



SB 137 – DODD

Federal transportation funds: state exchange programs

Summary

SB 137 reduces duplicative federal transportation permitting and environmental review by expanding the State's existing program to exchange federal surface transportation revenues for state transportation revenues. Referred to as the Match-Exchange Program, this streamlining mechanism is currently only available to regional transportation planning agencies with populations below 200,000.

Background

The California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), and cities and counties all receive federal surface transportation funding for a variety of transportation projects ranging from capital improvements, safety projects on existing roads and bridges, and bicycle and pedestrian related infrastructure projects.

All transportation projects in the state fully or partially funded with federal, state, regional or local revenues, and regardless of what level of government is acting as the lead agency, are required to go through California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review and apply for other necessary permits. When a project includes any amount of federal funding, the State, regional agencies, and cities and counties also have to go through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

CEQA is in many ways more robust than NEPA, as are many of our natural resource and wildlife laws. As such, undergoing federal review in addition to state review is duplicative and adds time and cost to transportation projects without

any added benefit to the public process or the environment. Counties estimate that going through federal environmental and permit review in addition to California's robust processes adds anywhere from fifteen- to forty percent to the cost of a project.

Existing Law

Section 182.6(g) of the S&HC permits a Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) not designated as, nor represented by, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with an urbanized area of greater than 200,000 population, to exchange its annual apportionment of Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds for non-Federal funds (State cash). If an eligible RTPA elects not to exchange, Section 182.6(h)(1) permits an eligible county represented by that RTPA to exchange its entire annual sub-apportionment, pursuant to Section 182.6(d)(2) (110 percent 1990/91 Federal-aid Secondary minimum), for State cash.

In addition, Section 182.6(h)(2) of the S&HC permits an eligible county, located within an MPO boundary, to exchange its entire apportionment of Section 182.6(d)(2) funds, if it receives less than one percent of the total statewide apportionment under Section 182.6(d)(2) or that portion, if any, received in excess of 3.5 percent of the total statewide apportionment

This Bill

SB 137 will allow the state, regions, and cities and counties to reduce the cost of transportation projects and provide for more projects to be completed with the same amount of revenue by expanding the Match Exchange Program to regions over 200,000 in population and to other



federal surface transportation programs including the Transportation Alternatives Program, Highway Safety Improvement Program, and local bridge projects. This bill does not require, but authorizes the state to expand the Match Exchange Program to the extent state funds are available and would not compromise other state funded projects or activities.

Support

California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
(Sponsor)

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