

May 30, 2020

Honorable Senator Jim Beall
Senate Transportation Committee
State Capitol Building

Re: Support for SB 1291 (Beall) Federal Transportation Improvement Program: Submissions

Senator Beall:

Fresno Council of Governments wholeheartedly supports SB 1291, which will provide much needed flexibility to regional agencies that otherwise face developing the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) in the face of uncertainties associated with federal changes under the SAFE Vehicles Rule (Part 2).

We support this because the bill is only temporarily suspending a more stringent state requirement during a period of great uncertainty. The underlying federal requirement remains in place. The federal law requires a new FTIP every four years. California law requires a new FTIP every two years.

There are two factors that are driving this need. First is the considerable uncertainty over the SAFE Vehicles Rule. Part 2 of the rule was just unveiled in March and will likely be effective sometime in June. The changes in fuel efficiencies create variables to modeling factors needed to make air conformity determinations. If conformity cannot be determined, billions in transportation projects—including rail and transit projects—will be at risk as soon as October.

Second, the FTIP process requires tremendous work and coordination with local jurisdictions. To get the needed approvals by September, much of the advance work needs to be done in May, June, and July. This year, those timelines are particularly difficult. Like most agencies, we are having a hard time completing all the steps required while sheltering in place. Given the significant consequences if an FTIP is not completed by October 1, it would be prudent to suspend the state requirement this year.

Thank you for authoring this important bill. Please contact Tony Boren at 559-233-4148 or tboren@fresnocog.org if you have any questions.

Best Regards,

David Cardenas, Chairman
Fresno COG Policy Board