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New Board Chair O'Connor to Head 'Climate Action' Task Force '

- Task force will seek ways Metro can help reduce greenhouse gases, combat global warming
- Director John Fasana named to head 'congestion pricing' task force

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 31, 2007) Expressing deep concern about LA County's environment and global warming, Metro's new Board Chair Pam O'Connor will convene and chair a task force on "comprehensive sustainable climate action."

In her inaugural remarks as the FY 2008 Board chair, July 26, O'Connor noted that California's Global Warming Solutions Act would likely affect Metro. Her task force will "identify policy and program recommendations...and other initiatives in order to establish a...Metro sustainable climate action."

The Global Warming Solutions Act (AB-32), which was passed by the Legislature, July 26, and signed by Gov. Schwarzenegger, aims to reduce California's greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent by 2020 and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It also requires mandatory reporting rules for significant sources of greenhouse gases by Jan. 1, 2009, among other provisions.

In addition to her task force, O'Connor announced that she had named Director John Fasana to lead a task force on "congestion pricing." In June, the Board directed the staff to develop a detailed operating plan for congestion pricing, which in some cities has included tolls for driving in traffic-choked urban areas and other means of promoting carpooling, bicycling or mass transit use.

'Green best practices'

"We're all proud of having made Metro a leader in environmental initiatives," she said, as evidenced by the agency's large fleet of clean-fuel buses. "And many of our cities and the county are moving aggressively to implement even more green best practices into their operations."

O'Connor said that, along with municipal transit operators and other transportation agencies, Metro's challenge is to connect people with the places they go to work, play, worship and receive education and health care.

"It does remain a daunting task because our population continues to



Board Chair Pam O'Connor

increase, and so do their expectations," she said. "The ongoing challenge of growing needs and limited funding is exacerbated by the proposed state budget which eviscerates transportation funding. At the same time, we're faced with global environmental impacts, such as the growth of our ports, air quality and climate change."

O'Connor closed her remarks by expressing pride in Metro employees "who work hard every minute of every day...It is their energy; it is their enthusiasm that gets the job done."

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