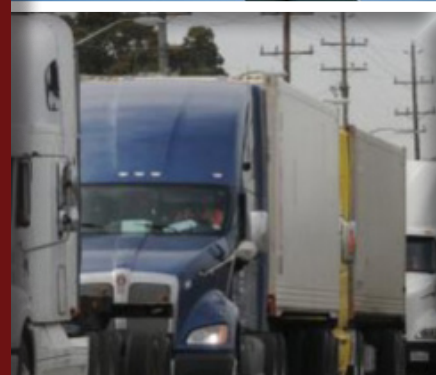




**2016  
Fresno COG One Voice  
Regional Priorities  
Summary**

***“One Voice” unites Fresno County communities and regional interests in a voluntary and collaborative effort to seek federal and state funds annually for projects of regional significance. All projects chosen shall contribute significantly to an improved quality of life throughout Fresno County.***



## 2016 Washington D.C. Fresno COG One Voice Delegates

**Amarpreet Dhaliwal**, Mayor, City of San Joaquin, Fresno COG Policy Board Chair

**Buddy Mendes**, Fresno County Board of Supervisors, Supervisor, District 4

**Andreas Borgeas**, Fresno County Board of Supervisors, Supervisor, District 2

**Nathan Magsig**, Mayor, City of Clovis

**Victor Lopez**, Mayor, City of Orange Cove

**Alma Beltran**, Mayor, City of Parlier

**Daniel Parra**, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fowler

**Lynne Ashbeck**, Council Member, City of Clovis and Vice President, Community Medical Centers

**Oliver Baines**, Council Member, City of Fresno

**Josie Cervantes**, Council Member, City of Orange Cove

**Margaret Mims**, Sheriff - Coroner, County of Fresno

**Les Wright**, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures, Fresno County Department of Agriculture

**Reverend Paul McCoy**, Chairman of the Board, Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission

**Blake Konczal**, Executive Director, Fresno Workforce Investment Board

**Lee Ann Eager**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fresno County Economic Development Corporation

**Jeffrey T. Roberts**, Vice President, Granville Homes

**Lydia Zabrycki**, Director of Operations and Client Relations, Precision Civil Engineering, Inc.

**Samuel Escobar**, City Manager, City of Orange Cove

**Tony Boren**, Executive Director, Fresno Council of Governments

**Mario Santoyo**, Local Agency Formation Commission, Public Member and Interim Director, San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority

**Paul McLain-Lugowski**, Chief Innovation Officer, Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission

**Chuck Riojas**, Financial Secretary/Treasurer, Building & Construction Trades Council

**Rob Terry**, Principal Regional Planner, Fresno Council of Governments

**Brenda Veenendaal**, Senior Regional Planner, Public Information Officer, Fresno Council of Governments

### One Voice History

In 2003, the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) initiated the first “One Voice” effort, seeking Federal and/or State funding for projects of broad community-wide benefit within Fresno County. The One Voice goal was to assemble a public-private delegation, select prioritized projects, and then visit Congressional and Federal departmental representatives in Washington, D. C. to pursue funding and grant opportunities. The Fresno COG also makes a similar efforts at the State level.

Originally, Fresno COG looked forward to the Fresno region garnering federal earmarked funds through the One Voice efforts that it might not have received otherwise. However, in 2010 Congress issued a one year moratorium on earmark funding and has since continued to uphold that policy, thereby increasing the importance of advocating for policy and regulatory reform and the preservation of program funding crucial to projects in the Fresno County region.

Fresno COG’s One Voice delegation continues to inform legislators about the region’s priority needs, appealing to federal decision makers for their support during the competitive grant processes. By advocating for policy and regulatory reform we continue to find ways to eliminate unnecessary procedures so that government agencies and the business community can work together efficiently toward job creation.

# 2016 One Voice Washington D.C. Regional Priorities Summary

## Table of Contents

### Water Policy

Water Policy Support.....	1
Community Services Block Grant.....	3

### Transportation Policy

High Speed Rail Training Facilities.....	4
Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.....	5

### Agriculture Policy

Pest Prevention & Exclusion of Pests Programs .....	7
Agriculture Canine Inspection to Protect Agriculture from Invasive Pest Introduction.....	7
Expand Drip Irrigation Funding Opportunities to Tenants .....	8

### Air Quality Policy

Air and Health Quality Empowerment Zone Designation .....	9
Clean Air Act Modernization .....	10

### Community, Economic and Workforce Development

Continuation of Payments in Lieu of Taxes Program .....	11
Support Continued & Increased Funding of the Community Development Block Grant Program .....	12
Establish Uniform Workforce Policies in the U.S. Department of Transportation.....	12
DOE Funding for Weatherization and Solar PV Installation.....	13

### Public Safety and Homeland Security

Future Funding through the US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program .....	15
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### Fresno COG 2016 One Voice Participant Contact Listing.....16



Fresno Council  
of Governments



# Water Policy Support



## REQUEST SUMMARY:

Support for Federal legislation and funding to assist the San Joaquin Valley in dealing with the negative impacts of continuing drought conditions, improved flexibilities to existing Delta pumping restrictions and the construction of the Temperance Flat Dam Project and other long term water supply reliability projects. Furthermore, support Endangered Species Act (ESA) amendments that balance social and economic benefits with species protection.

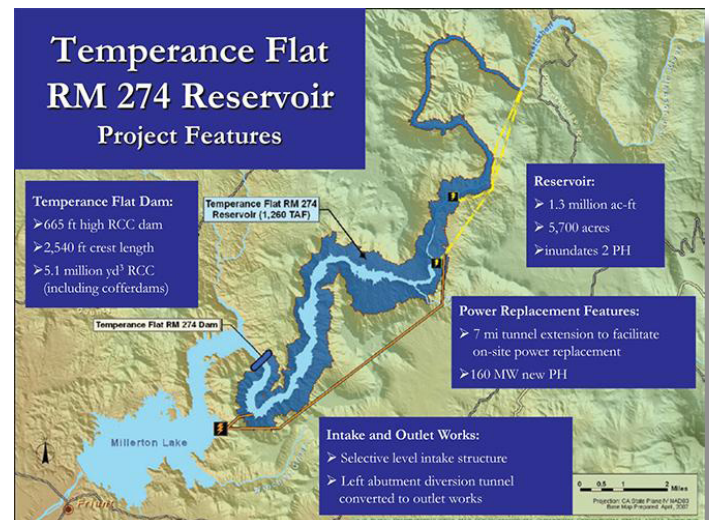
## REQUEST SUMMARY:

Support for Federal legislation and funding to assist the San Joaquin Valley in dealing with continuing drought conditions coupled with inadequate reservoir water storage capacities and serious Delta pumping restrictions resulting in;

- Serious and negative economic impacts to farms, rural communities and specifically low-income families. Continuation of 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 (refer to the Economic Opportunities Commission attachment).
- 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 resulting in making the negative impacts of the natural drought even worse. Both temporary and long term relief is key for the survival of the San Joaquin Valley's Agriculture industry and cities. Specific actions requested:
  - o Support for Congressman Valadao's Legislation
  - o Support for Senator Feinstein's Legislation
  - o Support resulting Legislation from Conference Committee
- The need to storage water normally lost during wet years for drought periods by 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 along with city and farm well failures. Specific actions requested:
  - o Congressional Construction Authorization for Temperance Flat Project-- For features generally de-

scribed in the feasibility report with a construction budget based on report estimates subject to indexing and with investment protections for non-federal contributions.

- o Financial Assistance to San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority--To secure partnership agreements and funding from non-federal sources.
- o Federal Appropriations--To initiate construction related activities such as but not limited to:
  - Definite Plan Report
  - Final Design
  - Land Acquisition
  - Construction



## PRIORITY BACKGROUND:

Water continues to be the most critical issue being faced by the San Joaquin Valley. 2016 appears to be the first normal year coming out of a historical drought period for California; however, it will start with historical lows in all its reservoirs and groundwater levels. Many pressing concerns - new as well as long standing - are affecting water supply reliability, quantity, and quality of the region's agricultural, urban, and environmental water needs. Making things worse, many of the Valley's ground water wells continue to fail forcing farmers to drill deeper in hope of reaching water but ultimately resulting in significant over drafting- similar to the days before the Central Valley Project Friant and San Luis Units were built when serious land subsidence was also occurring.

Fresno County, like the majority of the Valley, is a conjunctive use area, meaning that the region relies heavily on surface

water deliveries for ground water storage and usage by farmers and cities. The majority of the surface water supplies to Fresno County come by way of the CVP Friant Division on the east side and CVP San Luis Unit on the west side along with pre 1914 water right supplies from the Kings River. However, there has been a significant loss of CVP surface water supplies over the last decade due to environmental diversions, pumping restrictions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, environmental law suits and a historical drought which is unfortunately transforming Fresno County from one of the top Ag production counties in the Nation to a county with serious questions as to its ability to receive water from year to year.

The pathway to solutions for these complex water issues will be difficult to travel and will require much interest, energy, fortitude and cooperation from both our State and Congressional representatives but it is a road that must be traveled to achieve the necessary quantity and reliability of water supplies to meet the needs of our farms, municipalities and the environment. In November of 2014 Californians overwhelmingly approved Proposition 1 (Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014), which was a major first step for the construction of both short term and long term projects. Now is the perfect opportunity for our State and Federal legislators to partner in optimizing the funding of the State's Proposition 1 funds.

Construction of new above ground water storage and below ground water storage projects are key examples of the type of projects where the partnership of State and Federal funding can make a real difference. On a regular basis, storms and large flows of run-off from Friant Dam have demonstrated that the small storage capacity in Millerton Lake limits local ability to contain and control floodwaters. Additional storage, like the proposed Temperance Flat Water Storage Facility, would convert excess floodwater supplies into valuable water storage for beneficial uses. In January of 2016, the San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority was formed by five Counties (Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare and Kings) to pursue the construction of the Temperance Flat Project by securing both California Proposition 1-Chapter 8 funding and Federal assistance/appropriations.

Furthermore, it is important for Congress to amend the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to balance social and economic benefits with species protection. Due to the protection of the federally listed delta smelt, federal restrictions have severely reduced the availability to pump surface water from the Delta for delivery to millions of people in the Central Valley. Every year, hundreds of thousands of acre feet of surface water are allowed to flow through the Delta out to the ocean in an attempt to protect the declining

population of this fish species. As a result, the social and economic impacts to the Central Valley have been substantial. Local economies are being negatively impacted by declining job opportunities for families who rely either directly or indirectly on the Central Valley's agricultural industry. The lack of a sustainable surface water supply has forced farmers to rely more heavily on groundwater pumping to the detriment of existing groundwater aquifers.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS:**

Fresno County and the San Joaquin Valley are agricultural-based economies. The successes or failures of the agricultural industry reverberate throughout the regional, state, and national economy. The loss of surface water supplies over the last decade due to storage capacity limitations, environmental diversions, pumping restrictions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and exacerbation by the current drought have put a tremendous strain on the agricultural economy and the communities it supports.

Current impact estimates from the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences projects a \$1.84 billion loss to the agricultural industry and the loss of at least 10,100 agriculturally related jobs. The effects extend deeply into the economy and social services networks, with low income farm workers losing work and small towns losing business due to fallowed agricultural lands.



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# Community Services Block Grants

## A lifeline for communities and families devastated by the drought

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Request Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding in the amount of \$750 million for Fiscal Year 2017.

Request reauthorization of CSBG: Community Economic Opportunity Act of 2015 (sponsored by Rep. Fitzpatrick, co-sponsors include Costa, Nunes, Valadao.)

### PRIORITY BACKGROUND:

The single most important tool to respond to the plight of families devastated by the drought is the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG). CSBG is flexible and locally controlled. It is hailed by lawmakers because it is distributed to virtually every county in the nation, requires local input in how funds are used, and the agencies designated to manage CSBG funds must be governed by a tripartite board with members elected by local constituents, members appointed by elected officials with jurisdiction over the region, and members of organizations with a mandate to address the needs of the poor. In Fresno County,

Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (Fresno EOC) is the designated agency responsible for administering the federal CSBG funds. The agency's goal is to collaborate, support, and leverage all available resources to empower our residents toward self-sufficiency.

CSBG has been used to support families impacted by the drought:

- Facilitated the formation and management of the Central Valley Drought Relief Coalition (funded temporary water tanks, well drilling, and food assistance)
- Provided emergency water bill payment assistance for families affected by the drought
- Created the DEEP program – Drought Emergency and Educational Preparedness program in response to an increasing number of minority farmers contemplating suicide, the consequence of having their livelihood impacted
- Funded food distribution events feeding 10,000 individuals per month
- Temporary housing rental assistance for drought-impacted families
- Temporary fuel assistance payments preventing utilities shut off (LIHEAP)

- Flexibility to create innovative and responsive programs such as:
  - ◇ Fresno Community Development Financial Institution, small business lender to entrepreneurs unable to access capital through traditional means (over 325 loans with a value exceeding \$15 million, since 2009)
  - ◇ New credit union opened in Southeast Fresno
  - ◇ Solar installations for low-income families (450,000 watts installed since June, 2015)
  - ◇ Social enterprises including a commercial kitchen, transit system, diversified recycling services; all hire and train unemployed workers
  - ◇ Regional anti-human trafficking program to provide hope and support for the growing number of our residents in servitude - the fastest growing crime in the world, according to the State Department

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Reverend Paul McCoy, Chairman of the Board  
Paul McClain-Lugowski, Chief Innovations Officer  
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(Above) Shantytowns in a dried up canal bed on Westlands Water District land in the outskirts of Mendota, Calif.



Maria Lopez, 43, above right, and her cousin Reyna Camacho, 45, above left, both of Huron, wait in line in the bitter cold to receive food from the Community Food Bank

# Transportation Policies



## High-Speed Rail Training Facilities

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Provide support to create Fresno as the hub for training workers for high-speed rail for the entire country. A permanent facility of this kind will be necessary to keep up with the advancing technology, especially if the United States wishes not only to utilize this system but gain an innovative presence in the industry worldwide.

### PRIORITY BACKGROUND:

Since our last meeting in April, 2015 the high-speed rail project began construction. The project is well underway with the first sites, the Fresno River Viaduct and the Herndon Canal Bridge. This is a monumental project that will require a skilled labor force to construct and maintain the high-speed rail system. The purpose of this request is to establish a campus intended for training workers for the construction and maintenance of the high-speed rail. Because the high-speed rail system is new to the United States, it is necessary to train workers not only to 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.

The proposed facility is part of a broader vision associated with the location of the California High-Speed Rail Authority's heavy maintenance facility in Fresno County. That vision includes an educational center, transportation operations facility, an ongoing training site, a facility for businesses and countries to showcase their products, and an industrial

park for companies that provide services and products to the high-speed rail. 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.

The need for the training facility is necessary as we have a high unemployment rate and lack of skilled workers to fill the jobs that the construction of high-speed rail will provide. Fresno County is amongst California counties with the highest rates of poverty (26%) compared to California's 15.9%. Identified as an economically distressed area due to its low per capita income figures, the region is representative of those areas needing to diversify job opportunities through technical training. With the construction of high-speed rail and the need for a trained labor force to fill the jobs, the training facility is exactly what is needed to grow our local economy.

Throughout this year we have been approached by a respectable and proven training institute that is interested in providing the high-speed rail training. To assist in the creation of a state of the art high speed rail training facility workforce, Fresno County's eighteen public and private universities, community colleges, and technical institutes are ready to implement cutting edge curriculum. We are asking for your support to make Fresno County the hub for high-speed rail training for the United States.

First and foremost the training facility would provide training to our unemployed population as well as our underemployed. By creating the opportunity for a brighter future, this would have a direct economic impact to Fresno County as well as the Central Valley. The California High Speed Rail will bring much needed business and capital to numerous industries in the Central Valley; help eliminate over 12



billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions annually to combat global warming; encourage the savings of 2.0-3.2 million barrels of oil each year; and generate total projected employment of 2,388,000 jobs over the life of the project including direct, indirect, and induced jobs.



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## Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

#### REQUEST SUMMARY:

In implementing and further improving the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No 114-94), Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) recommends the following principles, with particular emphasis on maintaining and supporting federal formula funding allocations to regions and national freight programs that supports investments in Goods Movement:

**A. Continue to ensure financial integrity of Highway and Transit Trust Funds through the establishment of consistent revenue streams that provide for financial stability and certainty, and support continuous formula funding allocations.**

**Maintain and support continued federal formula funding allocations for projects that meet the goals of the FAST Act.**

Both the Veterans Blvd project and the State Route 180 East Kings Canyon Expressway Segment 3 are examples of the types of regional infrastructure projects that would benefit the entire Fresno County region if federal funds are awarded either through the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Discretionary Grant Program or apportioned through the new formula-based National Highway Freight Program.

The Veterans Blvd facility, which is well underway in the design and right of way acquisition processes, will benefit the region by addressing many ongoing acute issues in the area of goods movement, safety, traffic congestion and air quality. The project is the only remaining project identified in the Measure "C" Implementation Program, which is a local sales tax measure program, that has not been fully funded and constructed to date. The federal government has previously invested transportation funds to this project; therefore, it is imperative that the project be fully funded and constructed so that the region can reap the benefits of these investments.

With Segments 1 and 2 already completed for the State Route 180 East Kings Canyon Expressway project, Phase 3 completion will finalize the facilitation of improved traffic flow throughout the region. State Route 180 not only links Fresno County's eastern communities and National Park areas with vital regional services, but also serves as the goods movement corridor for eastern Fresno County, allowing for the global export of billions of dollars in agricultural, advanced telecommunication and electronic component goods each year.

**B. Support national freight programs through the identification of long-term dedicated funding sources.** Long-term, sustainable funding for transportation is yet



to be achieved. Because the bill relies on \$70 billion of General Fund support, the expected annual gap between Highway Trust Fund income and spending in 2021 is expected to reach \$20 billion each year.

**C. Continue to streamline planning, programs and project delivery** through additional state and regional stewardship such as delegation programs, increasing state and regional flexibility for using alternative project delivery methods and integrating planning, project development, review, permitting, and environmental processes to reduce delay. Ensure support for efforts that address multimodal connectivity and integration within the planning process.



**REQUEST BACKGROUND:**

Fresno COG supports the FAST Act that now provides greater program certainty while allowing for more deliberate economic investment that assures global competitiveness and job growth. Fresno COG is pleased to see dedicated funding for national freight programs and further encourages Congress to maintain formula funding allocations to regions. However, Congress should still place focus on the establishment of long-term sustainable transportation revenues, allowing for greater reinvestment in our transportation infrastructure. Investments in freight infrastructure is crucial to stitching together larger global value chains, growing local industries, and ultimately boosting regional economic growth.

The San Joaquin Valley (Valley) is California’s fastest growing region and the nation’s number one agricultural producer, generating more than \$35 billion in the gross value of agricultural commodities such as nuts, lettuce, tomatoes, wine, grains and other products. The Valley plays a major role in processed foods and energy products nationally and internationally. As a growing and diversified region, the Valley depends on an efficient goods movement system for its long-term economic success and to safely

move resources out of the Valley and on to the rest of the nation.

- In 2010 goods movement-dependent industries in the Valley generated approximately \$56 billion.
- Freight volumes are projected to grow from 500 million tons in 2007 to almost 800 million tons by 2040.
- Through 2040, roughly 93 percent of all commodity movement will be carried by truck.

The Fresno COG also supports continued efforts to streamline and reform Federal surface transportation programs and project delivery. This can be achieved through further opportunities for state and regional stewardship through-delegation programs, increasing state and regional flexibility for using alternative project delivery methods and integrating planning, project development, review, permitting, and environmental processes to reduce delay.

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# Agricultural Priorities



## Pest Prevention and Exclusion of Pests Programs

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Protect existing revenue sources and enhance federal funding of Pest Prevention Program activities. Support adequate and consistent funding for High Risk pest and disease prevention and exclusion programs in California. Fresno County does not receive adequate funding to protect their citizens from invasive pests. In Fiscal Year 2014-15 Fresno County received \$50,775 compared to \$92,712 received in Fiscal Year 2009-10.

### PRIORITY BACKGROUND:

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 if, and when, they occur.



There are a number of significant invasive species being introduced and detected in California that threaten agriculture and the environment. Continued funding of Pest Exclusion, Pest Detection Trapping and Survey Activities, Rapid Response, Pest Management and Eradication (if feasible), and Public Education Outreach Programs is critical in protecting California's resources. California has a three-pronged approach to pest and disease prevention which includes pest exclusion, pest detection, and pest eradication. Inspections at California border stations, various sea ports and the Mexico ports of entry keep harmful pests from harming our ecosystem and damaging the food and fiber production. In conjunction with pest exclusion, pest detection programs utilize trapping and visual surveys to catch potential infestations that may enter undetected as early as possible before economic damage can be done. If a pest is found, then eradication measures begin to eliminate the pest. These measures save millions of dollars, over time, as compared

to managing a pest after it has become established, and prevention of introduction allows for less restrictive trade with our foreign partners. With funding from the 2014 farm bill, this system has worked time and again to eradicate pests like the peach fruit fly and European grape vine moth in Fresno County. However, more and consistent funding is needed. Pests such as the Asian citrus psyllid and light brown apple moth were able to enter California and establish before being detected, which has severely limited our ability to eradicate them.

Prevention of entry and early detection of pests would provide higher crop yields and prevent job losses that could occur from loss of crops due to damage.

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## Agriculture Canine Inspection to protect agriculture from invasive pest introduction

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Protect existing revenue sources and support additional funding for canine detection teams to protect agriculture from invasive pest introduction at parcel facilities in the Central Valley of California. In Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Fresno County was budgeted to receive \$230,434, less than the amount needed to cover expenses for one team (one canine, handler, helper and associated costs). The actual need is for three additional teams, stationed within the Central Valley, to adequately inspect all of the facilities at an estimated cost of \$750,000 annually.

Support authority to allow agricultural inspectors to conduct inspections of "first class" and "priority mail packages containing plant material at postal facilities.

### **PRIORITY BACKGROUND:**

California is a major producer of agricultural commodities that are important to the nutrition and health of our nation, producing one quarter of the nation's supply of fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts. Fresno County is in the forefront of that production. Fresno County has partial support through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through Farm Bill funding to maintain inspections of mail and parcels for contraband plant material that may carry pests detrimental to agriculture and residents. This team is the only USDA team protecting the vast Central Valley of California. California's Central Valley produces half of the United States fruits, vegetables, and nuts and there are many facilities that provide pathways to introduction of harmful pests. Currently the Central Valley has one team in place to cover the entire Valley, but the actual need to adequately cover these pathways would be three additional teams to cover the central portion of California. Higher funding support is needed for the existing agriculture canine inspection teams and to fund the establishment of additional teams in the state.

Pest Detection and Pest Exclusion are the primary methods employed to prevent introductions of exotic pests into California and the County of Fresno. As a first line of defense, the California Agriculture Detector Dog Team Program was developed to prevent the introduction of harmful plant pests into the California via privately shipped parcels. This is a cooperative effort between the United States Department of Agriculture, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and the Fresno County Department of Agriculture. Currently the Fresno based detector dog protects the whole agriculture production area of the entire San Joaquin Valley. More teams are needed to regularly inspect at the many facilities located here.

Pest detection activities are greatly enhanced through the use of highly trained dogs to efficiently and effectively detect plant material in parcel shipments. One pathway that is not adequately protected is "first class" and "priority" parcels at postal facilities. Lack of access to primary and secondary postal distribution facilities located in and servicing the Central Valley, including Fresno County, need regular inspections, in order to protect agriculture and the public from invasive pests.

### **ECONOMIC BENEFITS:**

If a pest becomes established, costs to prevent economic damage to agricultural commodities rises millions of dollars. The General Accounting Office estimated in 1997 that the national cost to taxpayers from invasive pests was close



*Soya and her handler, Fresno County's only canine team, working a facility*

to \$41 billion annually in lost production, prevention, and control expenses.

### **CONTACTS:**

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## **Expand Drip Irrigation Funding Opportunities to Tenant Farmers**

### **REQUEST SUMMARY:**

We 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 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funding.

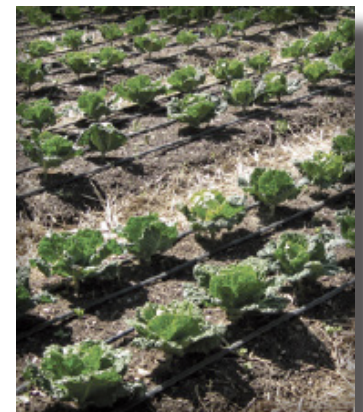
We also request the inclusion of programs that would benefit small-scale farmers when federal emergency drought assistance funds are released.

### **PRIORITY BACKGROUND:**

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.

Making the EQIP funding for drip irrigation 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. It would also increase access to water-conservation tools, which is incredibly important with the region's record-breaking droughts and decreasing water allocations.



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# Air Quality Priority



## Air and Health Quality Empowerment Zone Designation

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

Support reintroduction and enactment of H.R. 6378 - Air and Health Quality Empowerment Zone Designation Act of 2012 in the 114th Congress - Allowing the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to designate an area as an air and health quality empowerment zone. The Air Pollution Control District or other local governmental entity (area entity) authorized to regulate air quality for the area would nominate the area for such designation, 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.

### PRIORITY BACKGROUND:

The San Joaquin Valley continues to experience some of the worst air quality in the nation, especially ozone and Particulate Matter 2.5, due to unique economic, topographic and meteorological conditions. Senator Barbara Boxer introduced legislation in 2008 and 2010, and Congressman Jim Costa and Jerry McNerney introduced legislation (H.R. 6378) in 2012, to designate Air Quality Empowerment Zones in the San Joaquin Valley, addressing health and economic development impacts of non-attainment of federally mandated air quality standards. The Air and Health Quality Empowerment Zone Designation Act of 2012 (H.R. 6378, 112th Congress), if approved, would have authorized up to \$20 million annually in grant funding incentives for nonattainment areas like the San Joaquin Valley.



The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is seeking the establishment of a new designation as an Air Quality Enterprise/ Empowerment Zone at the state and federal level.

The new designation would recognize that the Valley has a unique air quality and economic situation that calls for additional state and federal resources to effectively meet the challenges that we face. Given the Valley's climate and economic situation, it is abundantly clear that aggressive regulatory measures alone will not yield the needed reductions to attain the federal air quality standards. One primary reason for this is that new tail-pipe standards for on-road and off-road engines will not produce any reduction in emissions until old engines are replaced with new cleaner engines. Without incentive grants, the full benefit of the new engine standards will not be realized for decades.

Additionally, incentive grants can allow for adoption of cleaner technologies that may otherwise be unaffordable. Furthermore, industrial equipment at stationary sources could be replaced with newer and cleaner equipment with appropriate incentive funding.

The San Joaquin Valley is California's top agricultural producing region, growing more than 250 unique crops and much of the Nation's fruits, vegetables and nuts. California is the nation's leading dairy state, with three quarters of its dairy cows located in the Valley. The annual gross value of agricultural production in the Valley is more than \$35 billion. Unfortunately, the San Joaquin Valley is also the home of the worst air quality in the country and has some of the highest rates of childhood asthma in California. Transportation, especially trucks, is the largest source of air pollution in the Valley. Air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley is estimated to cost the California economy more than \$28 billion annually.

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# Clean Air Act Modernization

## REQUEST SUMMARY:

The Clean Air Act was last amended in 1990. Over the last 25 years, local, state, and federal agencies and affected stakeholders have learned important lessons from implementing the law. It is clear now that a number of well-intentioned provisions in the Act are leading to unintended consequences. This experience can inform efforts to enhance the Clean Air Act with much needed modernization.

The Clean Air Act Modernization proposal seeks legislative improvements to the Federal Clean Air Act, while retaining the core elements in the Act that serve to protect public health, streamlining the administrative requirements in the Act, and ensuring expeditious air quality improvement considering technological and economic feasibility.

The Clean Air Act needs to be strategically amended to address the following issues:

**Problem 1:** Every five years the Clean Air Act requires that EPA review and update air quality standards. Currently, the transition between standards is chaotic and leads to a number of overlapping plans with different milestones and attainment dates. In the Valley, there are six active air plans (one for a revoked standard). Over the next two years, four new plans must be developed.

**Solution 1:** When a new standard is published, the old standard for that pollutant should be subsumed. States should be allowed to develop a single attainment plan that harmonizes increments of progress and other milestones without allowing for any rollback or backsliding.

**Problem 2:** Mobile and stationary sources throughout the nation have now been subject to multiple generations of technology forcing regulations that have achieved significant air quality benefits. Meeting the new standards that approach background concentrations call for transformative measures that require time to develop and implement. These transformative measures require new technologies that in many cases are not yet commercially available or even conceived. The formula-based deadlines and milestones that were prescribed in the Act 25 years ago now lead to mandates that are impossible to meet.

**Solution 2:** In establishing deadlines and milestones, the Act should be amended to require control measures that lead to the most expeditious attainment of health based standards while taking into account technological and economic feasibility.

**Problem 3:** The Act as it relates to the demonstration of Reasonable Further Progress or Rate of Progress treats all precursors the same, regardless of their potency in harming public health or achieving attainment.

**Solution 3:** The Act should be amended to allow states to focus efforts on meeting new standards in the most expeditious fashion through deployment of scarce resources in a manner that provides the utmost benefit to public health.

**Problem 4:** Requiring contingency measures in extreme nonattainment areas is irrational and unnecessary. These areas, by definition, have already implemented all available and foreseeable measures and still need a “black box” of future measures to define and employ.

**Solution 4:** We recommend that the Act be amended to eliminate the requirement for contingency measures in areas classified as “extreme” non-attainment by EPA.

**Problem 5:** The Act requirements for severe and extreme ozone nonattainment areas to address vehicle-related emissions growth must be clarified.

**Solution 5:** The Act should be amended to allow states to take credit for all transportation control measures and strategies and not punish areas that have implemented transportation control measures and strategies that have achieved early reductions in emissions.

We urge action on this matter as we believe that inaction will set many regions up for failure and economic devastation as the new federal standards encroach on background pollution concentrations.

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# Community, Economic and Workforce Development



## Continuation of Payments in Lieu of Taxes Program (PILT)

### REQUEST:

Fresno County respectfully requests that our representatives work with their colleagues to 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.

### BACKGROUND:

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 2015, Fresno County received \$2,735,384 for 1,526,794 acres in tax-exempt federal lands and is slated to receive the same amount in fiscal year 2016. These funds are critical to Fresno County in providing needed services on these federal lands, including, but not limited to, search and rescue operations, law enforcement, sanitation and road maintenance.

Prior to fiscal year 2008, PILT payments were subject to the annual appropriation process, and the program was underfunded year after year. As part of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (PL 110-343), Congress converted PILT from a discretionary program to a fully funded program (through fiscal year 2013). PILT's mandatory spending was renewed for another year with the President's signature on

the Agriculture Act of 2014 (PL 113-79), resulting in fiscal year 2014 program funding of \$437 million.

On December 18, 2015, the President signed the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriation Act, 2016 (PL 114-113) appropriating \$452 million in PILT program funding for Fiscal Year 2016. However, this is a one-year appropriation with uncertain



future funding. The County of Fresno strongly supports enacting legislation, like PL 110-343, that will afford impacted counties throughout the nation funding to offset the impacts of federal lands without facing the risk of the annual appropriation process and potential steep funding cuts. Counties understand the serious budget challenges the country is facing and the difficult budget decisions that Congress is considering. Nevertheless, the loss of PILT funding will put further strain on already stretched county budgets, and thereby limit local governments in their ability to provide necessary services. Therefore, Fresno County respectfully requests that our representatives work with their colleagues to ensure PILT is fully funded.

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## Continued and Increased Funding of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

### REQUEST SUMMARY:

The Fiscal Year 2016 funding for CDBG as set by Congress and signed by the President in December 2015, was \$3 billion, which is equal to Fiscal Year 2015 spending, and \$30 million below the Fiscal Year 2014 level. Fresno County supports funding CDBG at \$3.3 billion for Fiscal Year 2017 and preserving it as a flexible and locally-driven community development resource. This support is in conjunction with the National Association for County Community and Economic Development (NACCED), the National Association of Counties (NACo) and other members of the Community Development Coalition (supporter groups).

### PRIORITY BACKGROUND:

CDBG funds are used effectively and discretionally by local governments to address the unmet needs of low- and mod

zof the CDBG program in 1975. All 15 cities as well as the unincorporated areas of Fresno County have benefited from this program. Recipients such as Fresno County have given priority to responsible activities that are awarded and/or constructed quickly to have an immediate positive impact on those in need. Local governments in Fresno County, as well as the State and other locales around the nation, have a backlog of such critical projects that are implemented efficiently and effectively and can positively impact the local economy for years to come.

The CDBG program suffered a massive 17% cut in Fiscal Year 2011, and the program is at its lowest funding level since 1992. While Fiscal Year 2016 funding equals Fiscal Year 2015 spending, support for the program overall declined nearly 30 percent since 2010 which has hampered local government ability to implement the community-driven development initiatives needed to create jobs and improve essential infrastructure. These cuts have had devastating impacts at the local level including staff layoffs, reduction in public services, cancellation of much needed infrastructure and economic development projects, and diminished programs that provide safe and affordable housing. CDBG is needed more than ever to help improve low- and moderate-income communities, and bring local affordable housing and infrastructure up to required standards. Between 2007 and 2011, CDBG provided assistance to help over 174,000 businesses nationally expand operations and create and retain local jobs. Over the last decade, CDBG economic activities have directly created or retained more than 334,000 permanent jobs and sustained an additional 861,000 jobs nationally. Jobs sustained by the program include construction workers responsible for the rehabilitation of public facilities, infrastructure, and housing. Locally in Fresno County, the program has directly impacted these jobs while creating more sustainable communities that promote increased economic investment.

Most recently, following CDBG-funded community infrastructure improvements, AutoZone and McDonald's have broken ground to open first-ever franchises in the City of Mendota which will create jobs and boost the local economy. In addition, a new raisin processing plant, River Ranch Raisins, has opened in the small unincorporated community of Biola, creating 87 new jobs.

**Notable 2015 accomplishments include:**

**Biola Water Line Replacements: Biola Avenue - \$300,000 CDBG and Third Street - \$233,762 CDBG** Two separate but similar projects replaced an inadequately sized six-inch asbestos cement water line with larger PVC water lines, to provide the proper fire flow. Additionally, inoperable water valves were replaced, and additional new valves were installed, to provide proper system isolation capability.

**Kerman Katie's Park Improvements - \$183,866 CDBG**

A pre-fabricated restroom was installed and various park amenities at an existing nature-based City park were constructed, including playground equipment, an architectural

climbing wall, benches and picnic tables. Labor for the installation of most improvements was provided by community volunteers and the Local Conservation Corps.



**Caruthers Monitoring Well / Water Valve / Water Line Replacement - \$439,100 CDBG** An existing groundwater monitoring well that had gone dry due to the drought-induced dropping groundwater table, was replaced. Also replaced an undersized water line, and approximately 28 water valves throughout the Caruthers district.

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## Establish Uniform Workforce Policies in the United States Department of Transportation

**REQUEST:**

Request a uniform policy across all Department of Transportation (DOT) administrative departments, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and Federal Highway Administration, for targeted hiring initiatives.

Recommend that all administrative departments within the DOT identify workforce training funds that may be used by training providers vetted and used by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-recognized Workforce Boards.

**PRIORITY BACKGROUND:**

Federally-funded public infrastructure projects have the potential to produce multiple economic benefits, including the creation of employment opportunities for the nation's most economically disadvantaged areas. The U.S. DOT estimates that transportation accounts for 11 million jobs, and transportation-related employment accounts for about 8.7% of civilian workers in the United States. Targeted hiring initiatives and related job training strategies increase the likelihood that unemployed and underemployed members of economically distressed communities have access to these jobs. Currently, the U.S. DOT and its various administrative units lack a uniform policy for either targeted hiring initiatives or funding for concurrent job training. In order to

achieve the maximum benefit of federal projects, new policies are needed to address targeted hiring and job training at the U.S. DOT's Federal Railroad (FRA), Federal Transit (FTA), Federal Highway (FHWA) and other administrations.

After years of work, the Fresno Regional Workforce Investment Board's (FRWIB) recommended targeted hiring policies for the California High-Speed Rail project were deemed constitutional by the U.S. DOT's FRA and adopted by the California High-Speed Rail Authority. During the course of this protracted process, discrepancies between the U.S. DOT's administrative units became apparent. While the FRWIB's targeted hiring recommendations were eventually cleared by the U.S. DOT's FRA, nearly-identical recommendations were made by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and were cleared by the U.S. DOT's FTA. However, confusion still exists within the U.S. DOT's other administration units – namely FHWA. During a meeting with the Director of the California DOT he stated that targeted and/or focused hiring initiatives are not allowed by the U.S. DOT's FHWA. This sentiment has been echoed by those within that administration, despite the fact that targeted hiring initiatives have been allowed by the U.S. DOT's FRA and FTA administrations after full vetting from their legal counsels. What is deemed legal by two administrations within the same department should be allowed by administrations throughout the entire U.S. DOT. Clearly, a uniform policy is needed, the result of which could be increased job opportunities for the U.S. citizens and disadvantaged communities that need them most.

In March 2015, the U.S. DOT's FTA and FHWA began a one-year pilot program that enabled grantees of their funds to “utilize social and/or economic contracting requirements, such as a local or other geographic labor hiring preferences and economic-based labor hiring preferences (i.e. low-income workers) ...” The FRWIB supports this pilot program inasmuch as it leads to a permanent, unified targeted hiring policy within the U.S. DOT's various administrative units. On March 17, 2016, the DOT expanded the pilot program for an additional year.

A unified policy is also needed at U.S. DOT in the area of job training funding. Currently, the FHWA is the only administrative branch that distributes workforce training money. These funds may be used for salary reimbursement for on-the-job training programs but not to fund training for workers enrolled in schools screened by workforce investment boards and recognized by union apprentice programs. The FHWA should have a policy allowing funding of both on-the-job training and vocational classroom training. This policy should be applied across U.S. DOT administrations.

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## **Department Of Energy Funding for Weatherization and Solar Photovoltaics Installation**

#### **REQUEST SUMMARY:**

Allow the national Department of Energy (DOE) weatherization service provider network to use their existing weatherization DOE Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) funding to install solar photovoltaics (PV) on owner occupied single family low-income residential units. Allowing for such flexibility would greatly enhance the network's ability to increase energy efficiency and affordability for our most vulnerable residents.

In addition, ask the DOE to fund Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (Fresno EOC) for a demonstration project that installs rooftop solar PV on the homes of eligible low-income residents, a project that could be replicated nationwide. As one of the largest community action agencies in the nation, with more than 40 years of experience in weatherization and the manufacturing of insulation products, and as the state's lead for a network of agencies installing rooftop solar on the homes of low-income residents, Fresno EOC has the experience and capacity to carry out this demonstration project. Fresno EOC would work closely with its national weatherization networks to roll out the program region by region throughout the country.

Benefits of the proposal are numerous: reducing the energy burden on low-income household budgets, creating solar industry jobs for low-income youth residing in the neighborhoods where the services are offered (national programs such as Youth Build and the Conservation Corps could be used for training and deployment of services), and greenhouse gas reduction, to name a few.

#### **PRIORITY BACKGROUND:**

Fresno EOC is part of a national Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) network. This network has been providing LIHEAP and DOE WAP weatherization services for many years on the homes of eligible low-income recipients. Fresno EOC has weatherized over 20,000 housing units in Fresno County in just the last five years.

In 2015 Fresno EOC responded to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) issued by the State Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) to install solar PV systems on owner occupied single family homes determined to be eligible for a rooftop solar system based on criteria set forth in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). CSD awarded Fresno EOC \$4,050,000 for fiscal year 2015-16 to lead a statewide network of like providers installing rooftop solar systems on the homes of eligible occupants residing in Fresno, Madera, Merced, Kings, Tulare, Sacramento, and Los Angeles counties. The installation of Solar PV has the





potential to offset up to 100% of the electricity burden low-income families face. Fresno EOC has been successful, working with these network partners, installing solar systems at a fixed price of \$4.50 per watt. This price includes design, city plan check costs, permits, installation, and net energy metering paperwork processing. Fresno EOC leverages LIHEAP and the state's Low Income Weatherization Program funding with state solar funding to bring maximum value to the service recipient, assuring that the home is properly weatherized, safe and energy efficient, with the installation of a rooftop solar system.

Fresno EOC is a community action agency, part of a national network of 1,100 community action agencies authorized by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act. It is the federal Office of Community Services' designated provider of services for low-income residents in Fresno County. In that capacity, Fresno EOC serves as a weatherization contractor of the DOE and CSD. The DOE generally provides Fresno EOC with annual funding in the range of \$70,000-\$280,000 for weatherization services.

The California State Legislature has appropriated GGRF funding in the last two budget cycles to offset greenhouse gasses. CSD has received \$140,000,000 from the fund over the past two budget cycles for weatherization, solar water heater installation, and solar PV installation. Fresno EOC applied for and received \$4,050,000 in funding from

the GGRF, to install 900,000 watts of solar from Sacramento to Los Angeles.

Fresno EOC's pilot is demonstrating how stacking weatherization with energy generation provides maximum benefits for low-income residents. As the program expands it will create jobs for outreach personnel, system designers, installers, maintenance and repair specialists, and customer service representatives. And, when program beneficiaries begin realizing significant savings on their energy bills, they will have more discretionary cash to spend on other needs.

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# Public Safety and Homeland Security Priority



## Future Funding through the US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)

### REQUEST:

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.

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.

### BACKGROUND:

Despite the rising costs of incarcerating undocumented criminals, funding for SCAAP has sharply declined over the years. Since 2000 the program's funding has been reduced by 70 percent while state and local detention costs, as well as the number of jurisdictions applying for the program, have significantly increased.

The Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 budget request does not include any funding for the program. Congress addressed the same situation in the Fiscal Year 2014 budget and included \$180 million for SCAAP, a substantially reduced funding level for this important program.

SCAAP provides partial reimbursement to states and localities for costs of incarcerating criminal aliens arrested by the local police departments, Sheriff, State or Federal agencies within Fresno County. To qualify for the partial SCAAP reimbursement the criminal aliens arrested must have at least

one felony or two misdemeanor convictions for violations of State or local law, and be incarcerated for at least four consecutive days. Even with SCAAP funding some of the daily jail costs for qualifying criminal aliens, the Sheriff must absorb the full detention cost of many criminal alien arrests that do not meet the SCAAP requirements.

SCAAP funding has decreased over the years contributing to the closure of jail beds and the layoff of Correctional Officers. Due to lack of funding there are currently 487 fewer jail beds available in the



Fresno County Jail System than in November of 2007. Full funding of the SCAAP program could help to restore Correctional Officer positions lost during the recession.

The SCAAP funding reduces the amount of local funding needed from the community for the incarceration of criminal aliens. Any reduction or the elimination of SCAAP funding would require the use of scarce local funds for essentially a Federal role of incarcerating criminal aliens, thus reducing the funds available for other local government services.

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS:

Reduced costs of victimization to the citizens and businesses of the County when the full capacity of the Fresno County Jail System is available to house criminals.

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