



metrolinktrains.com/meeting

ITEM ID: 2026-323-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: October 16, 2026

MEETING DATE: October 23, 2026

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: October 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 state and federal stakeholders concerning Metrolink service and relevant policy initiatives.

Discussion

State

Legislature Concludes 2025-26 Session

Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 741 (Blakespear) into law at the conclusion of the 2025-2026 legislative session. SB 741, which Metrolink supported, improves the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) by expanding eligible uses to include transit maintenance, eliminates redundant emissions-demonstration requirements for ongoing programs, streamlines program administration, and clarifies that agencies may continue funding previously approved services without having to restart the application process. LCTOP is a vital, flexible funding source for Metrolink that supports operations or capital projects that reduce emissions and improve mobility across our six-county region. Metrolink has historically used LCTOP funding to support programs including discounted fares for students and low-income riders.

Looking ahead, voters will elect a new Governor, all 80 members of the Assembly, and half of the Senate in the November 3 general election. The Legislature will convene on December 7 to swear in members and begin the 2027-28 session.

Final GGRF Agreement Upholds SB 125 Commitment and Partially Restores TIRCP and LCTOP Funding

The Legislature and Administration reached a final agreement on the FY2026-27 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) expenditure plan, which was enacted with passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 113 (Gabriel). The agreement restores some funding for transit programs that faced significant reductions after changes to the state's Cap-and-Invest program earlier this year.

AB 113 (Gabriel) provides \$230 million for the zero-emission transit capital program, fulfilling the remaining FY2026-27 commitment made through SB 125. The agreement also provides \$95 million for Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and \$48 million for the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), up from the \$76 million and \$38 million, respectively, projected in June for those programs. The higher baseline GGRF funding reflects stronger than expected revenue generation at the most recent quarterly auction of the Cap-and-Invest program, which took place earlier this month.

The final agreement provides some additional certainty for transit agencies during FY2026-27 but does not resolve the longer-term funding challenges facing programs supported by GGRF revenues. Metrolink staff will continue working with the California Transit Association and partner agencies to monitor future cap-and-invest revenues and advocate for sustainable state support for regional rail.

CalSTA Opens Flexible State Rail Assistance Funding Cycle

On September 8, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) released a Notice of

Funding Opportunity for Cycle 2 of the Flexible State Rail Assistance (SRA) Program. SRA, created through SB 1, supports commuter and intercity capital and operating needs. State law splits SRA revenue equally between commuter and intercity rail and guarantees a minimum share to each of the state's three intercity rail corridors. CalSTA awards the remaining intercity funds through this flexible program, which is open to commuter rail agencies, intercity rail agencies, and Caltrans. Eligible uses include new or expanded service on emerging corridors, zero- and low-emission rail vehicles, replacement of aging signal and track infrastructure, planning activities, and operating funds to avoid service cuts or expand service.

Up to \$66 million is expected to be available in this cycle, reflecting revenues accrued from FY 2020-21 through FY2025-26 and forecasted revenues through FY 2029-30. Applications are due October 19, and CalSTA may award operating funds on a rolling basis before the deadline.

Federal

Congress Extends Surface Transportation Programs Through December 11

On September 2, the President signed a continuing resolution (CR) that funds the federal government through December 11 and temporarily extends the surface transportation programs authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which expired on September 30. The CR does not extend the IIJA's advance appropriations, about \$36.8 billion per year across the U.S. Department of Transportation. These funds drove much of the IIJA's growth in discretionary grant funding, including major passenger rail programs like the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. Unless Congress restores this funding through annual appropriations or the next reauthorization, discretionary transit and rail grant funding is expected to drop sharply in FY 2027. Staff will continue to will continue working with our congressional delegation and industry partners to advocate for federal investment in commuter rail as negotiations proceed.

Olympic Transportation Funding Pending in FY 2027 Appropriations

Funding for transportation improvements and operations associated with the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games remains under consideration as Congress works through the FY2027 appropriations process. The President's FY 2027 budget request did not include Olympic transportation funding. However, the House Appropriations Committee's FY 2027 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) bill includes \$875 million for Games-related public transportation, available to all host cities. The Senate has not yet released a FY27 THUD appropriations proposal.

We continue to work with our congressional delegation and regional partners to secure federal support for capital and operating needs related to the Games. With the Games less than two years away, timely federal action is critical, because service planning and capital investments require significant lead time. Metrolink will continue to demonstrate readiness to deliver Olympic transportation investments quickly and effectively.

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Attachment(s)

[Appendix A - October 2026 Bill Matrix](#)
[Presentation - October Legislative Update](#)