

**Fresno COG
DRAFT
2015 “One Voice” Regional Priorities
Summaries**

WATER

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Water Policy Support	<p>Request: Support for Federal legislation and funding to assist the San Joaquin Valley in dealing with continuing drought conditions coupled with Delta pumping restrictions resulting in;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious and negative economic impacts to farms, rural communities and specifically low income families. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding is critical to assure essential support for low income families who have lost their jobs and are struggling to pay for housing, utilities, and food. Funding programs are also necessary for failed ground water wells to farmers and rural communities. • Significant operational constraints that severely limit water supply movement through both the State and Federal pumping stations thereby impacting available critical water supplies to both west side and east side farms and cities. • The need to storage water normally lost during wet years for drought periods by completion of the Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigation Feasibility report and then construction of the Temperance Flat Dam storage project along with the construction of additional water supply reliability projects that would enhance regional water conveyance and improve ground water storage and reduce groundwater over drafting. 	Fresno County/ Latino Water Coalition	<p>Bernard Jimenez, Deputy Director Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning (559) 600-4234 bjimenez@co.fresno.ca.us</p> <p>Mario Santoyo Executive Director California Latino Water Coalition (559) 799-0701 (c) msantoyo1@verizon.net</p>

TRANSPORTATION

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Surface Transportation Reauthorization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure financial integrity of Highway and Transit Trust Funds through a multi-year surface transportation bill that will provide financial stability and certainty. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The bill should be passed on time and include \$11M appropriation for the Fresno BRT Project b. Maintain formula allocations, like STIP, for projects like Veterans Blvd. 2. Support a national freight program with a dedicated funding source. 3. Streamlining and Flexibility <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Revise the definition of eligible projects for the FTA Pilot Program for TOD to ensure that projects with less than 50% fixed guideway are eligible to apply for funding 4. Fix it first through investments directed at rebuilding and maintaining transportation infrastructure that is in a good state of repair. Priority should be given to preservation and maintenance of the existing system of roadways, bridges, transit routes, railroads, ports and airports. Support should also be provided for modernization and replacement of transit and rail equipment. 	Fresno COG	Tony Boren, Executive Director, Fresno COG, Office: 559-233-4148 tboren@fresnocog.org
High-Speed Rail Training Facilities			
<i>Topic</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
High Speed Rail Training Facilities	Fresno County marks the starting point of a high-speed rail network that will one day span the entire country. Because high-speed rail is new to the United States, it is necessary to train workers to not only build but also maintain the high-speed rail line in a world of ever-changing technology. Fresno County has both the land and population to make a high-speed rail educational center a success, not only for the State of California, but for the entire country. Locating a high-speed rail operations, education, and training facility in	Economic Development Corporation	Henry Perea, Supervisor, District 3, County of Fresno, BOS, Office: 559-600-3000, hperea@co.fresno.ca.us Lee Ann Eager, President/CEO, Fresno County Economic Development Corporation, Office: 559-476-2513, leager@fresnoedc.com

	<p>Fresno County will provide the workforce for the construction and maintenance of the nation's first high-speed rail line. As this burgeoning industry grows, it will be able to rely upon both the training and the firsthand experience of the professionals involved in the project from its earliest stages. It will also be a major economic stimulus for Fresno County's economy and put many people back to work in a region that has rarely received the caliber of State and Federal opportunities that California's other large metropolitan areas have.</p> <p>Request: policy or regulations be created that require high-speed rail training facilities be located alongside high-speed rail testing facilities in the Central Valley.</p>		
--	--	--	--

AGRICULTURE

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Pest Prevention & Exclusion of Pests Programs	<p>It is widely recognized that additional resources are needed to safeguard America's natural environment and food and fiber systems from potential destruction caused by invasive pests and diseases. There is a great need to use consistent and adequate federal funding to support efforts to discover new pests and diseases that impact agriculture. With sufficient federal funding, Fresno County can mitigate pests offshore and eliminate pathways of introduction, prepare for potential introduction of these pests, and rapidly and effectively respond to introductions when they occur.</p> <p>Request: Increased funding under the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine Program to support California's high-risk pest and Disease Prevention and exclusion programs. In FY 2014-15 Fresno County received \$50,775 compared to \$92,712 in FY 2009-10.</p>	Fresno County	<p>Les Wright, Agricultural Commissioner County of Fresno, Agriculture Department, 559-600-7510 lwright@co.fresno.ca.us</p>
Agriculture Canine Inspection to protect agriculture from	<p>California is a major producer of agricultural commodities that is important to the nutrition and health of our nation. Fresno County is in the forefront of that production. Fresno County and eight other counties have partial support</p>	Fresno County	<p>Les Wright, Agricultural Commissioner County of Fresno, Agriculture Department, 559-600-7510 lwright@co.fresno.ca.us</p>

<p>invasive pest introduction</p>	<p>through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to maintain inspections of parcels for contraband plant material that may carry pests detrimental to agriculture. Continued and higher funding support is needed for existing agriculture canine inspection teams and to fund the establishment of additional teams in the state.</p> <p>Request: Increased funding under the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine Program to support existing and additional canine detection teams to protect agriculture from invasive pest introduction through parcel facilities. In Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Fresno County is budgeted to receive \$230,434.</p>		
<p>Expand Drip Irrigation Funding Opportunities to Tenants</p>	<p>During the course of the USDA-grant funded Valley Grow Project, one glaring challenge for many minority and disadvantaged farmers has become apparent: Those who rent the land they sow do not qualify for the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funding for drip irrigation. Because they do not own the relatively small pieces of land they cultivate, minority and disadvantaged farmers typically utilize temporary irrigation "tape" to water their crops rather than investing in more costly and permanent drip irrigation systems. For this reason, many minority and disadvantaged farmers do not qualify for the USDA's EQIP funding for drip irrigation. As an added benefit, making the EQIP funding for drip irrigation more accessible to farmers who rent smaller plots of land would expose a traditionally underserved community to the USDA's many services and help eliminate the fear and distrust that minority and socially disadvantaged farmers often have of government programs.</p> <p>Request: A temporary waiver to USDA regulations during times of officially declared drought so small-scale farmers who use temporary irrigation systems can access USDA EQIP funding. We also request the inclusion of programs that would benefit small-scale farmers when federal emergency drought assistance funds are release.</p>	<p>Workforce Investment Board</p>	<p>Matt Leedy, 559-375-5665, mleedy@workforce-connection.com</p>

AIR QUALITY

***Discuss City of Clovis' urban forest request, as an example of air quality improvements and GHG reducing mechanisms

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
<p>Air and Health Quality Empowerment Zone Designation</p>	<p>Support reintroduction and enactment of H.R. 6378 - Air and Health Quality Empowerment Zone Designation Act of 2012 in the 113th Congress - Allowing the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to designate an area as an air and health quality empowerment zone if the air pollution control district or other local governmental entity (area entity) authorized to regulate air quality for the area nominates the area for such designation, including by submitting a strategic plan designed to address air quality challenges, achieve attainment of air quality standards, and improve the health of the population in the area.</p> <p>Request:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Incentive Funding – Significant new funding is necessary to procure the necessary emission reductions. The District is seeking \$200 million per year for a period of ten years to accelerate the introduction of new cleaner technologies. 2. Tax Incentives Plant/Fleet Modernization – In order to attain the federal standards for ozone and PM2.5, the District, ARB, and EPA have identified opportunities for emissions reductions from existing and new regulations. The regulations identified to date are not sufficient to bring the Valley into attainment in a timely manner. In order to attain the standard it will be necessary to go beyond regulation and replace existing industrial and mobile source equipment with cleaner equipment prior to the end of its useful life. 	<p>Fresno County</p>	<p>Bernard Jimenez, Deputy Director Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, (559) 600-4234, bjjimenez@co.fresno.ca.us</p> <p>(Jeannie Figueroa 559-600-1225)</p>

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Community and Economic Development			
<i>Topic</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Economic Development and Redevelopment Support	<p>Legislation is suggested whereby the federal Economic Development Administration would oversee a program that would provide federal funding (non-matching grants) directly to communities classified under the federal definition as “disadvantaged” or “severely disadvantaged” specifically for redevelopment or economic development efforts. These efforts include, but are not limited to, direct federal subsidy that would reimburse the municipality for granting property tax abatements, sales tax rebates, development fee abatements, or similar financial incentives to encourage redevelopment of blighted areas or new commercial, sales tax generating economic development projects. To ensure that each qualifying municipality spends program dollars in an appropriate manner, each municipality would adopt by ordinance an Economic Incentive Zone Plan (EIZ) that identifies a “zone” within the community that is specifically targeted for redevelopment or new, tax-generating economic development projects where federal dollars are permitted to be used to fund qualifying incentives.</p> <p>Request: Support for Federal legislation and programs to provide financial assistance directly to communities designated as “disadvantaged” (defined below) for the purpose of economic development and/or redevelopment of blighted areas.</p>	City of Mendota	Vince DiMaggio, City Manager, City of Mendota, (559) 655-3291, vincedimaggio@cityofmendota.com
Support Continued & Increased Funding of the Community Development Block Grant	<p>Support increased funding of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. CDBG funds are used effectively and discretionally by local government to address the unmet needs of low- and moderate income families and their neighborhoods, and have significant positive impacts on local economies.</p> <p>The FY 2015 funding for CDBG as set by Congress and signed by the President in December, 2014, was \$3 billion,</p>	Fresno County	<p>Bernard Jimenez, Deputy Director, Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, (559) 600-4234 bjimenez@co.fresno.ca.us</p> <p>(Jeannie Figueroa 559-600-1225)</p>

	<p>a total of \$30 million below the FY 2014 level. This decrease was minimized due to the hard work by NACCED, NACo and other members of the Community Development Coalition (supporter groups).</p> <p>Request: Increased funding for CDBG in FY2016.</p>		
Workforce Development			
Job Training Program	<p>Funding for Career Technical Training that has a direct link with the specific skills needs of businesses operating within the San Joaquin Valley will have a positive impact on retaining and growing the industrial and manufacturing base in the Valley. Referencing responses from the Deloitte publication, “Seventy-four percent of respondents indicated that workforce shortages or skills deficiencies in skilled production roles are having significant impact on their ability to expand operations or improve productivity”, citing these types of jobs require training in the various fields of machinist, operators, technicians, craft workers, and the like.</p> <p>Filling these “vacant” jobs reduces unemployment, increases personal spending power, and provides the skilled workforce necessary for business growth and development – all of which creates an economic develop benefit and strengthens the overall economy.</p> <p>Request: Funds for developing Career Technical Educational Training Programs in FY 2015-16 for specific skill certifications, grants or other funding mechanisms for allocating funds and/or cost-sharing programs to area businesses who provide internships for those participating in the vocational program(s).</p>	City of Sanger	<p>Brian Haddix, City Manager, City of Sanger, 559-876-6300, bhaddix@ci.sanger.ca.us</p> <p>Tony Pacheco, Councilmember District 3, City of Sanger, (559) 876-6300, ext. 1500, tpacheco@ci.sanger.ca.us</p>
US DOT to Establish Consistent Policies for Targeted Hiring Program & Workforce Development	<p>Currently, the U.S. Department of Transportation and its various administrative departments lack a uniform policy for either targeted hiring initiatives or funding for related job training</p> <p>Request:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A uniform policy pertaining to focused hiring programs is developed and implemented by all administration 	Workforce Investment Board	<p>Matt Leedy 559-375-5665 mleedy@workforce-connection.com</p>

Funds	departments within the U.S. DOT. 2. All administration departments within the U.S. DOT should identify workforce training funds that can be used by schools screened by Workforce Investment Act-recognized workforce boards and those used by union apprentice programs.		
-------	--	--	--

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Public Safety			
<i>Topic</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Future Funding through the US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)	<p>Request: Continuation of funding to the local jail to partially offset the cost of incarcerating criminal aliens arrested by any of the Local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies within Fresno County.</p> <p>Advocate for a long-term authorization and increased funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) to assist Fresno County with costs incurred for incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens.</p>	Fresno County (Sherrif's Dept.)	Steve Wilkins, Undersheriff, Sheriff's Office, 559-600-8800, Steve.Wilkins@fresnosheriff.org

OTHER

Public Safety			
<i>Topic</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Continuation of Payments in Lieu of Taxes Program (PILT)	The County of Fresno strongly supports funding of the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) program. PILT provides payments to counties to help offset losses in property tax revenues due to the presence of tax-exempt federal land within county boundaries. In fiscal year 2014, Fresno County received \$2,735,384 for 1,525,262 acres in tax-exempt federal lands and is slated to receive the same amount in	Fresno County	Vicki Crow, Fresno County Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector 559-600-3496, VCrow@co.fresno.ca.us Paul Dictos, Fresno County Assessor-Recorder, 559-600-6879, pdictos@co.fresno.ca.us

	<p>fiscal year 2015. These funds are critical to Fresno County in provided needed services on these federal lands, including, but not limited to search and rescue operations, law enforcement, sanitation and road maintenance.</p> <p>Request: Ensure that PILT is fully funded. Continuation of the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes program is important to Fresno County as it makes up for diminished tax revenues stemming from Federal ownership of land within the County's boundaries. Loss of funding will impact essential County services, such as search and rescue operations, law enforcement, sanitation, and road maintenance.</p>		<p>Kathleen Donawa, Fresno County Assistant County Administrative Officer, (559) 600-1223, kdonawa@co.fresno.ca.us</p>
--	---	--	---