



2023 _____

**FEDERAL
LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES**

SCAG'S FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

SCAG maintains a Federal and State Legislative Platform, which consists of the Regional Council's positions on policies and legislative initiatives related to SCAG's core planning and policy areas – transportation, air quality, freight/goods movement, housing, environmental impact, sustainability, and economic recovery and job creation – that need the leadership and support of Congress and the California State Legislature to resolve challenges facing the SCAG region.

The following are our four top priorities for the 118th Congress:

1 Provide funding for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program and Healthy Streets Program in the FY24 appropriations package.

The Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program provides funding for pedestrian and bicycle facilities that strategically connect active transportation networks to the essentials of everyday life. The Healthy Streets Program provides funding for cool and porous pavements and to expand tree canopies to address urban heat islands, improve air quality and reduce stormwater runoff.

Both programs were authorized under the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and will serve a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing public health, and making a community a more enjoyable place to live, work and play.

Implementing active transportation infrastructure and healthy streets strategies also helps local communities make

their streets safer. 81% of the SCAG region's High Injury Network, which are stretches of roadways where the highest concentrations of collisions occur, are in equity areas, such as state designated disadvantaged communities, federally designated environmental justice areas and communities of concern. This relationship underscores the ability for these programs to provide resources in areas with the greatest need.

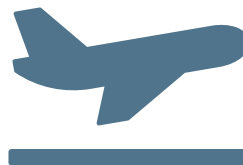
While authorized, the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program has received funding only one time in the FY23 Appropriations bill, and the Healthy Streets Program has yet to receive any funding.



2 Ensure that the FAA reauthorization bill authorizes funding for MPOs to conduct airport surface transportation passenger and cargo studies, as well as planning activities.

The SCAG region is home to eight commercial airports, seven governmental and military airfields, and more than 30 reliever and general aviation airports. On a daily basis, the region's airports provide service to hundreds of thousands of air passengers and thousands of tons of cargo. Moreover, the airports in the SCAG region employ approximately 60,000 people onsite. At any given moment, thousands of passengers, employees and goods are traveling on Southern California's roads, highways and transit systems to and from our many airports.

As a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), SCAG focuses on the impact that air cargo and passenger activity has on our surface transportation system. Ensuring the region's ground transportation network can accommodate the trips generated by our airports will result in better outcomes for all users. Currently, however, the FAA does not provide any funding programs to assist MPOs in conducting this important planning work.



3 Include robust funding for the following housing programs: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) in the FY24 appropriations package, and create new tools to confront the housing crisis. In addition, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit should be expanded.

Southern California has a serious housing shortage, impacting both the number of homes available and affordability levels. As a result, the SCAG region has some of the highest purchase and rental housing prices in the nation. This problem will only be exacerbated by projected population growth and will impact other regions as Californians seek less expensive housing opportunities.

SCAG's housing planning efforts provide a sustainable vision for housing in Southern California that plans for an existing need of 836,857 new units to address overcrowded and unsafe housing conditions in the region's most accessible and high-resource locations. In addition, Southern California is planning for 504,970 new units to accommodate anticipated population growth. Further, in alignment with SCAG's 2021 adopted Racial Equity Action Plan, SCAG seeks to support housing that serves a variety of household types, sizes and

income levels, including ensuring that housing meets the needs of the lowest income and most vulnerable populations.

While the region plans for a total of 1.3 million new housing units, it is imperative to have public-private partnerships to construct and deliver them, and the variety and flexibility of funding sources to make partnerships work.

SCAG urges Congress to provide robust investments in the Community Development Block Grant program, Emergency Solutions Grants and HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, as they are among the best opportunities to address our region's housing crisis.



4 Ensure that Southern California receives its fair share of federal resources to address the water crisis. Additionally, provide flexibility in the use of metropolitan planning resources so that MPOs can provide increased support for integrated planning and technical assistance.

The SCAG region is expected to grow by 1.7 million residents by 2050. Although many Southern Californians and the region's water suppliers have made significant progress in reducing water usage and improving efficiency, water usage is outpacing water replenishment and reducing water supply at unsustainable rates. This reality has obvious impacts on the region's ability to manage and support our projected population growth.

SCAG brings Southern California's diverse residents and local partners together with unifying regional plans, policies and programs that result in healthy, livable, sustainable and economically resilient communities. Through our planning efforts, SCAG aims to support investments in water infrastructure and conservation practices that bolster the region's economic, housing and population growth.

Currently, federal metropolitan planning organizations' (MPOs) planning funds are limited to transportation planning and air quality considerations. This inhibits MPOs from holistically planning for anticipated growth in the context of water needs and systems, including groundwater resources and associated infrastructure, resulting in a missed opportunity to integrate the program funding more effectively to respond to the unique challenges of regions.



OUR REGION AT-A-GLANCE



18.7M
RESIDENTS



15TH
LARGEST
ECONOMY
WORLDWIDE



\$1.6T
REGIONAL
GDP



40%
NATION'S
CONTAINER
IMPORTS



38,618
SQUARE MILES

6

COUNTIES



191
CITIES

47.6%
STATE
POPULATION



5.7%
U.S.
POPULATION

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ABOUT SCAG

Founded in 1965, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a Joint Powers Authority under California state law, established as an association of local governments and agencies that voluntarily convene as a forum to address regional issues.

The SCAG region encompasses six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura) and 191 cities in an area covering more than 38,000 square miles. The agency develops long-range regional transportation plans, including sustainable communities strategy and growth forecast components, regional transportation improvement programs, regional housing needs allocations and a portion of the South Coast Air Quality management plans.

SCAG is governed by an 86-member board of directors known as the Regional Council whose membership includes local and county elected officials. Additionally, SCAG Bylaws provide for representation of Native American tribes, Air Quality Districts, and the Transportation Corridor Agencies on the Regional Council and policy committees.

In addition to the six counties and 191 cities that make up the SCAG region, SCAG works in partnership with six County Transportation Commissions that hold the primary responsibility for programming and implementing transportation projects, programs and services in their respective counties.



INNOVATING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

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