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Speaking at the Mobility 21 transportation summit, U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer said the state will have a better chance for more federal transportation funding if California voters pass the infrastructure bond measures.

Boxer Calls for Californians to 'Step up to the Plate' on Infrastructure Bond Issues

- Villaraigosa, Perata, Nunez push for passage of Props 1A through 1E

(Oct. 31, 2006) Californians must "step up to the plate" and vote for the infrastructure bonds on the Nov. 7 ballot to "send a signal to the whole country" that the state is serious about improving mobility, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer said Monday during the fifth annual Mobility 21 transportation summit at the Sheraton Universal in Universal City.

Also:

[Majestic Realty is Mobility 21's 2006 'Julian C. Dixon Award' Winner](#)

Noting that only 92 cents of every dollar California taxpayers send to Washington is returned to the state in federal spending, Boxer said the state will have a better chance of receiving a bigger share of funding in the next federal transportation bill if voters pass the bond measures.

Boxer was joined by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, State Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, House Speaker Fabian Nunez and other elected officials in urging passage of Propositions 1A through 1E, the infrastructure bond measures.

Proposition 1B, the largest of the measures, would invest almost \$20 billion in transportation infrastructure and Proposition 1A would ensure that existing state gas taxes for transportation are protected.

“The state has neglected its infrastructure for too long,” Perata said during a news conference. “We have an opportunity to make a strong down payment that will allow us to begin to remedy the problems we’ve had.”



Speaking at a Mobility 21 news conference, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said the Southern California region must “come together” on transportation issues.

‘Lose its competitive edge’

“If we don’t pass these bonds,” said Nunez, “California stands to lose its competitive edge not only in the global marketplace, but in this country as well.”

Adding his voice to the call for passing the bond measures, Villaraigosa said, “Mobility 21 is an opportunity for the region to come together to commit ourselves to the planning, to the resource development, to the real commitment to change the way we do business in Los Angeles.”

In remarks during the summit’s opening session, CEO Roger Snoble said Southern California needs to become more adept at seeking federal funding, should improve its political influence in Sacramento and Washington and increase regional cooperation on transportation issues.

He also called for encouraging transit-oriented development, nurturing new transportation technology and improving transportation security.

“We need to fight the idea that our region is incapable of change,” Snoble said, noting the region’s “gas hog” reputation. He pointed to sales of hybrid cars and increasing transit ridership as evidence that the region’s habits are changing.

\$1 billion in funding

Nearly 500 attended Mobility 21, an organization that has secured nearly \$1 billion in federal and state funds for key transportation initiatives.

During breakout sessions, attendees discussed federal funding available through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Los Angeles County alone will derive \$5.2 billion in transportation formula funding and earmarks from

SAFETEA-LU through fiscal year 2009.

The summit also focused on public-private partnerships, which can be particularly valuable when public funds are scarce and infrastructure needs are high.

Ideas from these sessions will be incorporated into the Mobility 21 plan of action for the coming year.

During the past four years, the Mobility 21 coalition has brought to national attention significant issues, including the growing goods movement through the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and its effect on freeway traffic and air pollution; the importance of housing and business construction along transportation corridors and the need to protect Proposition 42 state gasoline sales tax funds from being raided by the legislature to balance the state budget.

The annual Mobility 21 Summit is sponsored by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Automobile Club of Southern California.

-- Kim Upton contributed to this story.