



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
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2025-26 STATE LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SCAG's Legislative Program

SCAG maintains a State and Federal Legislative Program, which includes the Regional Council's positions on policies and legislative initiatives related to SCAG's core planning and policy areas—transportation, air quality, freight/goods movement, housing, environmental impact, sustainability, and economic recovery and job creation—and that need the leadership and support of the California State Legislature and Congress to resolve challenges facing the SCAG region.

SCAG's legislative efforts are the product of a committee process whereby the agency's Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee, comprising elected officials from throughout the region, identifies and recommends specific legislative action for consideration by the Regional Council concerning state and federal legislation affecting the SCAG region.

The following state legislative principles for 2025-26 encompass SCAG's broad, policy-oriented objectives, which build upon long-standing, Regional Council-adopted policies.

Policy Statement

SCAG works in partnership with the state on locally tailored solutions to address issues of regional and statewide concern.

Because of the SCAG region's rich diversity, one size rarely fits all. With more than 150 city councilmembers, mayors, and county supervisors serving on SCAG's Regional Council and policy committees, the nearly 19 million people of the SCAG region deserve to be represented at the local level with the best solutions to pressing public policy issues made in collaboration with the elected officials closest to the people.

SCAG supports legislative efforts that provide funding, resources, and tools that help our region's 191 cities, six counties, six county transportation commissions, and other member and partner organizations implement locally tailored solutions that address specific needs and meet statewide policy goals. We support efforts that leverage local knowledge from lived experiences.

The guiding ethos of the principles that follow reflect SCAG's belief that local levels of governments need additional tools and resources to achieve the positive outcomes associated with the policy goals the region shares with the state. These principles also support and reinforce the Connect SoCal 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, which the SCAG Regional Council unanimously adopted in April 2024. Connect SoCal 2024 identifies policy priorities and implementation strategies to further our goals within the four pillars of Mobility, Communities, Environment, and Economy.

Mobility

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

1. Support legislation that increases funding for the state's Active Transportation Program to provide resources needed to implement the active transportation strategies in Connect SoCal.
2. Support legislation that facilitates development of complete streets, safe multi-use public rights-of-way, and street networks for people of all ages and abilities using a variety of modes (e.g., walking, biking, rolling, driving, taking transit).

CONGESTION REDUCTION

3. Support new sources of dedicated funding for transportation demand management programs and strategies at the regional, county, and local levels, especially to help regions prepare for major events, such as the 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games.
4. Support local pilot programs and funding mechanisms that employ innovative transportation strategies, such as congestion or cordon pricing systems, to reduce congestion and improve mobility while promoting equity.

TRANSIT & RAIL

5. Support legislative efforts that allow transit operators more flexibility in using funding transit projects, operations, and maintenance.
6. Support legislation that implements mobility hubs and mobility as a service to enable more seamless mobility.
7. Support legislation that advances public transit frequency, reliability, and fare and scheduling integration across operators. This may include legislation that supports the extension of public transit projects—such as new bus rapid transit, dedicated bus lanes, express bus service on managed and express lanes, and transit signal priority treatments.
8. Support legislation that improves safety and security for transit riders and operators.
9. Support legislation that advances coordinated transportation and land use planning, such as residential development along high-frequency transit corridors and around public transit facilities and centers.
10. Support efforts that fund transit-oriented communities, mixed-use development, green streets strategies to reduce extreme heat and emissions exposure, and safe streets to allow people of all ages and abilities to maximize opportunities for active lifestyles, access essential services, and use transit or non-motorized transportation options.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

11. Protect all existing and new transportation funding sources, especially Senate Bill 1 (Beall, 2017) revenues, from borrowing and use for any purpose other than transportation and minimize restrictions on funding sources so regional agencies can address local needs while achieving state and federal goals.

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12. Support regional equity considerations for any funding source to ensure Southern California receives its fair share of funding based on population, opportunity, and other quantifiable measures corresponding with the funding source.
 13. Support the development of greater efficiencies for the California Transportation Development Act while streamlining and updating performance metrics relating to farebox recovery.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

14. Work with the state and local partners to identify new tools and funding mechanisms to strengthen safety outcomes and achieve the region's overarching safety goals (Vision Zero and Toward Zero Deaths) and targets, especially for communities most impacted by high concentrations of serious and fatal crashes.
15. Work with local, state, and federal partners to advance safer roadways, including reduced speeds, to achieve zero deaths and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Communities

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSING PRODUCTION

1. Support legislation that would provide new incentives, tools, and ongoing funding and expand housing programs that fund construction and development of housing and housing-supportive infrastructure, such as the Infill Infrastructure and Regional Early Action Planning grant programs, consistent with Connect SoCal 2024's growth patterns, while preserving local authority to address housing production, affordability, and homelessness challenges.
2. Support restoration and expansion of tax increment tools to build affordable housing stock, support community and economic development, improve public transit, adapt to a changing climate, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Incentivize collaboration among potentially impacted jurisdictions by sharing net proceeds from future tax increment financing districts and emphasize tax increment as a public financing tool that does not increase taxes to residents.
3. Support legislation that would increase coordination and flexibility between the California Department of Housing and Community Development and local jurisdictions to realize shared housing production goals, particularly for the development and implementation of local housing elements as well as advancing fairness and transparency of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) program.
4. Advocate for specific opportunities that allow cities and counties to equitably and collaboratively share or trade RHNA allocations as a tool to facilitate effective planning for, and development of, housing.
5. Support legislative efforts that provide funding to build transit-oriented communities and resilient development, as well as mixed land uses and green streets strategies consistent with Connect SoCal 2024, to accelerate housing production while reducing emissions and promoting safe streets for all transportation modes.
6. Support efforts to expand access to homeownership, particularly for first-time homebuyers and communities of color.

PROJECT STREAMLINING

7. While underscoring our support for environmental protection, support California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reform to expedite and streamline project development and delivery, especially for transportation, transit-oriented, infill, and housing projects.
8. Support efforts to improve the implementation of Senate Bill 743's (Steinberg, 2013) vehicle miles traveled (VMT) analysis provisions, including a) more comprehensive CEQA guidance for quantifying VMT mitigation measures, b) determining whether a specific mitigation action independently serves to decrease VMT (i.e., additionality), c) assessing (and accounting for) any unintended consequences on housing development, d) implementing regionally-based VMT mitigation mechanisms, and e) establishing project-specific design considerations to reduce VMT within the context of the state's unique and diverse landscapes.

RACIAL JUSTICE

9. Recognizing that systemic racism continues to create barriers to success for people of color, support legislative efforts and programs, such as the Reconnecting Communities Program, which reverse the effects of inequitable policies, processes, programs, and practices and empower communities disproportionately impacted by climate change to address the legacy and impact of past planning decisions in the region.

Environment

BUILDING RESILIENCE

1. Support transparency, sufficient allocation, and equitable distribution to the SCAG region of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund resources commensurate with the region's responsibility and opportunity in meeting the state's overall greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals.
2. Support the extension of California's landmark cap-and-trade program, a key element of state and regional efforts to reduce GHGs by providing funding to implement Connect SoCal 2024.
3. Support legislation that would implement improvements to Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg, 2008) to focus on achievable actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and greater consistency between regional and state GHG reduction strategies and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment process.
4. Support new funding sources for implementation and demonstration projects that increase and quantify the carbon sequestration potential and resilience benefits of natural and agricultural lands.
5. Support funding opportunities that foster sustainable and equitable land use and development across the SCAG region—including local and regional climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience initiatives.
6. Support legislation to fund climate vulnerability assessments for infrastructure planning and delivery for implementing agencies.
7. Support legislation and funding that provide resources for local governments to assist displaced residents and help communities recover from wildfires, earthquakes, and other natural disasters.

WATER

8. Support an “all of the above” approach to the state’s drought and water shortage emergency, including: a) improving water efficiency and reuse, b) enhancing water systems’ health and resilience, c) developing new water supply and storage, and d) supporting investments in water infrastructure, efficiency, and conservation practices that support the region’s economic and population growth and foster planning for the region’s housing needs identified in Connect SoCal 2024.
9. Support legislative efforts that reduce barriers and create efficiencies to development and provide increased resources for water infrastructure, including investments in repairs, modernization, storage, and enhancements to the region’s aging water infrastructure that can serve the Southern California region’s needs and ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and resiliency of the region’s water systems.
10. Support programs and state and federal investments that increase water affordability for low-income customers. Support the distribution of federal funds at the state level through an equity lens, such that Southern California communities receive their fair share of funding based on population, opportunity, and other quantifiable measures.
11. Support additional flexibility in the use of state resources to support integrated planning and technical assistance from metropolitan planning organizations for water resources and associated infrastructure, transportation, land use, energy, stormwater, and air quality.
12. Support legislation that increases funding for nature-based solutions, which would provide the resources necessary to implement climate resilience and natural and agricultural land preservation strategies in Connect SoCal 2024.

Economy

BROADBAND ACCESS

1. Support legislative efforts to prioritize additional funding and resources and support broadband infrastructure, particularly in low-income and rural areas, to bridge the digital divide and integrate broadband, land use, and transportation planning to support intelligent transportation systems.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2. Identify new and ongoing funding sources for economic, educational, and workforce development centered on inclusive growth, support for small businesses, family-supporting jobs, access to capital, entrepreneurship.
3. Support the establishment of a new California State University campus in the City of Palm Desert (Coachella Valley) and University of California (UC) hospital related to the UC Riverside School of Medicine to improve health outcomes and increase educational and economic opportunities in the SCAG region.

FREIGHT & GOODS MOVEMENT

4. Recognizing both the pivotal role that the SCAG region plays in domestic and international trade and, consequently, the disproportionate impacts carried by Southern California, support increased funding to the Trade Corridors Enhancement Program (TCEP) and oppose efforts to reprioritize funding for

non-freight related purposes to ensure the region can preserve and maintain key regional goods movement corridors.

5. Support the creation of programs designed to assist in leveraging technology and data to improve freight mobility, establish public-private partnerships, increase goods movement efficiency independently and through shared-use corridors, reduce harmful emissions, mitigate negative impacts on disadvantaged communities, and address shifting consumer behaviors (e.g., e-commerce).
6. Preserve the legislative intent of TCEP to support freight movement, not mitigate passenger vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

TECHNOLOGY & DATA

7. Support legislation and funding that enables electric and alternative fuel vehicle planning, permit streamlining, purchases, and charging and refueling infrastructure, as well as new technologies and innovations in the state transportation system that improve accessibility, efficiency, safety, and capacity while reducing environmental impacts and mitigating the impact to the power grid.
8. Support funding for smart cities, including pilot projects to implement smart cities at the local level, emerging technology, and coordinated data collection and sharing to reduce greenhouse gas and VMT impacts, utilize water and energy resources more efficiently, and create safer roadways and highways.
9. As zero-emission and alternative fuel vehicles and supporting infrastructure are deployed, including but not limited to electric, hydrogen, and natural gas, advocate for policies that take a life-cycle approach. Support policies and plans for electric vehicles that consider life-cycle analysis and prioritize proper battery reuse, recycling, and disposal.

Miscellaneous

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

1. Support legislative efforts to modernize the Ralph M. Brown Act to increase public participation, keep up with emerging technology, and allow local government agencies flexibility in conducting official meetings through virtual format as well as omit the time-consuming "Roll Call" process while maintaining the existing practice of recording and publishing votes for public review.