



ITEM ID: 2025-177-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: April 18, 2025

MEETING DATE: April 25, 2025

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: April 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

A virtual public meeting was held on Wednesday, March 26 as part of the Authority's outreach to collect public comments on the October 2024 and January 2025 schedule changes. The meeting was attended by 61 people with 12 verbal comments and 25 written comments received. Subsequent to the virtual public meeting, as of the date of preparation of this report, 265 comments to the online survey concerning the schedule change have been received. The online survey will close to comment on April 15, and a summary of comments, outreach conducted and Title VI equity analysis will be presented to the Board of Directors in conjunction with the public hearing at its regular meeting on April 25.

State

Metrolink Supports SB 741 (Blakespear)

Metrolink distributed a letter of support for SB 741 (Blakespear), a bill that would expedite coastal permitting when a project improves the resiliency of the LOSSAN Corridor. Under SB 741, a municipality, county, or special district could issue a local emergency declaration, which in turn would allow the requirements of obtaining any permit under this division may be waived. Senator Catherine Blakespear (CA-38) is the chair of the Senate Transportation Committee's LOSSAN Rail Corridor Resiliency Subcommittee.

Metrolink Supports AB 394 (Wilson)

Metrolink distributed a letter of support for AB 394 (Wilson), legislation aimed at improving public safety on transit systems across the state. If passed, A.B. 394 would strengthen penalties for assaults on transit employees, as well as empower courts to bar individuals who have committed violent offenses against transit workers from accessing the system. The legislation would also expand enforcement against trespassing on transit systems. AB 394 is co-sponsored by the California Transit Association and the California Conference Board of the Amalgamated Transit Union (CalATU). Assemblymember Lori Wilson (CA-11) is the chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee.

Bill Would Prohibit the Sale or Donation of On-Track Diesel Equipment

SB 30 (Cortese) would prohibit public agencies from selling or donating decommissioned locomotives and other equipment powered by a diesel engine. Metrolink, along with fellow regional and commuter rail operators in California, sent a letter to Senator Cortese suggesting areas for improvement and identifying issues of concern with the legislation. While Metrolink has typically operated under more restrictive Carl Moyer requirements when decommissioning its old locomotives, we join the other passenger rail operators from around the state having concerns regarding the broad scope of SB 30, which as written, would apply to all on-track diesel-powered equipment and would prohibit the sale of such equipment to other jurisdictions even when it would result in the recipient utilizing the equipment to replace even older, more polluting equipment in use and, thus, produce an overall cleaner emissions output. Metrolink

and other operators will work with the author to seek amendments to address.

Federal

Congress passes a Full-Year Continuing Resolution

On March 14, U.S. Senate passed and President Trump signed H.R. 1968, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025. The U.S. House of Representatives voted to approve the H.R. 1968 on March 11. H.R. 1968 funds most programs and departments at FY2024 enacted levels through September 30, 2025. The 2025 Continuing Resolution (CR), together with the advanced appropriations from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), provides \$20.9 billion for public transit and \$16.2 billion for passenger rail. The transit funding is an increase of .4 percent from FY2024 enacted levels; the passenger rail funding is a decrease of .6 percent from FY2024 enacted levels.

Because a CR constitutes a continuation of last year's funding levels, FY2025 Community Project Funding requests – otherwise known as earmarks – were not included in the legislative text. The draft FY2025 House Transportation-HUD appropriations bill had included three Community Project Funding requests for Metrolink:

- \$500k for Fiber Network System from Simi Valley to Moorpark (Rep. Brownley)
- \$750k for Wireless Crossing Nearsite Station Stop (WCNSS) system technology at Sylmar/San Fernando Station (Rep. Cardenas); and
- \$250k for WCNSS at Burbank Airport (then-Rep. and now Sen. Schiff)

The draft FY2025 Senate Transportation-HUD appropriations bill had included \$200 million for public transportation systems responsible for moving people for the 2028 Olympic & Paralympic Games. Unfortunately, that was also not included in the full year CR passed by Congress in March.

USDOT Reviews Unobligated Competitive Grants from FY22-25

In March, USDOT leadership circulated a memo instructing staff to examine competitive grants from FY22-FY25 whose funds haven't been fully obligated. Specifically, staff was asked to flag awards that invest in climate, equity, and other types of projects that conflict with the Trump Administration's priorities. Leadership will then determine whether a specific project can proceed or should be revised or canceled. Metrolink's only outstanding federal USDOT grant that hasn't yet been obligated was awarded outside the timeframe the memo pertains to, so at present, the agency is unimpacted.

Access DC

Government Relations Director Jeff Dunn represented Metrolink at the annual ACCESS DC advocacy trip organized by the Greater Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in Washington DC, March 11-13. Metrolink joined 150 business and public sector leaders advocating for federal assistance to the region for three principal needs: rebuilding homes and infrastructure from wildfire devastation; preparing the region to host world sporting events including the World Cup next year, two Super Bowls, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2028; and stimulating overall economic growth and workforce development in the region.

As part of the Sporting Events Advocacy team, Metrolink was able to deliver its Olympics needs' messages to Congressional Members and USDOT in coordination with its local partners in transportation, including LA Metro, the Ports, Los Angeles World Airports, and the City of LA. Metrolink met with Senator Adam Schiff, Minority Leader Hakim Jeffries,

Representatives Julia Brownley and John Garamendi who are members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and senior Administration staff at USDOT to assert regional transportation and infrastructure needs to prepare for these sporting events.

For Metrolink, this included advocacy for its principal needs expressed in a letter to USDOT Secretary Sean Duffy in February of \$107 million in FY 26 and \$318 million in total through FY 28 for capital and project needs and operational surge in advance of the Olympic Games. This same ask was also made directly on the Hill by Metrolink CEO Darren Kettle to congressional delegation members in late February. Staff will keep the Board apprised of its continued advocacy of this Board-directed priority in separate efforts in April, May, June, and throughout the year.

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Attachment(s)

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