



ITEM ID: 2026-231-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: June 18, 2026

MEETING DATE: June 26, 2026

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

State

Advocacy in Sacramento for State Budget Request

Metrolink CEO Darren Kettle and staff have had numerous meetings with legislative staff and Administration officials to impress upon them the need for state funding to close an anticipated Metrolink Operations budget gap for FY27. To date, letters of support addressed to the Governor and legislative leaders have been provided by Assemblymember Juan Carrillo, Senator Catherine Blakespear and Senator Maria Elena Durazo. The following member agencies and organizations have also provided letters of support: Riverside County Transportation Commission, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, Ventura County Transportation Commission, San Fernando Valley Council of Governments and San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments. The legislature faces a June 15 deadline to pass an FY27 budget bill.

California Air Resources Board – Cap-and-Invest Program Amendments

On May 29, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) voted 10-3 to approve amendments to the Cap-and-Invest program. The vote followed eight hours of board discussion and a full day of public comment from hundreds of affected stakeholders including transit operators, affordable housing developers, local governments, environmental organizations, health organizations, industry representatives from public utilities and energy sectors, and private individuals. The overwhelming majority of commenters opposed the amendments, including Metrolink, Metro, and transit operators from across the state.

The amendments increase the number of free pollution allowances available to industrial facilities, utilities, refineries, and natural gas suppliers. The state Legislative Analyst's Office estimates this change could reduce Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) revenue by approximately \$2 billion annually, enough to eliminate funding for programs such as the Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and Low-Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), which only receive funding after \$2.3 billion is automatically set aside for higher-tier programs. Metrolink has been a significant beneficiary of both programs, receiving \$1.2 billion in TIRCP awards and \$30.6 million in direct LCTOP allocations over the past decade, including \$18.9 million directed toward low-income and student fare programs.

Advocacy from transit operators was a focus at the California Transit Association Spring Legislative Conference in Sacramento in May. Metrolink joined more than 40 transit agencies, in coordination with the California Transit Association, in signing a letter opposing the proposed amendments. Staff will remain engaged in advocating for the state to reprioritize or backfill revenues for the affected transit programs. The amended regulation takes effect September 1, 2026.

Senate Bill 667 (Archuleta) – Update on Amendments

At the February 27, 2026 Board of Directors meeting, an Oppose position on SB 667 was

approved. As introduced, the bill required railroad corporations to install wayside detector systems at specified intervals on California rail tracks used by freight trains, established penalties for violations, and directed the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to enforce those penalties. Metrolink opposed the bill due to concerns that the required detector spacing could force freight trains to operate at significantly reduced speeds, negatively impacting corridor capacity and passenger rail on-time performance and reliability.

On June 4, 2026, the bill was substantially amended and no longer contains the wayside detector installation requirements. The amended bill instead directs the CPUC to conduct, on or before July 1, 2029, a comprehensive review of its existing list of hazardous railroad sites, and requires the annual report to include an evaluation of each listed site to determine whether changes in conditions, operations, or safety data warrant removal, modification, or addition of any site. In light of these amendments, staff will remove Metrolink's Oppose position and actively monitor the bill as it continues to move through the Assembly. It is anticipated that other public and private rail operators who previously joined in opposition will similarly withdraw their opposition.

Federal

Surface Transportation Reauthorization – BUILD America 250

On May 17, 2026, the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee released the long-awaited surface transportation reauthorization bill. Titled the Building Unrivaled Infrastructure and Long-term Development for America's 250th Act — or the "BUILD America 250" Act — the bill (H.R. 8870) covers fiscal years 2027 through 2031 and addresses highways, transit, rail, safety, and the Highway Trust Fund. The T&I Committee passed the bill on May 22, 2026, with significant amendments, including the addition of the Railway Safety Act.

The \$580 billion five-year surface transportation bill is funded via \$474.4 billion from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The remaining roughly \$106 billion, which includes all passenger rail funding, is authorized subject to the availability of future appropriations from the General Fund. Unlike the current surface transportation law, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the BUILD America 250 Act does not include advanced appropriations, meaning passenger rail funding would not be guaranteed and would instead be subject to annual congressional action.

In the Senate, none of the committees of jurisdiction (Environment and Public Works, Commerce, and Finance) have yet produced bill text. Existing authorities for highway and transit programs expire September 30, 2026. If Congress does not pass a new surface transportation authorization bill before that deadline, an extension likely extending into the next Congress following the November election will be required to continue funding these federal programs.

FY 2027 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations

On June 4, the House Appropriations Committee approved the Fiscal Year 2027 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending bill by a vote of 34 to 27. The bill provides a total discretionary allocation of \$92.2 billion, which is \$10.6 billion (10.4%) below the Fiscal Year 2026 enacted level. The bill includes \$875 million proposed for transportation needs related to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

The bill also includes \$2,629,200 in Community Project Funding for four Metrolink-related projects, including two of our submitted requests and two projects submitted by member agencies.

The four projects included are:

- \$679,200 – Metrolink San Bernardino Line Operational Reliability and Safety Improvements (*Rep. Pete Aguilar*)
Technology upgrades along the San Bernardino Line to improve system operations and passenger real-time information. Includes expanded video surveillance at signal locations, upgraded customer information displays, and track/signal technology to improve rail temperature readings and reduce train delays.
- \$250,000 – Metrolink Rail Stations and Crossings Modernization Project (*Rep. Luz Rivas*)
Modernizes safety and passenger information systems at two commuter rail stations and crossings in the San Fernando Valley. Includes real-time digital display monitors, expanded video surveillance, and smart crossing technology to improve safety, reduce traffic congestion, and enhance rider communications.
- \$850,000 – OCTA Irvine Station Metrolink Rehabilitation Project (*Rep. Dave Min*)
Improvements at the Irvine Metrolink Station to support system reliability, safety, and state of good repair needs.
- \$850,000 – RCTC Mead Valley Metrolink Station/Mobility Hub Project (*Rep. Mark Takano*)
New Metrolink station to serve the fast-growing communities of Mead Valley and Perris, enhancing regional mobility and connectivity.

Next, the House of Representatives will consider the legislation, but floor action has yet to be scheduled. The Senate has not yet scheduled a THUD markup, which will include Congressionally Directed Spending requests.

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Attachment(s)

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