



ITEM ID: 2025-267-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: July 18, 2025

MEETING DATE: July 25, 2025

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: July 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

Metrolink Strengthens Relationships in the San Fernando Valley

On June 2, Rory Vaughn, senior planning manager, and Sylvia Novoa, public affairs manager, attended the San Fernando Valley Council of Governments Transportation Committee (COG) meeting. Attendees were provided an update on the status of Metrolink's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) grant application which seeks to fully fund the remaining balance of the Antelope Valley Line Capital and Service Improvements Phase 1. If awarded, the grant funds would deliver three of four AVL capital improvements in northern Los Angeles County.

On June 4, community relations staff attended the third annual convening of more than 100 San Fernando Valley Nonprofits and Foundations. Metrolink staff attended to meet and add organizations and contacts to its current CBO and nonprofit database and to explore strengthening relationships with these organizations, particularly to ensure a robust Title VI outreach process in future efforts.

Local Elected Outreach in the San Gabriel Valley

As of this writing, Metrolink staff will participate in the San Gabriel Valley Public Affairs Network Legislative Networking reception on June 20, providing opportunity to meet with local elected officials and develop ties with the local elected representatives in our service region. On June 26, staff will join the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (COG) at an event to honor the outgoing and incoming governing board leadership. Metrolink continues to develop strong working relationships with local officials and constituent organizations in our service region.

State

Legislature's Two-Party Agreement Responds to May Revise

The Legislature voted on June 13 to pass a balanced FY25-26 State Budget. SB 101 (Budget and Fiscal Review) maintains \$1.078 billion in Greenhouse Gas Reduction funding for formula TIRCP and ZETCP, which Governor Newsom had proposed cutting in his May Revise. This is welcome - but still tentative - news for transit agencies that rely heavily on these investment programs. As a next step, the Legislature will introduce a "Budget Bill Jr.," reflecting negotiations and an agreement with the Governor on transit investments and much more. Also expected in the coming months is trailer bill language extending the Cap-and-Trade program and associated expenditures. TIRCP and LCTOP are funded from cap-and-trade and Metrolink strongly encourages lawmakers to continue investing and consider increasing available support for these programs in the coming months.

House of Origin Deadline Passes

June 6 was the deadline for the Senate and Assembly to pass bills that originated in their respective chambers. As a result, lawmakers voted on a flurry of legislation in late May and early June.

AB 394 (Wilson), a bill that would provide transit agencies with new statutory tools for protecting transit workers against battery, was approved by a vote of 76 to 0. AB 394 was supported by Metrolink, the California Transit Association, and a large coalition of other transit agencies and unions. It now moves to the Senate.

SB 30 (Cortese), which would prohibit public agencies from selling or donating decommissioned diesel engine locomotives, passed by a vote of 76 to 10. Metrolink, alongside other commuter rail agencies in the state, expressed concerns with the legislation in a letter sent to the bill author earlier this year. The legislation was amended to exempt Tier 2 and cleaner locomotives from the ban, subject to certain conditions, and now moves to the Assembly for consideration.

SB 71 (Wiener) would permanently exempt certain clean transportation projects from CEQA requirements until January 1, 2040 and was passed unanimously by the Senate. The bill was amended to include rail capital and maintenance projects for the exclusive use of Tier 4 or zero emission locomotives.

SB 741 (Blakespear) would amend the process associated with obtaining a permit from the California Coastal Commission for certain types of emergency work in the LOSSAN rail corridor. Disagreements exist on the impact of the proposed legislation on future emergency work. The bill passed the Senate 39-0 and now moves to the Assembly.

Federal

Support for Metrolink in FY26 Community Project Funding Lists

Congress will shortly begin consideration of FY26 appropriations bills. As a part of that process, legislators have been submitting Community Project Funding lists – earmark requests – to the various appropriations committees. To date, four Metrolink projects have been included in the lists submitted by our delegation. They include a \$1.33 million request from Congressman Whitesides for technology improvements on the Antelope Valley Line, \$2.48 million from Congresswoman Brownley to support the Arroyo Simi Bridges Scour Mitigation Project, \$625,000 from Congresswoman Friedman to update and replace customer information systems at the Glendale and Burbank stations, and \$1.98 million from Senator Padilla security and infrastructure enhancements systemwide. We are expecting a final list of projects in the Senate and House versions of the Transportation-HUD bill by mid-July.

Reconciliation Passes House but Faces an Uncertain Future

On May 22, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 215-214 to pass H.R. 1, the budget reconciliation legislation. The legislation includes many of President Trump's second term priorities, including funding for border security, immigration enforcement, and adjustments to SNAP and Medicaid, among other items. The House version 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. However, the legislation does not require the proceeds of these fees to be split 80-20 into the Highway and Mass Transit Accounts of the Highway Trust Fund, respectively. Also of note is the inclusion of \$1 billion for 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games-related security and planning costs.

H.R. 1 was written to qualify for the budget reconciliation process to avoid a filibuster and 60-vote threshold in the Senate. However, as of this writing, the Senate is releasing various portions of their own version of the reconciliation bill and any changes to the bill could prove controversial when the bill is returned to the House for approval. To date, no EV or hybrid vehicle fees have been included in the Senate's draft text. A path forward and realistic timeline for passing H.R.1 is unclear at the time of this writing.

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Attachment(s)

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