

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	June 25, 2025
SUBJECT:	Retroactively Approve the Redding Area Bus Authority's (RABA) Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program Applications for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 to Operate Route 299X – Burney Express, and I-5 Service Between Redding and Sacramento
AGENDA ITEM:	7-10
STAFF CONTACT:	Jennifer Pollom, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides funding for rural and intercity transit operations via the Section 5311(f) program. Caltrans selects projects and administers the program for California. SRTA reviews and approves projects submitted in the Shasta Region. Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA) submitted three applications totaling \$900,000.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Retroactively approve RABA's FTA Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program application for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 to operate Route 299X – Burney Express;
2. Retroactively approve RABA's FTA Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program applications for FFY 2025 to operate I-5 service between Redding and Sacramento; and
3. Authorize the executive director to provide certifications, assurances, and other requested information to Caltrans and FTA, and make amendments as needed for RABA to be considered for competitive grant funding.

DISCUSSION:

The FTA provides funding for rural transit services via the Section 5311 program and, specifically, intercity transit via the Section 5311(f) program. Caltrans administers 5311(f) funds through a competitive process. SRTA is responsible for reviewing and approving 5311(f) applications in the Shasta Region prior to Caltrans review for funding (SRTA's Policies and Procedures Manual available at <https://srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5077/SRTA-Policies--Procedures---Amended-11625?bidId=>, Chapter 3.15, page 308).

Caltrans issued a call for projects on May 7, 2025. Applications were due to Caltrans on June 10, 2025. RABA is seeking three FTA 5311(f) grants totaling \$900,000 to fund:

1. Route 299X – Burney Express service (first priority); and
2. New intercity service along I-5, between Redding and Sacramento (second priority), separated into two sections that each meet the grant requirements and make the most of the \$300,000 maximum amount restriction, as shown below.
 - Between Redding and Orland
 - Between Orland and Sacramento

Staff recommend approving RABA's applications so Caltrans may consider funding the projects for the operating period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. Caltrans prioritizes awarding funding to existing services prior to funding new services.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may choose not to approve RABA's 5311(f) applications. Doing so would require RABA to use federal and state formula funds apportioned to the region or one-time rural public transit funds for Route 299X operating costs. Potential Route 299X funds include: one-time federal COVID relief programs, annual FTA 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program, and/or Transportation Development Act (TDA) State Transit Assistance (STA). Not approving the I-5 service applications would continue to delay the start of the service.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

RABA submitted the applications to Caltrans by the due date. Caltrans selects projects and administers the program. Tehama County Transportation Commission has expressed prior support for I-5 service with a stop in Red Bluff and have committed funds to the effort. Additionally, the I-5 service project is consistent with the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Business Plan.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on June 11, 2025, to review and discuss the FTA 5311(f) call for projects and concur with staff recommendations.

FISCAL IMPACT:

RABA's \$300,000 FTA Section 5311(f) FFY 2025 application for Route 299X – Burney Express, if funded and combined with rider fares, is anticipated to fully fund Route 299X for the operating period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. This strategy efficiently funds rural transit needs first with the use of competitive 5311(f) funds, if awarded, and allows more TDA Local Transportation Fund (LTF) amounts for other needs, including streets and roads, as long as there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet.

RABA's \$600,000 FTA Section 5311(f) FFY 2025 applications, if funded and combined with state rail funds, Tehama County Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds (\$50,000 to \$100,000 annually), and rider fares, are anticipated to fully fund I-5 intercity service for twelve months.



Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Executive Director