

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	April 15, 2024
SUBJECT:	Receive Update on Legislative Activities and Provide Feedback on SRTA's Potential Position on Select Bills
AGENDA ITEM:	6
STAFF CONTACT:	Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Executive Director

SUMMARY:

Staff monitors proposed state legislation each year to determine if they will help or hinder advancing the transportation goals of the region. Staff identified several bills of key interest and recommends potential positions for board of directors' consideration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Fiscal and Policy Committee:

1. Receive an update on California legislative activities; and
2. Provide feedback to staff on recommended positions to take on select bills.

BACKGROUND:

The Executive Director has been tracking a number of proposed bills that were introduced in 2024 or were previously introduced in 2023 that could potentially be brought back for state legislative consideration. Staff utilize a policy tracking tool created by the California Association of Councils of Governments (CalCOG), of which SRTA is a member, to identify potential proposed legislation that may impact SRTA or local agency regional partners.

Staff have identified the following proposed bills of interest below with the inclusion of a brief summary and recommended agency position. Weblinks to the most recent bill language is provided via attachment.

1. **AB 817 (Pacheco) – Open meetings: teleconferencing; subsidiary body.** This bill proposes changes to the Ralph M. Brown Act to allow members of subsidiary bodies of an agency (such as an advisory committee) to have greater flexibility in attending meetings remotely. This only applies to advisory committees that don't make final decisions or take action on "legislation, regulations, contracts, licenses, permits, or any other entitlements." For example, greater flexibility would allow members of SRTA's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) to participate in meetings remotely since they meet to discuss and provide recommendations to the SRTA Board of Directors on transit-related items. ***Recommended position: Support.***
2. **AB 2290 (Friedman) – Transportation: Class III bikeways; bicycle facilities; Bikeway Quick-Build Project Pilot Program.** First, this bill proposes to prohibit allocating Active Transportation Program funds to projects that create a Class III bikeway unless the project is on a street with a design speed limit of 20 miles per hour or less, or the project will reduce the design speed limit to 20 miles per hour or less. Secondly, this bill proposes changes in how local agencies address including bicycle projects in their projects. Thirdly, this bill proposes Caltrans create a Bikeway Quick-Build Project Pilot Program and implement at least one project in each Caltrans district by January 1, 2027.

Staff reached out and received feedback from regional partners expressing concerns that the proposed changes put limits on where Class III bikeways may go. Such limitations may not match with other statutory laws related to transportation facility speed limits or with engineering design speeds. There is concern this limits funding options for regional partners in providing lower cost solutions to address community needs, where applicable. Staff has no position on the second and third items in this bill. **Recommended position: Oppose unless amended.**

3. **AB 2535 (Bonta) – Trade Corridor Enhancement Program.** The proposed bill would change how Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) funds are apportioned to projects and restrict use of funds. First, the bill proposes to not allow TCEP funding toward projects that include expansion of the physical footprint of a highway unless they address diesel particulate matter under various conditions. Secondly, the bill proposes the California Transportation Commission create targets for funding under future TCEP cycles toward zero-emission projects, including a goal of 50 percent of funds be allocated toward zero-emission freight infrastructure projects in 2030.

The bill leaves several terms undefined and thus left up to interpretation, causing potential confusion for local agencies on what part of their project could be eligible for funding and creating potentially unintended environmental legal challenges. Because the Shasta Region is in air quality "attainment" status this may not apply for now but could in the future. Additionally, TCEP already specifies that zero-emission freight projects are eligible for funding and provides parameters for including projects in grant applications. Staff is concerned that setting targets for funding zero-emission freight projects under TCEP may force the Commission to award funds toward projects that don't score well, thereby leaving other freight projects that do score well unfunded and making rural projects potentially less competitive. TCEP has been a key funding program for the Shasta Region in addressing freight activities on highways in the region. **Recommended position: Oppose unless amended.**

Proposed bills are still early in the state's legislative process. It is recommended that staff continue to track the status of these bills, including any amendments, and present letters for potential submittal at a later date, if necessary. Alternatively, the board could direct the executive director to submit letters if needed consistent with the board's position or to work with the Fiscal & Policy Committee to submit letters.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Staff participate in discussions with CalCOG member agency staff as well as local and regional partners as legislation is introduced to understand potential impacts and receive feedback or specific information.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact related to this item.

Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments:

- A. AB 817 (Pacheco) – Amended January 17, 2024: [AB 817 \(capitoltrack.com\)](#)
- B. AB 2290 (Friedman) – Amended April 1, 2024: [AB 2290 \(capitoltrack.com\)](#)
- C. AB 2535 (Bonta) – Amended April 9, 2024: [AB 2535 \(capitoltrack.com\)](#)