



July 20, 2026

To: Members of the Board of Directors

From: Jason Jewell, Managing Director 

Subject: Senate Bill 1098 Working Group Report on Consensus Recommendations

Overview

In September 2024, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 1098 (Chapter 777, Statutes of 2024), which requires the California State Transportation Agency to coordinate with Corridor stakeholders and provide guidance and recommendations necessary to support and improve the performance of the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo rail corridor. It requires the California State Transportation Agency to convene a working group composed of representatives from those stakeholder organizations to meet on a regular basis and submit consensus recommendations and feedback to the Legislature on or before February 1, 2026, on various topics related to rail service in the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo rail corridor.

The bill calls for the recommendations and feedback to be submitted to the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority, and the North County Transit District for review and consideration.

The California State Transportation Agency convened the first working group meeting on February 19, 2026, and held three additional meetings on March 27, April 28, and May 11. The last meeting on May 11, 2026, included members of the public. The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency staff participated in the working group meetings and provided feedback both at the meetings and through survey question responses and smaller stakeholder group meetings.

Based on the working group effort, the California State Transportation Agency drafted the report to the legislature, which includes thirty-nine recommendations under four policy areas of the bill. The California State Transportation Agency has made the report publicly available for comment and has provided it to the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency for feedback as required. The recommendations contained in the report reflect an effort to identify consensus perspectives and areas of alignment across stakeholder interests throughout the rail corridor.

Recommendations

- A. Receive and file the Senate Bill 1098 Working Group Report for review and consideration.
- B. Authorize staff to submit a comment letter to the California State Transportation Agency to be included as an addendum to the report submitted to the Legislature.

Background

Senate Bill (SB) 1098 requires the working group convened by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to be comprised of representatives from the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency (Agency) Rail Corridor track owners, passenger and freight rail operators, including managing agencies, joint powers authorities, and transit districts responsible for rail services, county transportation commissions for the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura, the metropolitan planning organizations for the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura, business, community, transportation, environmental, labor, and civic organizations, the California Coastal Commission and the Division of Rail and Mass Transportation within the California Department of Transportation.

As a requirement of the bill, the working group focused on four key areas for discussion and input which included:

- A. Service Coordination and Disruption Reduction: Strategies to improve maintenance, reduce track closures, address resiliency vulnerabilities, and enhance on-time performance
- B. Alternative Management Models: Evaluation of management and operations structures that improve intercity and regional rail service delivery.
- C. Statutory & Funding Changes: Recommended changes to state law, rules, or funding to improve quality, frequency, governance, and planning integration across the corridor.
- D. Federal Funding Coordination: Alignment with the federal Corridor Identification and Development Program to expand capital funding opportunities.

Based on the consolidated feedback and input discussed at the working group meetings and focused stakeholder meetings, CalSTA developed thirty-nine recommendations. A summary of the recommendations in each of the policy areas is

provided in Attachment A. The full draft of the SB 1098 report, including the 39 consensus-driven recommendations, is provided in Attachment B.

Related to SB 1098, Senator Blakespear has authored SB 1324 – LOSSAN Rail Corridor Governance Reform that proposes a one-year delay to the required report submittal date of February 1, 2026. While the bill currently proposes a revised submittal date, the intent of the author is to amend this bill with recommendations contained within the SB 1098 report. The bill has passed in the Senate and is now in the Assembly.

Discussion

CalSTA released the public comment draft of the SB 1098 report on June 10, 2026, and simultaneously provided the report to the LOSSAN Agency for review and comment.

LOSSAN staff presented an overview of the report and its key findings to the Board of Directors (Board) at its June 15, 2026, meeting and provided the full draft report for review. Because the report was received only a few days before that meeting, the Board directed staff to return with a more detailed review of the recommendations at the next Board meeting to allow additional time for consideration and Board direction. As discussed at the meeting, although the public comment period closed on July 3, 2026, CalSTA confirmed at that meeting that comments approved by the LOSSAN Board following the July 20, 2026, Board meeting would still be accepted and included as an addendum to the report submitted to the Legislature.

On July 2, 2026, the Executive Committee of the Board directed staff to draft a comment letter for the Board's consideration for submittal to CalSTA, with the focus on overall support of the thirty-nine recommendations included in the report while highlighting key recommendations related to LOSSAN Agency efforts and the critical need for future intercity rail funding to support the Pacific Surfliner. The draft comment letter to CalSTA is included in Attachment C.

Some of the key recommendations that correlate to LOSSAN Agency efforts as previously presented to the Board, Executive Committee, and included in the report are:

- Formalizing a cooperative agreement or memorandum of understanding between CalSTA and the California Coastal Commission in coordination with the Working Group, to identify streamlining solutions for permitting and delivery of coastal rail projects.

- Establishing a corridor-wide asset management and written fleet strategy that aligns equipment, facilities, and infrastructure needs with funding.
- Member agency compilation of a unified safety data set to identify and map high-risk locations with the greatest frequency and severity of incidents. Use that analysis to prioritize a ranked pipeline of targeted improvements: grade separations, enhanced barriers and fencing, upgraded crossing controls, and visibility and warning enhancements.
- Improve corridor-wide coordination and planning of maintenance work windows, including earlier AWW confirmation and consolidation of maintenance activities to reduce service disruptions and passenger impacts and commission an independent study to look at the most cost-effective way to implement work windows for all services across the rail corridor.
- Use existing avenues to formalize corridor-wide coordination including a Rail Leadership Group for strategic leadership engagement and the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee as a staff-led forum to advance priorities established by the Leadership Group.

Also on July 2, 2026, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) expressed general support for the SB 1098 consensus recommendations and emphasized several themes that are reflected in the proposed comment letter, including the need for continued State funding, streamlined permitting, clearly defined implementation responsibilities, continued stakeholder collaboration, and use of the Rail Leadership Group and Technical Advisory Committee to advance corridor priorities.

TAC members also raised several matters for future consideration, including clarification of the membership, roles and responsibilities of the Rail Leadership Group; ensuring appropriate representation of all LOSSAN member agencies; defining and obtaining agreement on any expanded role for the LOSSAN TAC; assigning responsibility for developing and maintaining corridor wide data sets; and providing member agencies an opportunity to review the draft comment letter before Board consideration. The TAC also identified the importance of accommodating future corridor growth, including the proposed Coachella Valley Rail service.

CalSTA plans to continue to hold regular quarterly meetings of the working group for continued coordination on the recommendations and related efforts. LOSSAN Agency staff intends to participate in these meetings.

Summary

Senate Bill 1098 requires the California State Transportation Agency to convene a working group composed of Corridor stakeholders to submit consensus recommendations and feedback to the Legislature on various topics relating to rail service in the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo rail corridor. In addition, the bill requires the recommendations to be submitted to the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo rail corridor Board of Directors for review and consideration. Staff is recommending the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Board receive the report and authorize staff to submit a comment letter to the California State Transportation Agency.

Attachments

- A. Senate Bill 1098 LOSSAN Rail Corridor Working Group Report to the Legislature Consensus Recommendations Summary
- B. Senate Bill 1098, Report to the Legislature, Pursuant to the Southern California Rail Revitalization Act, Public Comment Draft
- C. Draft Comment Letter to CalSTA