

SCAG TO HOST 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT MAY CONFERENCE

Join SCAG in celebrating the past, present and future at the 2015 Regional Conference and General Assembly, May 7-8, at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert. The event will commemorate 50 years of regional collaboration and service to SCAG's member cities as well as engage attendees in envisioning a sustainable future for Southern California. SCAG's largest event of the year, the conference is a great place to explore emerging trends and issues, and network with elected officials, city staff and business leaders from throughout the region. Early registration and sponsorship information is now available on SCAG's website: <http://scag.ca.gov/ga2015>.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HOLDS FIRST JOINT CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

On Feb. 11, SCAG co-sponsored with the San Diego Associations of Governments (SANDAG), its first Capitol Hill Congressional Breakfast Briefing. Congressmembers Julia Brownley (D-Los Angeles), Ken Calvert (R-Riverside), Susan Davis (D-San Diego), Ed Royce (R-Los Angeles), and Mimi Walters (R-Orange County) personally attended the briefing, held in the House Transportation & Infrastructure subcommittee hearing room with staffs of over a dozen other Southern California members. The briefing provided officers from the two organizations as well as executive leadership of the County Transportation Commissions to directly engage with our delegation's members on critical transportation issues related to the surface transportation reauthorization. SCAG and SANDAG's leadership also met with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx on the same issues to provide a clear statement of need from Southern California – the nation's global gateway – which included the need to pass a long-term bill; a fix to the Highway Trust Fund that is structurally solvent; a fully funded national freight program; and a further streamlined NEPA/CEQA process. These messages will form the basis for further interaction and follow-up this Congressional session, and will be reinforced with member offices throughout the year by SCAG and its partner agencies. SCAG will continue to organize and sponsor briefings such as this in coming years to develop a continuity of reciprocal dialogue with its Congressional representatives to ensure that the region's needs are effectively transmitted and addressed in Washington.

SCAG AND SCLC DISCUSS PRIORITIES WITH LAWMAKERS IN SACRAMENTO

Last month, SCAG, along with its partner business leadership organization, the Southern California Leadership Council, co-founded by governors Brown, Davis, Deukmejian and Wilson, met with state lawmakers to share regional needs in the areas of infrastructure and transportation funding, economic development, cap-and-trade, greenhouse gas emissions reductions and workforce development. These issues mirror the state legislative priorities adopted by the Regional Council in February and form the policy underpinning of SCAG's legislative activities for 2015. The delegation met with Senate Minority Leader Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar), Senator Bob Hertzberg (D-Los Angeles), policy director to President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon (D-Los Angeles) and senior staff to Senator Carol Liu (D-Pasadena). In the Assembly, the delegation met with Assembly Majority Leader Chris Holden (D-Pasadena), Assembly Transportation Committee Chair Jim Frazier (D-Oakley), Assemblymembers Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica), Chad Mayes (R-Palm Desert), Jay Obernolte (R-Big Bear), Sebastian Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles), as well as senior staff to Speaker Toni Atkins (D-San Diego). SCAG also met with Mary Nichols, chair of the California Air Resources Board to talk about future GHG emissions reductions targets, and held an evening reception on Feb. 25 attended by over two dozen state legislators, agency officials and staff. California Department of Finance Director Mark Cohen also addressed SCAG at a breakfast meeting on Feb. 26 to answer questions about the governor's proposed 2015-16 budget and possible revenue/expenditure adjustments forthcoming in the May revise.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR 2015 SCAG SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Now currently accepting applications, the SCAG Scholarship Program is designed to offer local government and planning experience that students can use to develop long-term career goals and a monetary award. The program provides a \$4,000 scholarship award for up to eight high school or community college students from the SCAG region plus a two-week internship with a local planning agency, council of governments, or SCAG. Eligible students must be a resident within the SCAG region (i.e. Imperial, Los Angeles,

Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, or Ventura County), enrolled as a high school junior or senior, or community college student, have at least a 3.0 grade point average, and be eligible to work in the United States. In addition, graduating students must be enrolled in higher education. All materials for the 2015 SCAG Scholarship Program must be postmarked by Thursday, April 30. For more information, and to apply, please visit the program's webpage at: www.scag.ca.gov/scholarship.

NEW 2015 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

On March 26, it is anticipated that the California Transportation Commission will release the Call for Projects for the 2015 Active Transportation Program (ATP), with an application deadline of May 31. To support project sponsors in developing quality projects, SCAG is partnering with the County Transportation Commissions, Caltrans, local advocacy groups and consultants to host a Development Workshop on 2015 ATP Funding. The workshop will be held on March 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in SCAG's Los Angeles office. It will include presentations on how to develop effective plans, projects and successful proposals. For more information, please contact Stephen Patchan, senior regional planner, at patchan@scag.ca.gov, or (213) 236-1923.

LITIGATION UPDATE: SANDAG AWAITS REVIEW BY CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT, SACRAMENTO KINGS ARENA PROJECT CLEARED TO PROCEED

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) continues with its litigation involving the CEQA challenge of its environmental impact report for its 2011 RTP/SCS, seeking review by the California Supreme Court of the appellate court decision last November that went against SANDAG. In early January, SCAG joined in the filing of an amicus letter to the California Supreme Court supporting SANDAG's Petition for Review. On March 2, SANDAG was notified by the Supreme Court of the court's 30-day extension of time to consider the petition. Therefore, the Court has until April 6 to determine whether it will consider the SANDAG case.

On Feb. 18, California's Third District Court of Appeal affirmed the trial court's decision to deny the CEQA challenge regarding the Sacramento Kings Arena project. Unless the California Supreme Court takes up review, the appellate court decision stands and brings an end to the litigation experiment that was part of SB 743, the special CEQA-streamlining statute adopted in 2013 for the Arena project. The statute provided that any legal challenge, including appeals, was to be resolved with 270 days of certification of the Administrative Record. The Court of Appeal's decision was issued nine days before this deadline, making the case one of the fastest CEQA cases on record.

Finally, on Dec. 23, 2014, SCAG filed an amicus brief with the League of California Cities and the California Association of Counties in the case of the *Center for Biological Diversity et al. v. the Department of Fish and Wildlife* case (Case No. S217763). The case is pending before the California Supreme Court and involves the Newhall Ranch development. The amicus brief was subsequently accepted by the California Supreme Court on Jan. 7, 2015.

CONCEPT APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED FOR NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

As previously reported, the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) adopted final guidelines for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program and issued a Notice of Funding Availability in late January 2015. Following the application deadline of Feb. 19, the SGC provided SCAG staff a list of 50 concept applications including a range of transit oriented development and integrated connectivity project proposals throughout the region. Subsequent to SCAG's confirmation that the concepts support implementation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the SGC will complete their established application review process by March 11, and approved concepts will be invited to submit full applications by April 15. The SGC will provide SCAG full applications for review, and SCAG staff is actively developing evaluation criteria. SCAG staff has formed a Cap-and-Trade Assistance Team to provide technical assistance to applicants within the SCAG region. Information on the AHSC Program is available at http://sgc.ca.gov/s_ahscprogram.php. SCAG's March staff report includes additional information on the AHSC program and SCAG's role in reviewing submittals – <http://www.scag.ca.gov/committees/Pages/Current-Agendas.aspx>. Please contact Kristen Pawling, associate regional planner, at (213) 236-1884 or pawling@scag.ca.gov for additional information.

SCAG MEMBER SERVICES TO ASSIST CITIES/COUNTIES WITH PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

In its effort to regularly update its Local Profiles, SCAG has completed about 200 of the draft reports and provided them for review to local planning directors. Local Profiles have been updated every two years since 2009 and are used to provide current information for local jurisdictions including population, housing, transportation, employment, retail sales, and education. Uses of Local Profiles include, for example, support for local planning and outreach, economic development, grant application support and performance monitoring. The final version for each jurisdiction is scheduled for release during the upcoming Regional Conference and General Assembly on May 7-8. Another benefit for SCAG member jurisdictions, GIS Services, is welcoming the cities of Palm Springs and Upland to the program. Over the next several months, SCAG staff will work on the cities' GIS needs, including training, map creation, and geodatabase development. SCAG has also commenced GIS trainings at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels, which will be held at locations throughout the region. In coming months, SCAG will also conduct a GIS rollout to eligible cities, which will involve the granting of a free laptop, ArcGIS software, geospatial data, and GIS trainings for over 20 jurisdictions. This effort aims to assist local jurisdictions to better leverage their resources and/or provide new services to their constituents. SCAG is committed to collaborating with member jurisdictions and other program participants to better utilize GIS to improve local and regional planning.

NEW INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION WITH INCHEON NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

On Feb. 12, leadership of SCAG and Korea's Incheon National University (INU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) promoting joint research and the exchange of information with respect to local planning practices and public policy. Founded in 1979, INU is located in the Incheon Metropolitan City in Korea. It is home to more than 20,000 students and nearly 400 full-time faculty members. The MOU signing ceremony was attended by SCAG President Hon. Carl Morehouse, SCAG Executive Director Hasan Ikhata, INU Vice President Dr. Ho Gi Nam and INU Provost Dr. Jong Gook Seo.

U.S. EPA UPDATES ON PM2.5 STANDARDS AND OZONE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finalized the area designations for the new 2012 Annual PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), effective April 15. Within the SCAG region, the South Coast Air Basin and the urbanized area of Imperial County have been designated as two moderate nonattainment areas. Both areas are required to develop State Implementation Plans (SIPs) to attain the new PM2.5 standard as expeditiously as practicable by the end of 2021. Transportation conformity for the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) must be re-determined for these two nonattainment areas by April 15, 2016. For the Federal Register Notice, see <http://1.usa.gov/1DQMrg1>.

On Feb. 13, the U.S. EPA issued a Final Rule to address SIP requirements for the 2008 8-hour ozone NAAQS. As reported previously, there are seven nonattainment areas under the 2008 ozone standards within the SCAG region and these nonattainment areas are required to fulfill their respective SIP requirements. The SIPs will establish new ozone conformity emission budgets for their respective nonattainment areas and these new emission budgets will be required to be used by SCAG for the conformity analysis for future RTP/SCS, FTIP, and their amendments. The Final Rule is expected to be published in the Federal Register shortly. For the pre-publication Final Rule, see <http://1.usa.gov/18KVvBX>; For the fact sheet, see <http://1.usa.gov/1EgmZLu>.