



ITEM ID: 2025-242-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: June 20, 2025

MEETING DATE: June 27, 2025

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: June Legislative Update

Issue

Staff provides a regular monthly update on current legislative affairs.

Recommendation

Receive and file.

Strategic Commitment

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitments of:

- **Connecting and Leveraging Partnerships:** We will forge new and enhanced relationships with our public and private partners to integrate and coordinate connecting services, providing residents throughout Southern California with better, seamless, sustainable alternatives to driving. This commitment is met by sharing news, information and the Authority’s legislative priorities with elected officials.
- **Advancing Key Regional Goals:** We will grow the role of regional rail in addressing climate change, air quality, and other pressing issues by advancing toward zero emissions, making rail a compelling alternative to single-occupant automobiles and advancing equity-focused opportunities for all communities throughout Southern California. This commitment is met by encouraging federal, state and local support for Authority priorities.

Background

Staff continues to engage with community, local, state, and federal stakeholders concerning Metrolink service and relevant policy initiatives.

Discussion

Local

On May 9, 2025, staff participated in Metro's On the Move event at the Pasadena Convention Center. The event hosted 530 seniors who learned about transit options in the region, including Metro, Metrolink and other Los Angeles County transit providers. Staff provided information on the planned fare restructuring to ensure that the seniors were made aware of the changes to the fare structure before the change occurs on July 1. Metrolink Community Relations plans on distributing information regarding the change in the fare structure to other community members and elected officials through various communication channels.

State

May Revise

On May 14, Governor Newsom released his May Revision for the proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget. The Governor's proposed budget in January presented a balanced budget and projected a surplus of \$363 million. Since then, the fiscal outlook has worsened and the May Revise now projects a state deficit, estimated at \$12 billion for the upcoming fiscal year. For transportation, the May Revise maintains the state's proposed \$1 billion investment in the Transit Intercity Rail and Capital Program (TIRCP). In addition, the Governor released his proposal to reauthorize the Cap-and-Trade program and to rename the program Cap-and-Invest. The program currently funds the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and transit programs such as TIRCP and the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). The Governor is asking the Legislature to extend the program to 2045 in order to provide greater market certainty and align with the state's existing 2045 carbon-neutrality goal. The Governor has proposed eliminating most current GGRF expenditures and programs starting in FY 2025-26, with the exception of high-speed rail and CalFire, and work with the Legislature to rebuild the GGRF expenditure program from the ground up.

CARB In-Use Locomotive Rule

In 2023, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved the In-Use Locomotive Regulation, with the goal of reducing emissions from diesel-powered locomotives. Following the regulation's approval, CARB sought authorization to enforce the regulation from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. CARB ultimately withdrew its authorization request in early 2025, making the regulation unenforceable. On June 26, 2025, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) will conduct a public hearing to consider repealing the In-Use Locomotive Regulation.

California Transit Association Legislative Conference

Transit policymakers, advocates, and leaders gathered in the state Capitol in early May as part of the California Transit Association's 2025 Spring Legislative Conference. Keynote remarks from California State Transportation Agency Secretary Toks Omishakin, as well as participation from legislators, local transit agencies, and other industry experts helped shape a focus on how to maintain and increase funding from the state as well as federal sources. While in Sacramento, staff met with state legislators and their staff to discuss recommendations for cap-and-trade reauthorization and resources needed to transport people

during the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Metrolink Strategy and Government Relations team met with Sens. Archuleta and Durazo, as well as with staff for Sens. Umberg, Limon, Blakespear, and Gonzalez. Metrolink's state delegation includes a number of influential policymakers that will be critical to ensuring a protection of state funding for transit and rail infrastructure and operations, even during a difficult budget year.

Federal

Congress Focuses on Reconciliation

Republicans in Congress are attempting to enact much of President Trump's agenda with a legislative process known as reconciliation, which helps avoid a filibuster. The draft reconciliation bill is still taking shape but is expected to include tax and immigration reform, among other items. The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's portion of reconciliation includes a \$250 annual fee for electric vehicles and a \$100 annual fee for hybrid vehicles, with proceeds deposited in the Highway Trust Fund. The House Homeland Security Committee's reconciliation section includes \$1 billion for 2028 Games-related security and planning costs.

House Hearing Explores Effectiveness of Rail Investment Programs

The House Transportation & Infrastructure Railroad Subcommittee held a hearing to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of federal rail assistance. Witnesses emphasized the role programs like CRISI and federal-state partnership play in helping modernize and enhance rail systems. Subcommittee members emphasized the impacts of bureaucratic hurdles on implementing infrastructure projects, including rail improvements. Takeaways included the need to standardize the NEPA process across different agencies, create pre-approved project pipelines, providing pre-award spending authority to allow certain activities to begin before official awards, and simplifying and speeding up the grant application and review processes.

FRA Administrator Nominee Considered by Senate Committee

The Senate Commerce Committee considered the nomination of David Fink to serve as Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. While some Senators raised concerns about Fink's safety record while serving as a former executive at New England freight railroad Pan Am Railways, his confirmation appears likely.

Metrolink in DC for American Public Transportation Association Legislative Conference

Chief Strategy Officer Paul Hubler, Government & Community Relations Director Jeff Dunn, and Management Analyst II Julie Nieto attended the American Public Transportation Association's Spring Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. Speakers included Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and Senator Elizabeth Warren. In addition to attending APTA programming, staff joined Director Tony Trembley to meet with members of the Metrolink federal delegation. Meetings focused on 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games capital and operations needs as well as recommendations for reauthorization of the federal surface transportation programs. Staff will provide oral updates to the Board following the event and via written report in next month's update.

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Attachment(s)

[Appendix A - June 2025 Bill Matrix](#)