

Immediate Past-President Pam O'Connor Honored by Mobility 21

On Friday, September 28, Immediate Past-President and Santa Monica City Councilmember, Pam O'Connor, received the Public Sector Leader of the Year Award at the 11th Annual Mobility 21 Southern California Transportation Summit. Immediate Past-President O'Connor was recognized for her leadership as the 2011-2012 President of SCAG's Regional Council and her work in garnering wide public input and support during the development of the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Congratulations to Pam for this recognition and her continued leadership.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment Ready for Public Hearing and Adoption October 4

The Proposed Final Allocation Plan for the 5th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment ("Proposed Final RHNA Plan") will be recommended to the Regional Council for adoption, in conjunction with a public hearing, on Thursday, October 4. I wish to again thank the RHNA Subcommittee, along with the CEHD Committee and Regional Council, for their hard work in ensuring a fair and transparent RHNA process. Subsequent to the anticipated adoption of the Final RHNA Plan by the Regional Council, SCAG will submit the Final RHNA Plan to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for approval. I am also pleased to let you know that we have invited Mr. Linn Warren, Director of HCD, to attend the, Regional Council meeting on November 1.

Court Rejects Filing of Amicus Curiae Brief in Support of SANDAG

Previously the Regional Council authorized SCAG to join in the filing of an amicus curiae brief supporting the San Diego Associated Governments (SANDAG) in a CEQA challenge of its 2050 RTP/SCS. Other agencies such as CALCOG, SACOG and MTC also joined in the amicus effort. Unfortunately, on September 25, the trial court judge rejected the application to file the amicus brief, noting amongst his reasons, budget constraints and lack of resources by the Court as well as the Court's recognition that his decision will likely be appealed to the Court of Appeals. This means that the trial court judge will not consider the amicus brief in deciding the SANDAG case. SANDAG has indicated that should there in fact be an appeal in the future, it would appreciate additional amicus efforts by SCAG and other agencies.

2012 South Coast Air Quality Management Plan Update

On September 7, the South Coast AQMD released a Revised Draft AQMP and the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for public review and comment. Subsequently, AQMD has held four regional public hearings on the Revised Draft AQMP and the Draft PEIR. The Draft Socioeconomic Report for the 2012 AQMP was released on September 28, for a 45-day public review and comment period. In response to two recently proposed rules by U.S. EPA, information to address the new VMT emission offset requirements and the 1-hour ozone SIP call has also been released and included in the Revised Draft 2012 AQMP. Dr. Barry Wallerstein, AQMD Executive Officer, will present the 2012 AQMP to the Regional Council on November 1. The final Adoption Hearing by the AQMD Governing Board is scheduled to be held in December. The Final 2012 AQMP is scheduled to be submitted to the ARB which will in turn submit the Final 2012 AQMP to EPA.

California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool

The Office of Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) within the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) has developed a proposed method for evaluating the cumulative impacts of pollution on communities, the draft California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool. The draft screening tool uses existing environmental, health and socioeconomic data to create a cumulative impacts score for communities across the state. The tool compares areas of the state against other areas, creating a relative ranking. In a letter to Cal/EPA Secretary Matthew Rodriguez, Regional Council President Glen Becerra recognized SCAG's ability and efforts to protect the environment and plan for economic growth simultaneously, and cautioned of potential unintended adverse consequences to cities and communities that could arise from use of the tool as a relative ranking instrument. He acknowledged the opportunity to increase support for the pending screening tool if there is additional input and collaboration from local elected officials. SCAG staff has followed up with the Secretary and learned that OEHHA will be revising the methodology based on the inputs received to date and will release

again for public review. SCAG staff has requested that Cal/EPA consider a workshop in the SCAG region after release of the revised document. I will keep you informed of the on-going opportunities to participate in the development of this screening tool.

City Managers' Sub Regional Meetings Planned

I will be traveling throughout the region during October and November to meet with City Managers to discuss areas of shared interest. The agenda for these meetings will include the following topics: Successful implementation of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS Plan approved by the state and federal regulatory agencies, next steps for preparing for 2016 RTP/SCS through creation of Subcommittees on areas needing further discussion (such as active transportation, finance, etc.), SCAG internal reorganization to implement the new Regional Council priorities, Southern California Economic Recovery & Job Creation Strategy Phase II, and SCAG's Sustainability Program. Additionally, I will also look for the Managers' input on increasing member benefits and making SCAG membership more valuable.

Regional CEO Sustainability Working Group

SCAG staff is convening a Regional CEO Sustainability Working Group as an identified action step in implementing the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. The Working Group will engage each of the six County Transportation Commissions (CTCs) on opportunities to further RTP/SCS strategies such as active transportation, first mile/last mile, and integrating land use and transportation. The Working Group consists of the CEOs or the designees of the CTCs in the SCAG region and the SCAG Executive Director. The purpose of the group is to monitor implementation of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS, to provide a forum for the discussion of innovative best practices being employed by the CTCs, and to identify potential new projects and policies that can be included in the upcoming 2016-2040 RTP/SCS. On an introductory conference call with the designees held on October 1, the Draft Active Transportation Work Plan was discussed and the working group's kick-off meeting was set for October 29.

Governor's Electric Vehicle Summit

SCAG staff participated in the Governor's Office Summit on Zero Emission Vehicles, an invitation-only forum held in Sacramento on September 28. The event was an opportunity to provide feedback on the recently released State Zero Emission Vehicle Action Plan. That plan will be presented and discussed at the Energy and Environment Committee meeting on October 4.

Housing Element Update Workshops

Following adoption of the Final RHNA Plan by SCAG, jurisdictions in the SCAG region will have one year to complete and adopt their local housing element update based on respective comments and findings by HCD. The deadline for the jurisdictions to submit their 5th cycle local housing element updates to HCD is October 15, 2013. HCD is developing a template to allow housing element streamlining. SCAG staff would like to hold a focus group for local planning directors to meet with HCD staff on the proposed streamlining process. The focus group will be held during the fourth week of October with the exact date and time to be determined. SCAG will select at least two individuals from each county to participate. If you would like to participate in the focus group, please submit your name to us no later than Thursday, October 11. In addition to the local focus group, SCAG staff is working on setting up one or more SCAG-sponsored workshops in November. The SCAG-sponsored workshops are intended to assist those local jurisdictions that still do not have a certified 4th housing element. I will keep you informed as information becomes available.

NRDC/Move LA SB 375 Implementation Report

As you know, SB 375 required SCAG and other California MPOs to include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of their Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) updates. These SCSs received a great amount of attention throughout the state and nationally. SCAG's SCS in particular received much attention and garnered great praise. While many stakeholders participated in the development of the RTP/SCS leading up to the adoption by the Regional Council, some interest groups have continued to keep the dialogue going and continue to work toward the plan's implementation. NRDC and Move LA have jointly issued a report that tells our RTP/SCS story and those of SACOG and SANDAG. You can view the report at <http://www.nrdc.org/globalwarming/sb375/implementation-report/>.

Recent Proposed Actions by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

On September 19, the U.S. EPA published in the Federal Register two proposed rules: (1) to withdraw EPA's March 2009 approval of the 1-hour ozone vehicle miles traveled (VMT) emissions offset demonstration and EPA's March 2012 approval of the 8-hour ozone VMT emissions offset demonstration for the South Coast Air Basin, and to disapprove these demonstrations ("partial disapproval"); and (2) to require California to develop new State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for attainment of the 1-hour ozone air quality standard in the South Coast extreme ozone nonattainment area ("1-hour ozone SIP call"). The South Coast 1-hour Ozone SIP is required to be submitted to EPA within 12 months after the effective date of the final rule (it is currently a proposed rule). These proposals are in response to a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision remanding EPA's previous actions on California's attainment plan for the South Coast Air Basin and directing EPA to take further action to ensure that the area has a plan demonstrating attainment of the 1-hour ozone standard, consistent with Clean Air Act (CAA) requirements. Although EPA has replaced the 1-hour ozone standard with a more health protective 8-hour standard, the CAA anti-backsliding provisions require that California have an approved plan for attaining the 1-hour standard in the South Coast Air Basin. The Ninth Circuit also rejected EPA's long-standing interpretation of the CAA's requirements for offsetting emissions from VMT. The proposed rules are intended to assure that South Coast plans for both the 1-hour and 8-hour ozone standards meet this CAA requirement consistent with the Court's decision. If the partial disapproval is finalized as currently proposed, two sanctions clocks will be triggered: 1) the stationary source offset sanctions begin 18 months after the EPA's final disapproval; and 2) the highway funding sanctions begin 24 months after the final disapproval. I am pleased to report that our partners at the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) and the Air Resources Board (ARB) are working with SCAG to address both the VMT emission offset requirement (per recent guidelines set forth by EPA) and the 1-hour ozone SIP call as part of the 2012 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). I will keep you informed as this process moves forward.