



2019-2020

Federal Legislative Platform



Connecting Communities for a Stronger Region

City of Escalon | City of Lathrop | City of Lodi | City of Manteca
City of Ripon | City of Stockton | City of Tracy | County of San Joaquin

Legislative and regulatory actions have the potential to significantly benefit SJCOG programs and services. They also have potential to present serious challenges that threaten the Agency's ability to meet the county's most critical transportation demands.

The 2019-20 Legislative Platform establishes the principles that will guide the Agency's legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts through the new legislative session. The platform is intended to be broad enough to cover the wide variety of issues that are likely to be considered and flexible enough to allow the Agency to respond swiftly and effectively to unanticipated developments.

2019-20 Federal Legislative Platform

Aviation

- Support flexibility with respect to the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), a federal grant program that provides funding to airports to help improve safety and efficiency.
- Support language that would address the 2014 FAA rule regarding voter approved general sales taxes. San Joaquin County, like many other self-help counties, has an airport and the County receives funds raised on the sales tax associated with the sale of aviation fuel. The 2014 FAA rule changed the definition of "local taxes on aviation fuel" to apply to all sales taxes rather than specific excise taxes on aviation fuel. This change diverts funding away from projects outlined in local sales tax measures.

Automated and Connected Vehicles

- The integration of AVs and CVs into the nation's transportation system should not come at the expense of local autonomy. Regional organizations (such as Councils of Government) should have the opportunity to work in cooperation with cities and counties in the testing of AVs and CVs, and planning for their assimilation into the transportation system.
- Support additional focus on how regional organizations can facilitate the regional sharing, storage, and use of data.

Economic Incentives for Job Growth

- Promote the inclusion of transportation and other types of infrastructure funding in any federal proposal for an economic stimulus package

- Support economic development incentives for hard hit areas to take the place of the former Enterprise Zone.
- Opportunity Zones -- the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 authorized the designation of Opportunity Zones to spur investment in distressed communities throughout the U.S. by offering tax incentives for investments in those areas. Each governor nominated local areas within their state for these designations, and the U.S. Treasury reviewed these areas and designated a total of 8,761 zones. San Joaquin County has 20 within the County. We will want to support final regulations that allow local governments to determine the types of development eligible for Opportunity Zone investments.
- Support the introduction of empowerment zone legislation.

Transportation Funding

- Support stabilizing and increasing transportation infrastructure funding sources to avoid the bankruptcy of the federal highway and transit trust funds. Could include:
 - Support to increase and index the gas tax to inflation.
 - Explore innovative funding mechanisms, such as a pay-by-the-mile user fee and public private partnerships.
 - Expand access to Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loans.
 - Remove procedural obstacles that impede expenditure of authorized federal funding.
 - Support the return of directed federal funding for transportation priorities.
- Support the continuation of, and increased investment in, federal discretionary grant opportunities such as the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) and Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) programs. Expand the INFRA program to include both competitive and formula-based awards.

Mobility

- Engage on issues related to transit technology/clean corridor tracking/new technology/platooning.
- Explore opportunities for Federal grants to fund various transportation priorities, including transit and bikeways.

Regional Transportation Plan

- Support efforts to change the adoption cycle for the Regional Transportation Plan from the current four-year requirement to a flexible timeframe of 6-10 years and specifically advocate for SJCOG's range of 5-7 years.

Project Streamlining

- Support legislation and/or administrative reforms to streamline the federal and state government's project delivery process and to eliminate unnecessary and/or duplicative requirements (CEQA/NEPA)