



February 12, 2021

Secretary David Kim
California State Transportation Agency
915 Capitol Mall, Suite 350B
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Transportation Aid Funding Available to California from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (PL 116-260)

Dear Secretary Kim:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Safe Routes Partnership California, the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and California Walks, we are writing to express our support for allocating a portion of the \$912 million available to the State of California pursuant to the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (PL 116-260) to high-priority local projects via California's Local Highway Bridge Program, the Local Highway Safety Improvement Program, and the Active Transportation Program.¹

Specifically, based on the percentages of funding these programs receive from the current federal aid transportation program in California, we urge the Administration to allocate \$74.2 million to California's Local Highway Bridge Program, \$19.3 million to the Local Highway Safety Improvement Program, and \$17.4 million to the Active Transportation Program. Each of these programs aligns with the State's broader goals of encouraging climate-friendly transportation investments, as well as a "fix-it-first" approach to maintaining our existing transportation infrastructure.

- **Local Highway Bridge Program (HBP) - \$74.2 million.** The local HBP funds preventative maintenance, rehabilitation, or replacement of eligible local agency bridges.² The program is significantly over-subscribed with a multi-year program of projects. According to the most recent estimates available to the program advisory committee, there are currently \$217 million in unfunded bridge projects that are ready for construction. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities on bridges can be funded up to AASHTO or Caltrans design standards, provided that the facilities match the existing corridor or an adopted bicycle/pedestrian corridor plan.

¹ <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/notices/n4510851/>

² <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/highway-bridge-program>

- **Local Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) - \$19.3 million.** California's Local HSIP focuses on infrastructure projects that are supported by data and designed to reduce collisions.³ The program is increasingly focused on systematic safety improvements that maximize cost-benefit ratio and are based on comprehensive Local Road Safety Plans. Local representatives on the program advisory committee estimate that local agencies could quickly deliver an additional \$200 million in local Highway Safety Improvement Program projects if additional funding were available.
- **Active Transportation Program (ATP) - \$17.4 million.** The ATP funds both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects to increase access and safety for bicyclists, pedestrians and other active transportation users.⁴ While many of the projects are built within local street and road right-of-ways, others occur on the state highway system. Demand for the program has far exceeded available funding capacity, with over \$2 billion in applications for approximately \$220 million in available funding in the most recent round of grants. Cities and counties could quickly deliver additional much-needed active transportation projects with supplemental funding from PL 116-260.

As outlined in Governor Newsom's January Budget Proposal, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant reductions in fuel tax revenue to *both* the State and local governments.⁵ As you are aware, the State and its local agencies receive approximately equal amounts of funding from SB 1 (Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017), while local governments receive approximately 40% of the revenues from the base fuel taxes and the gas tax replacement for the Proposition 42 sales tax. Accordingly, we urge the State to allocate this much-needed federal aid funding to support both state and local transportation projects.

While the funding allocated to California pursuant to PL 116-260 is highly flexible, funded projects still must comply with most federal requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act. Many local transportation projects typically funded with state fuel tax revenues would have significantly higher soft costs if they were "federalized." Therefore, the most efficient way to allocate a portion of the federal aid directly to local projects is through existing "federalized" grant programs.

We appreciate recent comments indicating the Administration is open to following the traditional 60% state, 40% local distribution of federal transportation funds in California in its allocation of funding available from PL 116-260. The numbers cited above apply the percentages of funding each listed program receives from the FAST Act in California to the \$912 million in available federal aid funding from PL 116-260. We urge the State to ensure that each of these important programs receives a much-needed share of the federal relief funding.

³ <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/highway-safety-improvement-program>

⁴ <https://catc.ca.gov/programs/active-transportation-program>

⁵ <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/2021-22/pdf/BudgetSummary/RevenueEstimates.pdf> (see page 261)

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions about this request (for CSAC, Chris Lee at clee@counties.org; for Safe Routes Partnership California, Jonathan Matz at jonathan@saferoutespartnership.org; for Cal Cities, Melanie Perron at mperron@cacities.org; and for California Walks, Caro Jauregui at caro@calwalks.org).

Sincerely,



Christopher Lee
Legislative Representative
California State Association of Counties

/s/

Jonathan Matz
California Senior Policy Manager
Safe Routes Partnership California



Melanie M. Perron
Deputy Executive Director, Advocacy and Public Affairs
League of California Cities



Carolina Jauregui
Co-Executive Director
California Walks

cc: Elissa Konove, Undersecretary, California State Transportation Agency
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