



Automobile Club of Southern California

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October 29, 2007

Mr. Jim Kemp, Executive Director
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
260 North San Antonio Road, Suite B
Santa Barbara CA 93110

Subject: Measure D Renewal – South County Stakeholders Committee

Dear Jim:

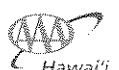
Following discussions in the Measure D renewal Stakeholders Committee for South County, we would like to share a few thoughts for your consideration prior to our next meeting on November 7th.

The draft “Southcoast Measure D Renewal Investment Plan” that was presented in our meeting of October 24th, allocates 37.4% of the subregional funds for “Alternative Modes” (Rail, Traffic Demand Reduction, Bicycle and Pedestrian projects, Safe-Route-to-School projects, and Bus Transit), equaling \$170.35 million. These funds will be fully dedicated and protected for these specific purposes only and can not be used for any other project. However, the “Investment Plan” allocates only 60.9% of the \$455 million Southcoast subregional share for the “Local Flexible Funding” category. This amount, equaling \$277.15 million, represents the total Measure D revenues available to the municipalities in the Southcoast subregion which can be used not only for road maintenance, traffic safety and congestion relief projects, but can also be allocated – at each local jurisdiction’s discretion – for “Alternative Modes” (Rail, Traffic Demand Reduction, Bicycle and Pedestrian projects, Safe-Route-to-School projects, and Bus Transit) in addition to the guaranteed 37.4% of funds allocated for “Alternative Modes.”

While the \$170.35 million allocated for “Alternative Modes” are fully protected for those specific purposes only and can not be used for any other project, the \$277.15 million designated for “Local Flexible Funding” category remain flexible subject to local discretion based on each jurisdiction’s assessment of their priorities, with no guarantee that they will all be available for road maintenance, traffic safety and congestion relief projects. Based on the discussions in the Committee meetings so far, we find this distribution of future Measure D revenues for the Southcoast region still reasonable, but we are strongly concerned about any proposal for further diversion or imposition of any additional restrictions on the “Local Flexible Funding” revenues, if such diversion or restriction result in further commitments for “Alternative Modes”.

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Any such diversion or restriction will result in a serious re-evaluation of our potential endorsement and support for Measure D renewal.

As you know, the Automobile Club of Southern California has long advocated for effective uses of transportation dollars on behalf of our over 6.5 million members in southern California, with more than 115,000 of them in 50% of Santa Barbara County households. The Auto Club remains a trusted voice for most people – even those who may not be our members - in deciding how to vote on local transportation sales tax measures principally because they know we look for equity and balance in allocation of revenues, among other critical requirements. Based on the presentations and material that we have received so far, we do not find any reason for a change in the proposed distribution of future revenues in the Southcoast subregion.

We believe that the process leading to the final decisions about the distribution of future Measure D revenues is as important as the final outcome and percentages allocated for each project and mode. The "Investment Plan" should be comprehensive and multi-modal in nature, reflecting local priorities and needs. Establishing those needs and priorities and allocation of funds for different modes and purposes should be primarily based on facts and data, with due consideration for local sensitivities. We have successfully supported several local transportation sales tax proposals in southern California counties, and we would like to continue a similar partnership with all the stakeholders in Santa Barbara County for the renewal of Measure D. We support measures that meet the following critical criteria:


- All funds are dedicated exclusively to transportation purposes;
- The proposals include a specific expenditure plan that reflects local priorities and contains effective projects that address current and future needs with an equitable distribution of funds for different transportation alternatives;
- The proposals provide adequate oversight and accountability provisions, including an independent oversight committee with audit responsibility and authority;
- A method is included in the measure to modify the expenditure plan in the future with appropriate and adequate safeguards;
- A maintenance-of-effort requirement for local agencies is included to ensure that the newly generated revenues are additive, and do not replace funds currently used for transportation; and
- The measure includes a sunset or termination date.

We are looking forward to our continued partnership with you and other stakeholders toward the successful passage of the new Measure D to improve traffic safety and mobility in Santa Barbara County. If you wish to further discuss this matter, please call me at (714) 885-2326.

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Sincerely,



Hamid Bahadori
Public Policy and Programs