

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

## JANUARY 2013

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### 2012 Economic Summit Recap

California State Controller John Chiang was among the nearly 300 business leaders, elected officials and dignitaries attending the Third Annual Economic Summit: Accelerating Southern California's Economic Recovery, co-hosted by SCAG and the Southern California Leadership Council on December 6, 2012. In his keynote address, Controller Chiang outlined the state's budget and current fiscal challenges. Joining him on stage to present opening remarks were several state legislators, including Assemblymember Mike Morrell, District 40; Assemblymember Donald P. Wagner, District 68; and Senator Roderick Wright, District 35.

Additionally, prominent economists led a review of economic data presented at the inaugural 2010 Economic Summit and compared it with the current state of the economy in the six-county SCAG region. The Southern California job recovery information is still behind schedule for all counties where some counties are not expected to recover job losses until 2020. Details by county can be found at [www.scag.ca.gov/economicsummit](http://www.scag.ca.gov/economicsummit).

The economists also unveiled a new study on the costs of transportation project delay. Expediting project delivery and regulation streamlining has been a high priority for SCAG, labor and business within Southern California in order to avoid additional companies moving out of California and attracting further business reinvestment in our communities. By moving projects in the adopted 2012-2035 RTP/SCS forward five years, the independent economists analysis concluded that 102,143 additional construction jobs would be brought forward per year, created sooner in an industry crucial to Southern California's recovery. Infrastructure enhancement leads to an expeditious and enhanced economic competitiveness with 120,639 jobs created per year. The reduction in travel time, emissions, fuel consumption and vehicle operating costs will lead to an additional 83,654 jobs per year. Advancing five years of projects would result in a decrease in construction costs by \$1.25–1.95 Billion (or 5–9% of construction costs).

The session led to an open discussion with legislators and leaders regarding high priority legislative goals for the next state legislative session. The discussion was moderated by Frank Mottek, anchor of KNX 1070 Newsradio's "The Business Hour," where local leaders expressed agreement on advancing economic recovery priorities. To view the Regional Economic Update presentation, SCAG Economic Summit program and recorded video from the day's events, please visit: [www.scag.ca.gov/economicsummit](http://www.scag.ca.gov/economicsummit).

### 2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Program Approved

On December 14, 2012, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) received notification of approval of the 2013 Federal State Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP). The approval of the FSTIP includes the approval of SCAG's 2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Program that the Regional Council approved in September 2012. In a separate letter dated December 14, 2012, the FHWA and FTA found that SCAG's 2013 FTIP and 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy conform to the applicable state implementation plan in accordance with the provisions of 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93.

### Imperial County Sanctions Will Be Lifted

On December 17, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed approval of the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District's (ICAPCD) revised fugitive dust rules that regulate emissions of inhalable particulate matter. In July 2010, the EPA partially disapproved ICAPCD's rules to control fugitive dust from local sources and a highway sanction has been in effect in the County since August 2012. The removal of the sanction will result in no job loss and no impact on transportation projects.

### Workshop on CalEnviroScreen Draft Tool and Follow-up

SCAG co-hosted a workshop to discuss the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Draft Tool (CalEnviroScreen) currently being developed by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA). The purpose of this tool is to screen the environmental health of California's communities based on cumulative environmental impacts. At the workshop, Arsenio Mataka, Assistant Director at Cal/EPA and George Alexeeff, Director at OEHHA provided a PowerPoint presentation on the draft tool followed by active discussion from participants including Regional Council and Policy Committee members, other representatives from local jurisdictions and interested stakeholders. A summary of the meeting along with handouts from the workshop can be found at [www.scag.ca.gov/new.htm#calEPA](http://www.scag.ca.gov/new.htm#calEPA).

The Revised Draft Tool of CalEnviroScreen will be presented at the Cal/EPA's Cumulative Impact Precautionary Approach (CIPA) Workgroup on January 11, followed by a public comment period through January. Cal/EPA staff will also be available to meet with SCAG to discuss and review tool specifics, such as data and indicator weighting. Another stakeholder meeting at SCAG is also anticipated to receive comments on the revised draft tool.

## 2013 SCAG Scholarship Program Applications Available

Applications for the 2013 SCAG Scholarship Program are now available. The Scholarship Program, now in its fourth year, is designed to provide seven high school or community college students a scholarship award of \$2,000 each and a two-week internship with a local planning agency, council of governments, or SCAG. Recipients will also have an opportunity to meet with their local government representatives and practicing planners to discuss the importance of urban planning and a future career in public service. A total of seven students (one student each from Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura Counties, and two from Los Angeles County) will be recommended for the scholarship award to the Regional Council. Scholarship information has been sent to all of the high schools and community colleges in the SCAG region. Applications for the SCAG Scholarship Program must be postmarked by Friday, March 8, 2013. More details about the SCAG Scholarship Program, including requirements and a downloadable application, are available at: [www.scag.ca.gov/scholarship](http://www.scag.ca.gov/scholarship).

## High-Speed Passenger Rail: GAO Preliminary Assessment of California's Cost Estimates

On December 6, 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives' Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing titled: "An Update on the High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program: Mistakes Made and Lessons Learned." Susan A. Fleming, Director of Physical Infrastructure for the Government Accounting Office (GAO), provided testimony based upon a GAO report called: "High-Speed Passenger Rail: Preliminary Assessment of California's Cost Estimates and Other Challenges." The GAO found that the California High-Speed Rail Authority followed some best practices in developing its cost estimates, but also needed additional work with respect to detailing out the operating costs, describing underlying assumptions for the cost estimates and conducting sensitivity/risk and uncertainty analyses. Among the challenges identified by the GAO was future funding prospects, ridership estimates and right-of-way (ROW) acquisition. The GAO report is available at: [www.gao.gov/assets/660/650608.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/650608.pdf).

## International Collaboration

On December 10, 2012, SCAG hosted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing ceremony with the Chinese Academy of Science, Institute of Policy and Management (IPM). The MOU is for SCAG and IPM to collaborate on areas of common interest in planning. The IPM is a top Chinese think-tank for macro-level decision-making on sustainable development and policy strategies. It publishes annually the "China Sustainable Development." During the visit, SCAG and IPM exchanged planning ideas regarding low-carbon sustainable socioeconomic development and strategic policy formation, greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies through local policies on sustainable transportation and land use planning and environmental preservation.

In addition, SCAG signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements (KRIHS) which is an official research agency for the government of the Republic of Korea. The mission of KRIHS is to provide the Korean government with long-term and short-term plans and policies to lead to more efficient use of land resources and to improve the balance of development between urban and rural areas.

## Transportation Research Board Presentation

An Environmental Justice Goods Movement paper prepared by SCAG has been accepted for presentation at the 14th Transportation Research Board National Transportation Planning Applications Conference to be held in Columbus, Ohio, May 5-9, 2013. This is in addition to the two previously accepted presentations for the national TRB conference to be held in Washington, DC this month.

## SCAG Personnel Changes

SCAG lost three valued personnel at the end of the year due to retirement: Debra Salcido, Clerk of the Board; Sylvia Patsaouras, Acting Director of Strategy, Policy and Public Affairs; and Mike Armstrong, Senior Aviation Planner. These three valued retirees were all long-time employees with significant experience and greatly contributed to the success of SCAG. They will be missed.

In the meantime, I am pleased to announce that Lillian Harris-Neal has replaced Deby as the SCAG Clerk of the Board in the Office of Regional Council Support of the Strategy, Policy and Public Affairs Division. Lillian comes to SCAG with a wealth of clerk experience. Lillian has over 20 years clerical experience, which includes almost 10 years' experience as a Deputy City Clerk with the City of Newport Beach. Lillian has previously served in the positions of Account Clerk and Senior Office Specialist for the City of Riverside. She received her Bachelor's degree in Sociology from National University, and an AA in Administration of Justice from Riverside Community College. Lillian also holds a Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) certification. Please welcome Lillian.

In addition, I am pleased to announce that Darin Chidsey will replace Sylvia as the Acting Director of Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs. Darin was the Deputy Director of this department and will continue to oversee legislation, media, public affairs, regional offices and the Clerk of the Board support. Darin has worked for SCAG for eight years in increasingly responsible positions. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental and Energy Policy from the University of California, Berkeley and a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Southern California. Prior to joining SCAG, Darin worked on Capitol Hill for the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Government Reform and in the personal offices of two Los Angeles area Congressmen.