



ITEM ID: 2025-150-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: March 7, 2025

MEETING DATE: March 14, 2025

TO: Executive Committee

FROM: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: March 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 February 18, staff participated in LA Metro's Girls Empowerment Summit with an informational booth on Metrolink service and programs, such as the Student Adventure Pass. The event was attended by 200 girls from LA County high schools and was designed to provide tailored workshops and highlight careers in transportation. Public agencies and private companies in the transportation industry were invited to provide information on their services and insight on career opportunities.

Staff also joined LA Metro at a community meeting on February 20 for the Pico Rivera Regional Rail Station Feasibility Study. Metro and the City of Pico Rivera are conducting a feasibility study for a potential new passenger rail station, which could be served by Metrolink and/or Amtrak in the future. The meeting was an opportunity for community members learn about the study and staff had an informational booth to share information on Metrolink service.

### **State**

The California Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee held an informational hearing examining the state's investment in public transportation. California Transit Association's Executive Director Michael Pimentel, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Acting Director Julie Kirschbaum, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Executive Officer of Government Relations Michael Turner, and Santa Cruz METRO CEO Corey Aldridge provided remarks and perspectives on transit operations and funding across the state. Participants emphasized the need to provide reliable and ongoing state funding to support transit operations.

California Assembly Transportation Committee Chair Lori Wilson introduced A.B. 394, 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. The legislation is co-sponsored by the California Transit Association and the California Conference Board of the Amalgamated Transit Union (CalATU).

California Assembly Member Nick Schultz (CA-44) introduced the Safe, Sustainable, Traffic-Reducing Transportation Bond Act of 2026 that would authorize the insurance of \$20 billion in General Obligation Bonds to finance transportation improvements. Specifically, AB 939 would make \$2 billion in funding available to intercity, regional, and computer passenger rail improvements. This legislation is co-sponsored by LA Metro.

California Senate Transportation Committee Chair Dave Cortese introduced SB 30, legislation aimed at prohibiting the sale of diesel-powered on-track equipment to other public entities planning on operating the equipment for public use. If passed, SB 30 would bar the sale of diesel rolling stock, including locomotives, to national or international customers.

California State Senator Catherine Blakespear (CA-38) introduced SB 741 to expediate coastal permitting and would apply to projects that improve 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.

## **Federal**

The federal government is currently operating on a Continuing Resolution that expires on March 14. To avoid a government shutdown, lawmakers will need to pass the FY25 appropriations bills or another Continuing Resolution. The yet-to-be-passed FY25 House Transportation-HUD appropriations bill includes three Congressionally directed funding requests for Metrolink:

- \$500k for Fiber Network System from Simi Valley to Moorpark (Rep. Brownley)
- \$750k for WCNSS at Sylmar/San Fernando Station (Rep. Cardenas)
- \$250k for WCNSS at Burbank Airport (Rep. Schiff)

As Congress grapples with how to pass the FY25 appropriations bills, some lawmakers have already begun working on FY26 spending legislation. House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole sent a letter to his subcommittee chairmen asking for markups to be completed in April and all spending bills to be passed by October 1.

In late February, Metrolink CEO Darren Kettle and Senior Manager of Government Relations Anna Denecke met with officials in Washington, D.C. to advocate for Metrolink's priorities, including Olympics funding needs, IIJA reauthorization recommendations and fleet modernization. Meetings were held with Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA), as well as Reps. Pete Aguilar (CA 33), Julia Brownley (CA 26), Ken Calvert (CA 41), Judy Chu (CA 28), Gil Cisneros (CA 31), Laura Friedman (CA 30), Young Kim (CA 40), Dave Min (CA 47), Luz Rivas (CA 29), Norma Torres (CA 35), and Derek Tran (CA 45). Mr. Kettle also met with senior officials at the Federal Railroad Administration and the staff director of the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, as well as the offices of Sen. Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Reps. Mike Levin (CA-49), and George Whitesides (CA-27).

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## **Attachment(s)**

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