensive reform of the SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) planning and approval process. SB 375 was enacted in 2008 and required MPOs as part of the regional transportation plan, to develop a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, otherwise known as a sustainable communities strategy (SCS). These plans were intended to be developed through a public process that was bottoms-up but ultimately had to meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that were set by the CARB. Under SB 375, CARB was also designated with the authority to review the technical methodology MPOs used to estimate the emission reductions achieved by the SCS, and whether the adopted SCS meets the emission reduction goals required.

Since this process was created, multiple challenges have been experienced by MPOs in this process, including delays in the approval process, gaps in transparency within the process, and overall lack of resources to meet the goals prescribed. While SB 375 allows a region that cannot meet the greenhouse gas emission reduction target to instead adopt an alternative planning strategy, in practice, MPOs have not done so due to concerns this would make their region ineligible for state transportation funding programs.

While SB 1087 is intended to be much more significant clean-up legislation, in its initial form, it is relatively narrow in scope. Specifically, the bill would modify the frequency with which an SCS would be included in a regional transportation plan, requiring that beginning January 1, 2027, every second regional transportation plan include an SCS prepared by the MPO.

The bill would also revise the distribution of \$25 million in annual planning funds from the SB 1 (Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program. Under current law, these funds are administered by Caltrans as competitive local planning grants. SB 1087 would instead allocate the \$25 million, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to MPOs based on their share of the statewide population, shifting the distribution model from a competitive grant process to a formula-based allocation. The MPOs then can use the funds for planning efforts to further SCS goals, per guidelines to be developed. While OCTA and cities have previously been successful in securing funds through the current Caltrans competitive process, it's unclear how or if MPOs would suballocate or provide funding under this program.

For OCTA, SB 1087 may have implications for regional transportation planning processes and the structure and administration of planning grant funding. Any future amendments expanding the bill's scope could affect the relationship between metropolitan planning organizations, county transportation commissions, and state agencies, as well as funding access for local and regional projects. This item is for informational purposes only, and staff will continue to monitor SB 1087 and related SB 375 reform discussions and will provide additional analysis should the bill be amended to include broader structural or funding changes. A copy of the text of this legislation is included as Attachment D.

#### Summary of LOSSAN Subcommittee Hearing on Strengthening Governance and Performance of Southern California Rail

On February 18, 2026, the Senate Transportation Committee's Subcommittee on the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Resiliency held an informational hearing. Presentations were delivered by representatives from the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), Caltrans Division of Rail, Metrolink, and Caltrain. The discussion focused on corridor governance under SB 1098 (Chapter 777, Statutes of 2024), fiscal stability of passenger rail operators, coastal resiliency planning, service reliability, and the transition to zero-emission rail technologies. The tone of the hearing reflected urgency and concern regarding corridor performance and long-term solvency.

CalSTA and Caltrans highlighted significant statewide rail investments, including more than \$25 billion in funded projects. Specific to Southern California, CalSTA noted that in October 2024, the State awarded \$125 million in TIRCP funding for emergency resiliency work in the City of San Clemente. That funding leveraged \$80 million from the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program and helped secure an additional \$100 million in federal Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements funding for the Coastal Rail Infrastructure Resiliency Project. Caltrans also reported that Pacific Surfliner service has been restored to 13 weekday round trips and introduced a new capital project evaluation tool intended to better prioritize investments based on service outcomes. However, Senator Blakespear (D-Laguna Hills) expressed concern that the SB 1098 governance report remains incomplete and questioned whether current oversight structures are delivering improved reliability, faster capital delivery, and meaningful ridership recovery.

A significant portion of the discussion addressed the state's hydrogen train procurement strategy as part of California's zero-emission goals. Caltrans indicated hydrogen technology was selected due to operational constraints on freight-owned corridors that limit electrification. Questions were raised regarding fuel sourcing, long-term costs, and deployment readiness. While support for zero-emission rail was expressed, legislators emphasized the importance of ensuring the strategy is financially and operationally viable before full implementation.

In the second panel, Metrolink's Chief Executive Officer reported gradual ridership growth, particularly among students and weekend riders, following implementation of a revised all-day service model. However, farebox recovery has declined from approximately 33 percent pre-pandemic to roughly 11 percent, with member agencies now covering nearly 75 percent of operating costs. Potential reductions in county contributions may require service adjustments absent a sustainable funding solution. Caltrain reported strong ridership gains following electrification, including significant weekend growth, but similarly faces a structural operating deficit due to long-term shifts in commuting patterns. Both operators underscored the need for stable operating funding.

Overall, legislators conveyed concern that without structural reform, improved accountability, and long-term funding stability, the corridor faces continued performance and financial challenges. The discussion focused on potential coordinated governance, disciplined capital prioritization, and sustained engagement in resiliency planning efforts, particularly in areas such as the City of San Clemente that are critical to corridor continuity.

#### California Department of Transportation Organizational Updates

On February 9, 2026, Caltrans announced a series of organizational and policy changes intended to elevate transit and rail within the department's structure and project delivery framework. The announcement signals a stronger emphasis on integrating transit into highway planning and aligning transportation investments with statewide climate, mobility, and equity goals.

Caltrans is creating a Deputy Director for Transit Rail Programs and has issued its first comprehensive Director's Policy on Transit. The Director's Policy on Transit outlines a "transit-first" approach to projects on the state highway system, emphasizing transit-priority treatments such as dedicated bus lanes and signal priority. The policy is intended to reduce travel times, improve safety, enhance transit competitiveness, and support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle dependence.

Caltrans is also restoring the Division of Mass Transportation to establish a dedicated team focused on improving the reliability, connectivity, and delivery of transit services statewide. In addition, Caltrans announced the formation of the California Transit Advisory Committee, which will provide strategic input and technical guidance to support implementation of the Director's Policy on Transit and related transit initiatives. Membership is limited to up to 20 representatives reflecting geographic diversity and a range of stakeholders, including transit operators, local governments, regional transportation planning agencies, universities, advocacy organizations, community-based organizations, and representatives of disadvantaged communities. Members will serve two-year terms, and meetings will occur quarterly. Caltrans has opened a public nomination and application process, with applications currently due by

April 30, 2026, after which appointments will be made to establish the inaugural committee.

Increased coordination between Caltrans' transit and rail leadership and regional agencies may influence how intercity rail, passenger rail, and highway interface projects are developed and delivered. Continued engagement will help ensure Orange County's operational and long-term mobility priorities are reflected in evolving statewide transit policy. It is expected that work will continue over the next few months, including coordination through advocacy groups such as the Self-Help Counties Coalition and CTA to better understand the goals of these programs and ensure alignment with local priorities. Staff will provide updates as they become available.

**Summary**

This report recommends SUPPORT positions on two bills: a bill that would establish a statewide safety requirement for school/campus electric bicycle parking, and a bill that would create a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group to streamline permitting for coastal resilience projects. The report also includes informational updates on a bill related to bus axle weight limits and a bill related to SB 375 reform. This report also includes summaries of the recent Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Subcommittee hearing and the California Department of Transportation's new transit-focused organizational and policy initiatives.

**Attachments**

- A. AB 1569 (Davies, R-San Juan Capistrano) Bill Analysis with Bill Language
- B. AB 2051 (Wicks, D-Oakland) Bill Analysis with Bill Language
- C. AB 1944 (Lee, D-Milpitas) Bill Language
- D. SB 1087 (Cabaldon, D-Napa) Bill Language
- E. Orange County Transportation Authority Legislative Matrix

**Prepared by:**



Clara Brotcke  
Associate Government Relations Representative,  
Government Relations  
(714) 560-5329

**Approved by:**



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