



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
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2025-26 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SCAG's Legislative Program

SCAG maintains a State and Federal Legislative Program, which consists of 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—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 SCAG Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee, composed of elected officials from throughout the region, identifies and recommends specific legislative action for consideration by the Regional Council with respect to state and federal legislation affecting the SCAG region.

The following federal legislative principles for 2025 and 2026 encompass broad, policy-oriented objectives of the agency that 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 created 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 increased funding for and the reauthorization of critical federal active transportation programs that local governments depend on, including the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Healthy Streets, Active Transportation Infrastructure Improvement Programs (ATIIP), and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) as well as the creation of new tools to provide the resources necessary to implement active transportation strategies in Connect SoCal.

AVIATION

1. Advocate for and seek funding opportunities from the Federal Aviation Administration, which can help SCAG conduct airport surface transportation passenger studies and planning activities.
2. Support legislation that modernizes and addresses the limitations of the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) by adjusting the outdated federal cap and adding indexing for future inflationary increases, allowing airports to meet their infrastructure needs to prevent delays in building, and fund projects that promote access to the airport to meet future capacity demands.

TRANSIT & RAIL

1. Support legislation and funding to expand the region's public transit and passenger rail projects and services to reduce congestion and enhance sustainability, including programs encouraging transit-oriented development to connect housing, jobs, and mixed-use development with transportation options.
2. Support legislation that encourages implementation of physical and digital projects that facilitate multimodal connectivity, prioritize transit and shared mobility, and improve mobility, accessibility, and safety.
3. Support legislation that encourages innovative approaches for addressing transit safety and security issues to minimize impacts on transit employees and the public and support those experiencing issues (e.g., unhoused persons).
4. Support efforts that fund transit-oriented communities, mixed land uses, 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.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

1. Support further development and implementation of public-private partnerships (PPPs) that are transparent, accountable, and marry the public sector policy goals with the financial expertise of the private sector to improve project development and delivery throughout the region, including support of improved PPP design-bid-build and design-build procurement processes.
2. Support private activity bonds, debt instruments that raise capital for revenue-generating highway and freight transfer projects, and restore tax exemption for advance refunding bonds, debt instruments that allow an issuer to pay off another outstanding bond to enable savings to be

reinvested in additional infrastructure upgrades at airports, seaports, qualified highway or surface freight transfer facilities, affordable housing, and other projects with a clear public benefit.

3. Support efforts to protect the tax exemption of municipal bonds to ensure local jurisdictions continued access to funding necessary to finance critical infrastructure projects.

PROJECT STREAMLINING

1. Support legislative streamlining and simplification measures that expedite and streamline the regulatory review processes, permitting and oversight, project development and delivery, and increase oversight and coordination among state and federal agencies.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION POLICY

1. Support the transition to a mileage-based user fee funding mechanism as a replacement to federal gas taxes to provide sustainable funding to meet our nation's transportation infrastructure needs and maintain system management, preservation, and resilience. Support measures that protect privacy, promote equity, and guarantee return-to-source. Before a transition period, support adjustments to the federal gasoline taxes to maintain purchasing power.
2. Support incentive funding to reward self-help jurisdictions. This model recognizes that self-help jurisdictions take risks and make significant local investments while leveraging federal dollars to deliver transportation improvements.
3. Support sustainable solutions that restore the Highway Trust Fund's long-term solvency, including expanding tolling options on the Interstate Highway System and assisting states willing to research and pilot innovative revenue programs.
4. Support making the Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning program permanent and expanding eligibility to include MPOs that are not landowners.
5. Support efforts to allow local governments to receive direct funding for federal grant and formula programs.
6. Support federal resources for the region to fund necessary capital infrastructure, clean fleet initiatives, security planning, and transit and roadway operations, in preparation for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games and other major events.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

1. Support increased dedicated MPO formula funding for planning and to provide robust regional infrastructure and transportation system investments, ensuring a world-class transportation system.
2. Support investment in and make MPOs direct recipients of the Congestion Relief Program; Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT); ATIIP; Healthy Streets; and other priority programs included in the last surface transportation reauthorization bill.
3. Support increased investment in SS4A and increased cap on planning awards for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).
4. Support efforts to make MPOs eligible to be direct recipients for priority federal formula programs, such as freight formula funds, PROTECT, and TAP, commensurate with our opportunity to achieve federal goals.

Communities

AFFORDABLE HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS, & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. Support new federal grant programs to support cities, counties, and regional collaborations that help jurisdictions provide for the needs of unhoused persons through supportive housing models and planning grants.
2. Support increased funding for critical federal programs that local governments depend on, including Community Development Block Grants, the Affordable Housing Tax Credit, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, as well as the creation of new tools to confront the housing affordability crisis and expand economic opportunity for residents in Southern California.
3. Support ongoing funding for the Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing program to help local jurisdictions remove barriers to affordable housing.

BROADBAND ACCESS

1. Support programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program and additional funding and resources for broadband infrastructure to bridge the digital divide, particularly in low-income and rural communities, Tribal lands, and community anchor institutions.
2. Support collaboration between the federal, state, regional, and local levels of government, including MPOs and regional broadband consortia, to expedite access to broadband infrastructure funding, streamline project permitting, and achieve economies of scale.
3. Support legislative efforts that promote the integration of broadband, land use, and transportation planning as a strategy to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and support legislative efforts that bolster the deployment of intelligent transportation systems by providing transportation agencies with access to the middle-mile network.

RACIAL JUSTICE

1. Recognizing that systemic racism continues to create barriers to success for people of color, support legislative efforts that reverse the effects of unfair policies, processes, programs, and practices, and empower communities that will be disproportionately impacted by climate change to address the legacy and impact of past planning decisions in the region, such as the Reconnecting Communities Program.
2. Recognizing that climate change, public health, and racial justice are interconnected, support efforts that invest in and empower communities that will be disproportionately impacted by climate change.

Environment

AIR QUALITY, ENVIRONMENT, & WATER

1. Support regional equity in funding allocations to ensure Southern California receives its fair share of grant and formula programs for climate resiliency, electric vehicle (EV) charging and fueling infrastructure, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Factors to consider include population, need (cumulative impacts), higher relative risks for natural hazards, improvement opportunities, and other quantifiable measures.
2. As zero-emission and alternative fuel vehicles, including but not limited to electric, hydrogen, and natural gas, and supporting infrastructure, such as solar panels, are deployed, advocate for policies that take a full cradle to grave approach. For electric vehicles, in particular, support policies that ensure proper battery reuse, recycling, and disposal.
3. Building upon SCAG's work to accelerate the electrification of vehicle fleets, support efforts that provide funding for electric and alternative fuel vehicle planning, permit streamlining, purchases, and charging and refueling infrastructure, focusing on public investment in areas that would otherwise be neglected, such as multi-unit dwellings, rural areas, and low to middle-income neighborhoods.
4. Support legislative efforts that promote sustainable water use planning, practices, and storage, which improve regional water security and resilience in a drier environment. Provide increased resources for water infrastructure investments to serve the Southern California region's needs and ensure the effectiveness, efficiency, and resiliency of the region's water systems.
5. Support additional resources for natural disaster resilience, preparedness, and response, and to assist displaced residents and help communities recover from wildfires, earthquakes, and floods.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Support legislative efforts that further a "Health in All Policies" approach to facilitate equitable health outcomes related to SCAG's core public health focus areas, as included in Connect SoCal: accessibility to healthy food, parks and open space, and other services, affordable housing, air quality, climate resiliency, economic wellbeing, health equity, physical activity, and safety.

Economy

FREIGHT & GOODS MOVEMENT

1. Support establishing a Freight Planning Pilot Program under the U.S. Department of Transportation for MPOs, local governments, and Tribes.
2. Support increased funding for maintaining and expanding transportation infrastructure for key regional goods movement corridors that link freight facilities and systems to the rest of the nation.
3. Support increased transparency for competitive grant awards.
4. Support increased federal freight funding by establishing a dedicated freight trust fund to distribute revenues to states and regions most impacted by goods movement.
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 adverse impacts on disadvantaged communities, and address shifting consumer behaviors (e.g., e-commerce).
6. Support funding strategies that strengthen the federal commitment to the nation's goods movement system, recognizing both the pivotal role the SCAG region plays in domestic and international trade and, consequently, the disproportionate impacts carried by Southern California.

TECHNOLOGY & DATA

1. Support funding for smart cities plans and initiatives to reduce GHGs and VMT, and deploy systems that allow for efficient water and energy usage and safer roadways and highways.
2. Secure funding to support coordination among state agencies, MPOs, and other governmental entities to collect and share data that reflects emerging technologies, mobility choices, land use collaboration, and regional conservation opportunities.
3. Building upon SCAG's work to accelerate the electrification of vehicle fleets, support efforts that provide funding for electric and alternative fuel vehicle planning, permit streamlining, purchases, and charging and refueling infrastructure, focusing public investment in areas that would otherwise be neglected, such as multi-unit dwellings, rural areas, and low- to middle-income neighborhoods.
4. Support increased resources for zero-emission and alternative vehicle charging/fueling infrastructure programs, especially for private vehicles and public transit fleets.