

## STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Federal Appropriations Earmarks for FY 2008-09

**MEETING DATE:** February 21, 2008

**AGENDA ITEM:** 6G

**STAFF CONTACT:** Steve VanDenburgh, Brittany Odermann

### RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize staff to submit FY 08/09 federal appropriations earmark funding requests to our region's congressional representatives for the Highway 101 Santa Maria River Bridge six-lane widening, Highway 101 Carpinteria Creek Bridge reconstruction, and Highway 166 (East) safety improvements.

### SUMMARY:

SBCAG is periodically afforded an opportunity to request discretionary federal funding through the annual budget appropriations process. This report identifies three projects that would be submitted to our congressional representatives for the FY 2008-09 appropriations bill. All three projects were submitted last year for the FY 2007-08 appropriations bill. However, Congress instituted a number of reforms in the appropriations process, including a significant reduction in the number of earmarks. Consequently, none of the requests submitted were funded. Approval of this staff recommendation would authorize staff to work with House of Representative and senatorial offices to secure the earmarks in the 08/09 appropriations bill. The success of our earmark requests is uncertain as many members of Congress continue to work toward additional reforms to the earmarking process which could further reduce the amount and number of earmarks approved as part of the appropriations bill.

### DISCUSSION:

The 2008/2009 federal budget appropriations cycle is underway. Appropriations requests must be submitted by February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Senators Feinstein and Boxer and Congressmembers Capps and Gallegly's offices in order to meet the budget preparation timeline.

SBCAG staff has identified three projects that upon board approval would be submitted by staff for incorporation into the 2008/09 appropriations bill. The projects were submitted last year along with a project for Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements on the South Coast of Highway 101, but did not receive funding. Staff is not recommending that the ITS project be submitted for FY 08/09. Two previous earmarks have been received for ITS improvements and the funds from those earmarks appear to sufficient to fund priority ITS projects in the corridor.

Proposed earmark requests for FY 08/09 are:

**101/Santa Maria River Bridge Widening Project: \$1.4 million.**

When the widening of Highway 101 to six lanes in Santa Maria, from Santa Maria Way to the Santa Maria River Bridge, is completed this year the four-lane bridge over the Santa Maria River linking Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties will likely become a traffic bottleneck. In anticipation of this, SBCAG, SLOCOG and Caltrans programmed \$2.16 million in STIP funds, prorated 20%\20%\60%, for environmental studies for the bridge widening which was completed on December 11, 2006. SBCAG and SLOCOG also requested an earmark from Congresswoman Capps for design of the six-lane bridge, and a \$2.7 million earmark was received. Caltrans has started to utilize the funds to do survey work in support of project design and successfully secured additional funding at the request of Mayor Lavagnino to fully fund design.

No funds are currently programmed for construction. However, the Board approved a joint submittal with SLOCOG and Caltrans for \$58 million in Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) Proposition 1B funding to cover total construction costs. This is a discretionary funding source under the administration of the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The project was not awarded funding in the initial round of CMIA selection, but should a project fall out of the program, the Santa Maria River Bridge Widening project could be considered for CMIA funding. Continuing to make progress in the development of the project and having it ready for delivery will make it a more compelling candidate for potential CMIA funding.

SBCAG staff recommends that the Board submit an earmark request to Congresswoman Capps for \$1.4 million to cover the cost of preparing a Corridor System Management Plan (CSMP) for this segment of Highway 101 that incorporates the Santa Maria River Bridge widening, the proposed Highway 101\135 interchange and north of the bridge into San Luis Obispo County. A CSMP is required of all projects after they are accepted into the CMIA program. Completing the CSMP ahead of time will make the project stand out from its competitors should CMIA funds become available in the future. The request would specify that any earmark funding not needed to complete the CSMP would be used on bridge-related right of way purchases or to fund bridge construction in Santa Barbara County or San Luis Obispo County.

**Highway 101 \ Carpinteria Creek: \$10.0 Million**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has released new 100-year flood maps in the Carpinteria area, and they show that water flows down Carpinteria Creek during a 100-year flood event would overtop the Highway 101 Carpinteria Creek Bridge. Any effort to widen Highway 101 to six lanes or to make improvements to the Casitas Pass Interchange as part of the currently programmed Linden\Casitas Pass Interchange STIP project would require raising the elevation of the bridge, and the profile of Highway 101 to the north and south. The cost of raising the bridge has not been calculated, but a rough estimate is \$10 million. That is the amount of an earmark that SBCAG staff recommends that the board request from Congress. Given the scope and cost of the earmark needed, and because it is driven by a FEMA flood map issue, Senators Feinstein and Boxer would receive this request.

SBCAG currently has \$53.5 million in STIP funds programmed to the Linden\Casitas Pass interchange project. There is \$2.4 million programmed to environmental and

design (environmental is underway), \$6.6 million for right-of-way, and \$42 million programmed for construction.

The project's purpose is to relieve congestion and improve operations at the two interchanges through widening and channelization of ramps and surface streets, provide a parallel facility to 101 by completing the connection of Via Real (frontage road) between the interchanges, and widen the Linden and Casitas Pass bridges over Highway 101 to allow for six lanes on Highway 101 to be built to Caltrans' standards. Improvements to the Casitas Pass interchange would require rebuilding, and therefore elevating, the bridge at Carpinteria Creek. This was not part of the original scope and purpose of the project, but has become an issue because FEMA has released revised flood maps for Carpinteria. The current estimated construction cost of the Linden\Casitas project is \$58 million. So a \$10 million earmark and additional STIP funds programmed through future STIP cycles would be required to fully fund construction of the project.

### **Highway 166 (East) Safety Improvements: \$6.0 Million**

Since 1996, fifty two people have been killed on Highway 166, and 9 in 2006 alone, including the principal of Cuyama Valley High School. This increase in accidents has prompted the reactivation of the Highway 166 Safety Task Force, which includes the CHP, SBCAG, SLOCOG, the City of Santa Maria Fire Department, and representatives from the offices of Senator Maldonado, Assemblyman Blakeslee, and Supervisor Centeno. The Task Force meets to identify and implement measures to reduce fatalities on the highway and coordinate its resources toward that end. The CHP, for instance, has applied for and received a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety to increase patrols on Highway 166. Caltrans is designing SHOPP safety projects for the corridor, including a turn lane project. In addition, Santa Barbara County SAFE call box revenues have been applied to a safety public information campaign for the corridor. Requesting an earmark for Highway 166 would be another way that SBCAG could assist in improving safety. The earmark would be targeted toward the east end of Highway 166, from Highway 101 to the Kern\SLO county lines, which is where recent fatalities have been located.

This earmark request would be submitted to Congressman Gallegly. His district covers portions of East Highway 166, from Highway 101 to the Kern\SLO border. SBCAG staff has also contacted SLOCOG about the possibility of a two-congressional district earmark, including the 24<sup>th</sup> district (Congressman Gallegly) and the 22<sup>nd</sup> district (Congressman McCarthy). The dividing line between the 24<sup>th</sup> (Santa Barbara County) and 22<sup>nd</sup> (SLO County) districts is the Cuyama River. Highway 166 meanders back and forth across the river east of Highway 101. SBCAG staff would work with SLOCOG to gain their support for a two-district, \$6 million earmark that would augment existing safety projects under design or study by Caltrans, or be targeted to other projects as advised by the Safety Task Force.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Authorize staff to submit FY 08/09 federal appropriations earmark funding requests to the region's congressional representatives for the Highway 101 Santa Maria River Bridge 6-lane widening, the Highway 101 Carpinteria Creek bridge reconstruction, and Highway 166 East Safety Improvements.

**COMMITTEE REVIEW:** None.