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County Administration
Building
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Telephone: (805) 568-2190
www.countyofsb.org

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

May 19, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Additional Local Bridge, Safety and Active Transportation Funding

Dear Governor Newsom:

I am writing on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to state our support for CSAC's request for an additional \$1 billion investment into local bridge, safety and active transportation infrastructure from one-time funds. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant drop in local transportation funding at a time when local agencies have hundreds of projects that could quickly go to construction. These projects will stimulate further economic recovery while also making permanent improvements that support California's sustainability and transportation safety goals.

The County supports CSAC's request for an additional investment of at least \$500 million in local agency bridges. California has over 12,000 locally-owned bridges, of which 1,035 are in poor condition. The Local Highway Bridge Program is significantly oversubscribed, with over 800 bridge projects seeking approximately \$5 billion and dedicated funding of only \$289 million annually. Additional funding could quickly be used advance dozens of projects to rehabilitate and replace local bridges that are ready to proceed but lack funding.

- County of Santa Barbara today has a \$55 million unfunded need for bridge repairs and bridge replacements.
- We currently have 3 major bridge projects (totaling \$97 million) ready to go out to bid that cannot without Advanced Construction authorization due to the HBP being currently oversubscribed.
- The Advanced Construction process in California requires local agencies to set aside very limited local funding to cover bridge costs until the State and Federal governments have revenue available to reimburse these costs. It is estimated to be one to four years for reimbursement to occur depending on the bridge type being reconstructed.
- Utilizing these limited local funds for bridges in lieu of their intended purpose has community impacts associated with their delayed use.
- Approving this request will allow California to approve current Advanced Construction bridge projects and minimize impacts to limited local funding.

The County also supports CSAC's request for an additional investment of at least \$250 million in the Local Highway Safety Improvement Program. This program funds evidence-based projects that improve safety for all users of California's local roadways, including pedestrians and cyclists. Despite reductions in driving due to the COVID-19 pandemic, preliminary data show increases in traffic deaths in 2020. During the most recent grant cycle, local agencies sought \$489.8 million in local road safety projects, but funding was only available to make awards of \$227.6 million this spring.

- CSAC request will allow California to double the revenue available for evidence-based traffic safety improvements to almost fully fund the current cycle's HSIP applications.
- Approving this request will minimize injuries/deaths on a significant portion of the local road system in the State.

Finally, the County supports CSAC's request for at least an additional \$250 million for local active transportation grants to improve access and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians in local communities. While cities and counties are integrating active transportation improvements into ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation programs, there is still significant demand for larger-scale projects to enhance local streets for bicyclists and pedestrians. During the current grant cycle agencies requested over \$2 billion with only \$220 million available.

- CSAC request will allow California to more than double the revenue available for the current ATP grant cycle.
- During this cycle there were over \$2 Billion in proposed requests/applications statewide.
- Approving this request will allow the State to fund the highest priority viable ATP applications from the over \$2 Billion "wish list" submitted this cycle.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a 2021 Legislative Platform which includes the Inter-Agency Collaboration principle that specifically states that the County will support the advocacy efforts of such organizations as the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and other local, regional and federal agencies/associations, as well as the Fiscal Stability principle that states that the County will support efforts to generate new intergovernmental revenue.

For these reasons, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors is requesting your support for at least \$1 billion in sustainable fix-it-first local bridge project, as well as investments in road safety and active transportation infrastructure. If you have questions about the Board's position, please contact the County's Legislative Coordinator, Jasmine McGinty at 805-568-3108 or jmcginty@countyofsb.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cliff Berg
Governmental Advocates, Inc.

cc: Senate President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

Joe Stephenshaw, Staff Director, Senate Budget Committee
Sandy Perez, Assistant, Senate Budget Committee
Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Christopher Woods, Budget Director, Office of Senate Pro Tempore Toni Atkins
Jason Sisney, Budget Director, Office of Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Chris Lee, California State Association of Counties
Members, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors
Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Nancy Anderson, Legislative Coordinator, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors