



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 15.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 19, 2026

SUBJECT: FEDERAL AND STATE REPORT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE February 2026 Federal and State Legislative Report.

DISCUSSION

Executive Management Committee Remarks Prepared by Raffi Haig Hamparian Government Relations, Executive Officer: Federal Affairs

Chair Dutra and members of the Executive Management Committee, I am pleased to provide an update on several key federal matters of interest to the agency. This report was prepared on February 3, 2026, and will be updated, as appropriate, at the Executive Management Committee meeting on February 19, 2026. The status of relevant pending legislation is monitored in the [Metro Government Relations Legislative Matrix <https://libraryarchives.metro.net/DB Attachments/2%20-%20February%202026%20-%20Legislative%20Matrix.pdf>](https://libraryarchives.metro.net/DB_Attachments/2%20-%20February%202026%20-%20Legislative%20Matrix.pdf), which is updated monthly.

Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation

Metro's government relations team continues to provide timely and accurate information about our agency's initiatives with members of the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation, our two U.S. Senators, and with the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Spending Bill

On February 3, 2026, Congress adopted and the President signed into law the Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Appropriations bill. Metro was pleased that this bill includes funding for key Metro priorities, including:

Capital Investment Grants: \$1,700,000,000

(Note: with advanced appropriations from IIJA, this will provide a total of \$3,656,200,000 in budgetary resources for CIG in FY26)

2028 Olympics Transit: \$94,316,766

2026 FIFA World Cup Transit: \$100,250,212 (Metro's share of this national figure is approximately \$9 million)

The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the bill also included funding for specific Metro priorities:

Vermont Avenue BRT: \$149,900,000

LACMTA Regional Bus Stop Enhancement Program: \$2,600,000

Consistent with our Board-adopted Federal Legislative Program, Metro's Government Relations team has advocated for the funding levels included in these bills and will continue to closely monitor the progress of this bill.

Metro deeply appreciates the strong and consistent leadership of our Board in providing clear direction, through our Board-adopted Federal Legislative Program, in our successful effort to secure federal mobility funding related to the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Staff is also deeply appreciative to all members of the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation for backing our work to secure funding for our agency in the Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation spending bill. Staff wants to express appreciation to our champions in Congress, including key House and Senate appropriators and their aides who worked with Metro's Government Relations Department on the Metro-related provisions. Staff also appreciates the ongoing work with key stakeholders on this vital spending legislation, which is now law, including our collaboration with the U.S. Department of Transportation, LA28, and other key individuals and organizations who worked with Metro to ensure the final transportation spending bill, including so many provisions favorable to Metro.

Surface Transportation Authorization Bill

As shared last month, Metro continues to advance the Board-approved USA Build Initiative as Congress prepares to consider in 2026 a new surface transportation authorization bill. The current measure, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will expire on September 30, 2026. Metro's government relations team is working with members of the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation and key authorizers in the House and Senate to smartly and effectively advance the policy proposals embedded in the USA Build Initiative.

It is expected that the House and Senate may move within the next 60 days to release the text of their draft surface transportation authorization proposals. As Congress begins to work on a new surface transportation authorization bill, we look forward to keeping the Board fully apprised of the work in this regard.

Transit Operator Safety

In alignment with Metro's Board-approved 2026 Federal Legislative Program, staff continue to prioritize transit operator safety and maintain active communication with the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation on this issue. The upcoming reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs presents an important opportunity to advance enhanced protections for transit operators nationwide.

Representative Laura Friedman (CA-30) has introduced the "Safe and Affordable Transit Act of 2025," legislation that supports several of Metro's key priorities. The bill would create a new Transit Security Grant Program funded at \$50 million annually for FY 2026-2030 to support efforts such as hiring additional officers to patrol transit systems, contracting with local law enforcement to increase police presence, and implementing physical infrastructure upgrades-including monitoring devices and operator shields-to improve passenger and operator safety. Additionally, the bill directs the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to collaborate with the Transportation Research Board, with input from transit employees, on a comprehensive study of crime prevention strategies on public transportation systems. Metro has endorsed this legislation as it directly aligns with the agency's recently adopted federal legislative program.

Federal Transportation Grants

Metro remains committed to smartly and aggressively pursuing competitive federal grants to advance a wide range of transit projects and programs. In alignment with this effort, staff continue to work closely with the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation and key regional partners-including

the LA/Orange County Building and Construction Trades Council and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce-to build support for both current and future grant applications.

Metro is currently preparing an application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Railroad Partnership Program/Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (FSP-National Program) to secure funding for the construction of the Link US Project. Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS), the busiest transit hub in the western United States, serves as the backbone of the 351-mile LOSSAN Corridor and supports the Pacific Surfliner. The Pacific Surfliner is Amtrak's second busiest intercity passenger rail corridor and the nation's busiest state-supported route-underscoring the regional and national significance of this investment.

Last month, the USDOT issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program. According to the USDOT, this program "provides grants for surface transportation infrastructure projects with significant local or regional impact." Metro is currently reviewing which project(s) we have that would best compete for a BUILD grant. The application deadline for the BUILD grant program is February 24, 2026.

Conclusion

Chair Dutra and members of the Committee, I look forward to providing further updates and expanding on this report during the Executive Management Committee meeting scheduled for February 19, 2026.

Executive Management Committee Remarks Prepared by Madeleine Moore Government Relations, Deputy Executive Officer: State Affairs

Chair Dutra and members of the Board, I am pleased to provide an update on several State matters of interest to our agency. This report was prepared on February 3, 2026, and will be updated, as appropriate, at the Executive Management Committee on February 19, 2026. The status of relevant pending legislation is monitored monthly in the [Metro Government Relations Legislative Matrix <https://libraryarchives.metro.net/DB_Attachments/2%20-%20February%202026%20-%20Legislative%20Matrix.pdf>](https://libraryarchives.metro.net/DB_Attachments/2%20-%20February%202026%20-%20Legislative%20Matrix.pdf).

Budget Update

On January 9, Governor Newsom formally released his January budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2026-27, the final budget in his gubernatorial tenure. Facing stronger-than-anticipated cash receipts, the Governor's budget projects a relatively small \$2.9 billion deficit. Citing a volatile federal environment, the budget proposal reflects the Newsom administration's caution. As such, the proposed budget does not create any new spending programs. The proposal also allocates \$23 billion into the state's reserves.

Citing caution due to a volatile federal environment, the Governor does not propose any new funding programs. However, the budget maintains all transportation funding from last year's Budget Act. No funds are currently proposed to be clawed back. However, the budget is silent on the state's commitment to the next SB 125 allocation, which is \$230 million for zero-emission vehicles statewide, of which \$67 million would be for LA Metro.

There is also concern that the projections for funding from the new cap-and-invest plan fall short of recent years, as it relates to funding the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and the

Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). The Governor's proposed FY 26-27 budget projects \$283 million for TIRCP instead of the maximum of \$400 million and \$141 million for LCTOP instead of the \$200 million maximum. Historically, TIRCP has received on average \$301.1 million, and LCTOP has received on average \$144 million. Of the \$1 billion in cap-and-invest GGRF funding that is at the discretion of the legislature, \$250 was carried over from last year's Budget Act, including \$125 million for transit passes. The remaining \$750 is proposed to support CalFire. That does not leave any additional discretionary funding in the cap-and-invest program to support other Metro priorities.

As always, Metro staff remain engaged with partners in the State government as we approach the beginning of the new budget cycle, to ensure that transportation is sufficiently funded and we can continue to advance our capital and operating plans. The Senate and Assembly Budget Committees have begun meeting on the initial budget proposal, and these hearings will continue throughout the spring.

Legislative Update

The second year of the 2025-26 legislative session resumed on January 5, 2026. The following is an update on bills where the Board has taken a formal position:

SB 220

SB 220 by Senator Ben Allen (D - Pacific Palisades), a bill concerning the Metro Board of Directors, was heard in Senate Transportation Committee on January 14. The bill needed 8 votes to pass but failed on a vote of 7-2-6. SB 220 was recently amended to delete the modifications to the Board composition and would instead have imposed a July 1, 2027, deadline for submitting the report required by current law. Metro testified in opposition to the bill, asserting it was unnecessary and citing the recent creation of an ad hoc committee established by Chair Dutra that will consider changes to Board composition and conclude by July 1st of this year. At the Committee hearing, Senator Allen and Chair Dave Cortese also discussed holding an informational hearing regarding Metro Board Governance at some point this legislative year. At this time, no hearing has been formally scheduled, and if that changes, staff will keep the Board apprised.

SB 677

SB 677 by Senator Scott Wiener (D - San Francisco) intends to make technical and clarifying changes to SB 79 (Wiener) which establishes statewide standards for housing development near major transit stops. The bill was heard in Senate Housing Committee on January 6th and was further refined to only include two technical amendments. The current language of SB 677 states for purposes of SB 79, "high-frequency commuter rail" to mean public commuter or intercity rail stations with a total of at least 48 passenger trains on an average weekday across all directions. SB 677 also makes a technical change to the definition of "commuter rail." The bill passed the Senate Local Government Committee on January 14. Last month, Government Relations staff recommended to the Board an oppose unless amended position on SB 677, citing concerns that the passage of SB 79 had created unintended consequences for Metro projects. Metro strongly supports transit-oriented development and operates one of the most robust joint development programs in the country. SB 79 has become a catalyst for local opposition to Metro's transit projects. By linking increased housing density to both existing and future transit investments, the law has intensified resistance from some

cities and community groups that now view new transit projects as a trigger for state-mandated upzoning. Metro's transit expansion program depends on strong, consistent cooperation with cities throughout Los Angeles County. When SB 79 fuels local opposition, it directly threatens Metro's ability to secure permits, obtain competitive funding, coordinate construction, and maintain project schedules. These delays increase costs, jeopardize federal funding timelines, and ultimately slow the delivery of transit service to communities that rely on it most. On January 22, the Metro Board adopted a formal oppose unless amended position on this legislation. Following this, staff have communicated to the author the Board position, and continue to work with partners in the legislature to develop solutions to ensure that Metro transit projects are not negatively impacted.

Conclusion

Chair Dutra and members of the Committee, I look forward to providing further updates and expanding on this report during the Executive Management Committee meeting scheduled for February 19, 2025.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Government Relations will continue reviewing legislation introduced in Sacramento and Washington, DC, to address any equity issues in proposed bills and the budget process. Securing federal transportation funding levels enables our agency to advance projects that improve equitable access and mobility for the 10 million individuals who live, work, and travel throughout Los Angeles County.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME

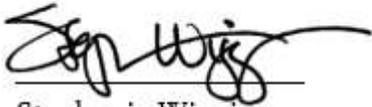
VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

This item supports Metro's systemwide strategy to reduce VMT through administrative and legislative advocacy activities that will benefit and further encourage transit ridership, ridesharing, and active transportation. Increased state and federal funding received benefits Metro's projects and programs to reduce VMT. Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets were designed to build on the success of existing investments, and this item aligns with those objectives.

*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Step Wiggins', written over a horizontal line.

Stephanie Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer



Government Relations Federal and State Affairs Update

Executive Management Committee
February 19, 2026

Federal Affairs Update

- **Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation**
- **Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Spending Bill**
- **President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget**
- **Surface Transportation Authorization Bill**
- **Transit Operator Safety**
- **Federal Transportation Grants**

State Affairs Update

- **Budget Update**
- **Olympic and Paralympic Games Advocacy Update**
- **Legislative Update:**
 - **AB 1837 (M. González)**
 - **SB 677 (Wiener)**