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### **Congressman Miller (R-CA) Unveils Free Way Act - H.R. 6002**

Last night, Congressman Gary Miller (R-CA) introduced [H.R. 6002](#), the Free Way Act of 2008. The bill, if adopted into law, would prohibit states and localities from charging carpoolers tolls for HOV access if access was provided for free prior to December 21, 2007. The legislation, which has been referred for action to the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, is cosponsored by Representatives David Dreier (R-CA), Buck McKeon (R-CA), Grace Napolitano (D-CA) and Hilda Solis (D-CA).

Congressman Miller has acknowledged that the bill represents a marker for this year and that his goal is to incorporate the language of H.R. 6002 into the multi-year transportation reauthorization bill to be developed and considered next year. We, along with USDOT, Caltrans and Governor Schwarzenegger's Washington, DC office, have repeatedly reached out to the Congressman in an effort to discuss his legislation but to date, we have not been able to meet with the Congressman to discuss H.R. 6002.

### **Response to H.R. 6002**

Media Relations prepared the attached [press release](#) in response to H.R. 6002, a bill that would prohibit states and localities from charging carpoolers to access freeway

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carpool lanes built with federal funds. Staff gave the press statement to the Whittier Daily News after receiving an interview request on this topic. Media Relations staff explained that the carpool lanes and freeways in Los Angeles County are often congested and it's difficult to build new freeways or expand existing ones.

Congestion pricing is a proven concept that has worked in San Diego and Orange Counties, Salt Lake City, Houston, Minneapolis and cities around the world. By better managing traffic flow, more capacity can be squeezed from busy freeways.

With new fast and reliable freeway express bus service, beefing up rail service and other efforts, the expectation is that more drivers will rideshare or travel during non-peak hours when they would be charged less for driving in express lanes that would have guaranteed speeds of 45 to 50 miles-per-hour. Toll revenue would be used for maintaining the roadways and to further enhance rideshare programs in the freeway corridors.

### **Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) Chairs Hearing to Examine Goods Movement Issues**

By citing that “Nowhere is the need to improve goods movement more important than in California, particularly Southern California,” Senator Barbara Boxer began a hearing yesterday of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, which she chairs. The hearing examined a number of specific revenue solutions that may be needed in order to meet the demands of the movement of goods on America's highways.

The hearing was largely viewed as a prelude to Congressional consideration of the new surface transportation bill next year. Senator Boxer (D-CA) offered three potential funding mechanisms for the next reauthorization legislation, with one particularly targeting the goods movement needs of the nation:

- Using the current gas tax to pay for safety and maintenance programs;
- Creating a second fund to pay for enhancements to the basic system;
- Creating a specific fund for freight/large corridor projects.

A number of individuals testified at the hearing, including Charles Potts, Vice Chairman for the American Road Transportation Builders Association (ARBITA). He shared that ARBITA has proposed a “Critical Commerce Corridors” (3C) Program, a national freight program financed through freight-related user fees. Mortimer Downey, Chairman for America's Gateways and Trade Corridor, testified at the hearing and shared his support for Senator Boxer's proposal to establish a dedicated Federal fund for goods movement projects.

### **Joint Congressional Hearing on Financing Future Infrastructure Projects**

Yesterday, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House Budget Committee held a joint hearing to examine options for funding future infrastructure investments. The hearing focused on methods for financing investment in roads, bridges, transit, aviation, ports, waterways and wastewater treatment facilities.

In his opening remarks at the hearing, House T&I Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) remarked, "Here, in one of the richest nations on earth, our infrastructure is literally crumbling around us -- collapsing, in some cases. In the aftermath of the tragic collapse of the Minneapolis bridge in August of last year, the sense of urgency has grown." The Congressional Budget Office and Government Accountability Office both testified on the additional amount of resources needed to update the nation's infrastructure. Chairman Oberstar expressed his long-standing belief that Congress needed to adopt a capital budget, rather than the annual process now in place, while Budget Committee Chairman John Spratt (D-SC) expressed his desire that Committees work together to solve the infrastructure financing situation.

As an illustration of the difficulty that Congress will have in reaching any consensus, the Budget Committee's Ranking Member, Paul Ryan (R-WI), announced his intention to introduce a bill today that would suspend the federal gas tax for the summer of 2008, with the loss of funds to be offset by the elimination of all congressional earmarks in FY 2009.

### **Division 5 Mechanics Place 3rd at International Bus Roadeo in Austin**

The maintenance champs from Arthur Winston Division 5 – Andrew Warren, Frank Forde and Rommel Vargas – placed third, out of a field of 47 competitors from around the U.S. and Canada, in the 2008 International Bus Roadeo in Austin, Texas.

The veteran maintenance team, who took home the gold in the 2007 International Bus Roadeo held in Nashville, Tennessee, battled 47 teams in the maintenance competition, which tests mechanics' abilities to troubleshoot mechanical problems and fix them quickly.

The Orange County Transportation Authority maintenance team won first place in the category and the maintenance team from Delaware Transit Corporation earned a second place finish.

Also competing in the Bus Roadeo was West Valley Division 8 Operator Julio Flores, who competed against 76 transit operators in the 40-foot bus competition. The operators' skills behind the wheel were put to the test as they maneuvered their coaches on a difficult 11-part obstacle course which included judgment stops, right and left hand reverses and passenger stops.

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Overall, we placed in the top 20 among the 88 transit properties who competed for bragging rights as "Best Overall Transit Property."

### **Media Inquiry into SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan**

The Daily News has inquired about our reaction to the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG) 2008 Regional Transportation Plan released today. Planning staff reported that we have worked closely with SCAG to ensure all projects recommended for funding in our Long Range Transportation Plan were also included in SCAG's plan that incorporates transportation needs for the entire five county region. Among local projects of interest to the Daily News, the Canoga Transportation Corridor project is recommended for funding in the LRTP, and is currently undergoing corridor analysis. However, the region does not have enough funding to fully implement all needed transportation projects and the Board has directed staff to look into an array of new funding opportunities to meet these future needs. The story is expected to run tomorrow.

### **Media Inquiry Regarding Bike to Work Week**

Reporters from KNBC and KPCC today requested information on the Bike to Work Week celebration. Staff explained that we promote the use of bicycles as an alternative to car commuting in Los Angeles County. With traffic conditions and gas prices going up, bicycling helps not only to ease traffic congestion, but is environmentally benign and cost-effective. Stories will run during the weekend and Monday morning, the day of the kick-off event.

### **Next Week's Procurement Postings**

#### IFB for Construction and Construction Management for the Trench Drain Systems at Divisions 4, 6, and 15

We will release an Invitation for Bids (IFB) next week for the Divisions 4, 7 and 15 Trench Drain Systems. The procurement blackout period is expected to run from May 14 through June 16, 2008.

The contractor shall perform complete construction and construction management for the trench drain systems at Divisions 4, 7 and 15. The purpose of the project is to collect contaminated water spilled from bus washing and cleaning operations and to divert it into nearby existing clarifier. Rain water shall be diverted to a storm drain system.

Any inquiries concerning this procurement action during the blackout period must be directed to and may only be answered by Leo Lopez, Contract Administrator, at

phone number (213) 922-3675.

## **Upcoming CEO Meetings & Events**

Next week, I will be meeting individually with Directors Fleming, Najarian and Parks. I will also be participating in the Bike to Work Media Kick-Off, the Press Event for the Tunnel Advertising for Speed Racer, and the Budget Briefing with the reporters from the L.A. Times and Daily News.

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