

MEMO

To: SBCAG
Re: CALCOG Regional Issues Forum, April 30-May 1, 2009
From: Supervisor Janet Wolf
Date: May 20, 2009

I attended the CALCOG Regional Issues Forum with my Executive Field Representative, Karin Quimby. This was a very informative meeting that presented some of the major issues facing us as we work to develop regional transportation plans in response to SB 375.

SB 375 is the nation's first bill to link transportation and land use planning with climate change. It was stressed that there are other significant benefits as well, including: air pollution reduction, gas and water conservation, and agriculture and habitat protection. Encouraging pedestrian and bike-friendly communities will improve the overall health of our population as well, thereby reducing health care costs in the long term.

It was impressed upon us that MPOs, like SBCAG, must develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that will provide the data and modeling to suggest ambitious and achievable targets for GHG reductions in our region. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) will ultimately set targets that our region will be required to meet with our SCS if feasible.

Had we decided to undertake the regional blueprint process some years ago, we would be well along the way towards now developing our SCS. Despite the fact that we're behind other MPOs in this regard, we will need to complete our SCS by 2013. Santa Barbara County is moving ahead with important data gathering through its recently adopted Climate Action Strategy. This should assist SBCAG in developing its SCS.

One of the major challenges we face is in the radical decrease in State funding for public transit. Beginning in FY 2011 no transit funds will be available from the state until 2013 while at the same time as ridership is increasing, and must increase if we are to meet SB 375 targets.

Environmental and business stakeholders also weighed in on the implementation of SB 375. They discussed new strategies being tested to address our needs/goals:

- tailored mass transit (i.e. Google bus in S.F.)
- congestion pricing
- green accountability in development
- TDR
- pay offsets
- Retrofitting existing homes has the greatest benefit to reduce our energy use in the built environment
- Gray Water—new legislation on the horizon

Finally, the impact of new and upcoming federal legislation and regulations on California were discussed. We were reminded that SAFETEA-LU (highway trust fund obligations) expires Sept. 30, 2009 and told that the next Federal transportation bill will very different from the current one. The changes were described as “revolutionary” not “evolutionary.”

The success of SB 375 ultimately relies on local governments. I look forward to working with SBCAG as we develop an ambitious and achievable Sustainability Communities Strategy.

From: jaruhge [jaruhge@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2009 7:47 PM
To: Jim M. Kemp
Subject: 246 widening

Jim Kemp--SBCAG 5-11-2009

We taxpayers are having Caltran shove down our throats road work that has been "approved" by our Santa Barbara County Association of Governments(SBCAG) representatives that has not been vetted by the taxpayers. These representatives are Supervisor Joni Gray and Mayor Dick Dewees. They have represented the 4th District and Lompoc for the past 10 years and have been instrumental in getting NOTHING done to improve our main artery to 101, State route 246 to Buellton.

For two years now, they have been "working" with Caltrans in "special meetings" to define just what they and Caltran want for the local commuters. A recent example of their work was revealed to us in a public meeting two weeks ago when we were told that Caltran was going to build a roundabout at 246 and Purisima Rd. Caltrans attitude was this is it, even though "it" is a traffic jam in the making, but there was no place for the public to help in the design with public input. It was all a fete complete. We were told that the roundabout was a \$3 million project while an interchange, which would be more effective, and safer, is a \$12 million project. But no funds for Lompoc.

Now this week, Caltrans is telling us about their plans to widen 246. These improvements would be only three passing lanes, again with no public input and no room for comment or change. Neither Lompoc SBCAG representatives have offered to have public hearings. Caltran comes to town and tells us that "this is it."

We need something better than three suicide passing lanes on 246 for our thousands of commuters who are the lifeblood of Lompoc financially.

What we need is an extension of the present four lane 246 parkway from Domingos Rd. where it presently ends, to Ocean in Lompoc. But Caltrans does not want to spend the money for Lompoc. Passing lanes are \$40 million while four lanes are \$70 million according to Caltrans.

The 12 miles of unwidened 246 is all in Supervisor Joni Gray's district and is the only section of major road NOT widened to 4 lanes. Joni Gray and Mayor Dick

Dewees must go to bat for Lompoc to get what is needed here. They constantly let themselves be talked out of it by Caltrans.

In Joni Gray's "Home town", Orcutt, she is sponsoring the four lane Union Valley Parkway with a \$39 million price tag, \$24 million of which is for an interchange on 101. This road to nowhere is in no way as important as 246 is to the thousands of commuters. These funds must be transferred to the 246 project so that the \$70 million 246 parkway can be completed now. Lompoc has waited 30 years to have this road widened. If not now then when--50 years? If Joni Gray can do it for Orcutt why not for Lompoc? BUT Joni Gray, and Dick Dewees, to date, have done NOTHING for Lompoc for better roads for our thousands of daily commuters. We need our parkway too, not suicide passing lanes.

Concerned Taxpayers, I.N.C., Justin M. Ruhge, Lompoc, 93436, 805-7379536