



November 7, 2024

To: Members of the Executive Committee

From: Jason Jewell, Managing Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Jewell", is placed over the "From:" line.

Subject: 2025 Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Legislative Program

Overview

Annually, the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency adopts a Legislative Program of strategic goals to guide its legislative activities for the upcoming session. The 2025 Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Legislative Program has been prepared for consideration by the Board of Directors.

Recommendation

Adopt the 2025 Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Legislative Program.

Discussion

The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency's (Agency) Board of Directors (Board) annually adopts a Legislative Program (Program) that outlines broad policy positions to guide staff when engaging in legislative activities. Official LOSSAN Agency positions not addressed by the Program are brought to the Board for separate action during the legislative sessions of the United States Congress and the California State Legislature. The Board last updated the Program on November 20, 2024.

The 2025 Program outlines principles aligned with the LOSSAN Agency's role while also advancing the goals outlined in the LOSSAN Agency's annual business plan. The Program is organized into four major categories, which are discussed in greater detail below, but can be outlined as follows:

1. Secure Sustainable Funding
2. Implementation of Transportation Policies
3. Connectivity and Integration
4. Infrastructure, Service, Resiliency, and Safety

The 2025 Program is included as a strikethrough version in Attachment A, with a clean copy included as Attachment B. The 2025 Program retains key provisions from the 2024 Program, while also updating and reorganizing the language to reflect the current legislative environment. Staff recommends the following changes:

- Subsection (a) of the Section entitled, “Top Priorities for 2025,” is proposed to be revised. Throughout the LOSSAN corridor there are areas that are at high-risk of failure. Staff continues to support efforts to advance resilient infrastructure. Specifically, streamlined permitting is necessary for these high-risk areas since inclement weather events and ongoing coastal erosion has accelerated the vulnerabilities of the corridor. This principle is not intended to limit support only to permit streamlining.
- Subsection (e) of the Section entitled, “Secure Sustainable Funding,” is recommended to be modified. With cap-and-trade funding set to expire in 2030, staff anticipate legislative discussions taking place next year to extend the program. This principle is to monitor that process and continue to advocate for intercity rail to be an eligible recipient in its next iteration.
- Subsection (e) of the Section entitled, “Secure Sustainable Funding,” is recommended to be revised. Beyond feasibility and funding, implementing zero-emission locomotives must also consider reliability and interoperability. Introducing new forms of locomotive technology has proven to be unreliable in some instances, stressing on-time performance. Additionally, there must also be a consideration of how a zero-emission locomotive functions in terms of interoperability and sharing corridors, especially working with various stakeholders throughout the LOSSAN Rail Corridor.
- Subsection (a) of the Section entitled, “Implementation of Transportation Policies” is proposed to be modified. With the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) well underway in terms of implementation, discussions are beginning related to developing the next reauthorization bill for surface transportation. LOSSAN staff will continue to dually prioritize both the implementation of the IIJA while looking toward the next reauthorization to ensure intercity rail is funded and appropriate federal actions are provided.
- Subsection (d) of the Section entitled, “Implementation of Transportation Policies” is proposed to be added. This year, SB 1098 (Chapter 777, Statutes of 2024) was signed into law. This bill creates various reporting requirements examining the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. A part of this requires LOSSAN to be a member of a larger working group to be convened by

the California State Transportation Agency. As a part of this working group, LOSSAN will participate and inform the recommendations in order to share its perspective, ensuring that the recommendations make sense and provide benefit to the corridor as a whole.

- Subsection (c) of the Section entitled, “Connectivity and Integration” is proposed to be revised to incorporate subsection (d) of the same Section. The two principles, which discuss connecting intercity passenger rail services with other transportation services, are largely duplicative of each other; therefore, it made sense to consolidate them to create a streamlined legislative program.
- Subsection (e) of Section IV entitled, “Infrastructure, Service, Resiliency, and Safety Improvements” is proposed to be revised. Specifically, this principle signifies the importance of partnering with the member agencies as well as the state and federal government on adaptation and resiliency efforts to support the coastal rail corridor. Following the rail service suspension that occurred in southern Orange County, and other immediate challenges needing to be addressed along the corridor, further discussions have taken place to prepare and combat the evolving impacts the environment is having on critical transportation infrastructure. The purpose of these revisions is to broaden the scope of solutions that can be identified since the process is evolving.
- Subsection (g) of the Section entitled, “Infrastructure, Service, Resiliency, and Safety Improvements,” is recommended to be removed. Last year, Governor Newsom signed SB 677 (Chapter 407, Statutes of 2023) by Senator Blakespear. This legislation required LOSSAN to identify projects to increase climate resiliency on the corridor and to discuss possible funding options for the projects identified. Since LOSSAN has now implemented this legislation, it no longer needs to be included in the Legislative Program.

To ensure the maximum applicability of the 2025 Program, the Board may review and amend the Program as legislation or legislative issues arise when deemed appropriate. In addition, to advocate for the Program’s goals and principles effectively, LOSSAN Agency staff will continue to explore and identify opportunities where the legislative resources and expertise of LOSSAN Agency’s member agencies can be leveraged to advance the positions and goals outlined in the Program.

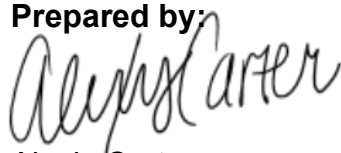
Summary

The 2025 Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Legislative Program is presented for consideration and adoption.

Attachments

- A. 2025 Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Legislative Program (Strikethrough Version)
- B. 2025 Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Legislative Program (Clean Version)

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