



March 19, 2024

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Senate President Pro Tempore
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
1021 O Street, Suite 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Protect Regional Early Action Planning 2.0 (REAP 2.0) Grant Program

Dear President Pro Tempore McGuire, Speaker Rivas, and Budget Chairs Wiener and Gabriel:

As you continue to set your priorities for the FY 2024-25 State Budget, we urge you to maintain your strong support for the Regional Early Action Planning 2.0 (REAP 2.0) grant program, the only program specifically and exclusively designed to implement the regions' Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS), as required by SB 375 (2008). While we recognize the incredible budget challenges the Legislature now faces, REAP 2.0 must be protected if we are to meet our ambitious Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction, mobility, and housing goals.

In July 2023, the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG) full REAP 2.0 application was approved by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), formally committing \$246 million to SCAG. With this commitment, SCAG developed our REAP 2.0 program through an inclusive outreach process focused on engagement with disadvantaged and underserved communities, by understanding key priorities and refining the program and funding allocation to meet them. Since then, SCAG has sub-allocated \$192 million primarily through competitive programs to more than 100 transformative, local projects that implement the region's Regional Housing Needs Determination and the dozens of GHG-reducing strategies contained within Connect SoCal, the Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/ SCS) for the Southern California region.

Connect SoCal is a long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic and environmental goals. It sets the stage for the region's ambitious housing plan to accommodate 1.3 million new housing units and includes new mobility strategies to enhance accessibility without adding automobile trips. SCAG's REAP 2.0 programs support transformative planning and implementation activities that realize these objectives by providing resources to local cities, counties, transportation agencies and other partners to implement Connect SoCal.

As part of the REAP 2.0 program, SCAG created the County Transportation Commission (CTC) Partnership Program which funds projects that integrate and align Southern California's mobility and housing opportunities. To help achieve equitable project outcomes, applicants developed engagement plans prioritizing impacted communities and other relevant stakeholders, such as local jurisdictions and community-based organizations (CBOs).

Some of the innovative projects awarded through SCAG's REAP 2.0 CTC Partnership Program include the following:

- \$15 million for the "North Hollywood Transit Center," which will result in improvements to multi-modal transportation options for San Fernando Valley residents and riders to the third busiest station in the LA Metro transit system. The result will accommodate an increase in transit demand from future bus rapid transit services and a planned mixed-use development project that will accommodate 1,500 housing units, a quarter of which will be rent restricted.
- \$4.3 million for the "First Street Multimodal Boulevard Design," which will complete planning and design work to advance bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvements such as protected bike lanes, transit signal priority and bus stop shelters on a four-mile stretch of First Street in Santa Ana.
- \$3 million for the "RCTC Core Capacity Innovative Transit Study," which will evaluate transit potential along the Interstate 15, Interstate 215, and along the San Jacinto Branch rail line in western Riverside County. The long-term vision of the study is a fully integrated transportation network that allows for multimodal access while leveraging advanced technology.
- \$6.5 million for the "Countywide Multi-Modal Complete Streets Program," which will fund portions of several multi-modal projects in the cities of Fontana, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Rialto, Twentynine Palms and Upland. These projects will lay the groundwork for developing efficient mobility hubs and addressing infrastructure needs related to affordable housing development.

- \$1.67 million for the “Santa Paula Branch Line Active Transportation – Master Plan Update and Validate Connections to Serve New Housing and Reduce VMT,” which will advance the Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan, improving active transportation connections to housing, transit, and job centers in Ventura County.
- \$1 million for the “Calexico Intermodal Transportation Center,” which will construct a new intermodal transportation center in downtown Calexico, California, a major hub for cross-border travel, to consolidate public and private transportation providers in one facility to improve mobility and safety of passengers, increase transit ridership, accommodate zero emission transit vehicles, reduce vehicle emissions and enhance the Downtown Business District.

Projects like these are critical to implementing Connect SoCal. Reducing or delaying funding to them will compromise their integrity and have severe, negative impacts to Southern California and the entire state. We respectfully ask the Legislature to protect this vital program to ensure climate, housing and mobility goals are met.

Sincerely,



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Southern California Association of Governments



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Executive Director
Imperial County Transportation Commission



Martin Erickson
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