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Therese W. McMillan
Deputy Executive Director, Policy

Legislation Committee
May 11, 2007
Minutes

Chair Rubin called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. In attendance were committee members Chu, Dodd, Haggerty, Halsted, Lempert, Spering and Yeager. Also in attendance was Commissioner Tissier.

Minutes

Minutes of the April 13, 2007 meeting were moved by Commissioner Dodd, seconded by Commissioner Halsted, and approved.

Legislative History

Rebecca Long noted several bills in the May 2nd history, including Assemblyman DeSaulnier's AB 1637 that MTC is sponsoring to provide discount fares for qualifying low-income transit riders; the bill is now a two-year bill. In response to Commissioner Lempert asking about SB 372 (Steinberg) regarding high-speed rail, Ms. Long said it appears to be a spot bill and anticipated the rail debate to be part of the annual budget process.

State Legislation

Infrastructure and Housing Bond Implementation Update

For information, Ms. Long reviewed, by program, the key bills among a myriad of bond bills, and noted those concerning State local partnership that are in competition with the one MTC supports, SB 748 (Corbett). In response to Commissioner Spering's question about trucks and the trade corridor bills, Therese McMillan said staff would work with Senator Lowenthal regarding eligibility criteria for provisions of SB 9, his bill, to associate with trade infrastructure.

Ms. Long noted the provision in AB 1091 (Bass) to expand the definition of "close proximity to transit" to a half-mile versus a quarter-mile; Commissioner Spering suggested building a Bay Area legislative consensus to fund transit oriented development activities from Proposition 1C. Steve Heminger agreed that opportunity is there and said the Joint Policy Committee ought to pursue it.

SB 264 (Alquist) would authorize the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to submit to the voters a sales tax ordinance imposing a 0.125 percent (1/8 cent) sales tax for specified purposes, provided the ordinance is approved by two-thirds of the voters and contains an expenditure plan. Moved by Commissioner Halsted and seconded by Commissioner Yeager, the committee referred to Commission a position of "support" on SB 264. Noting that VTA may not require the full amount of the tax but that passage of the measure would give VTA more funding options for its needs, Commissioner Chu noted that if interest is expressed by enough other counties, a similar sales tax for specified purposes could become "universal" and not have to be handled by each county.

Federal Legislation

H.R. 1984 (Baird) would change how the “Buy America” law affects project contracts administered by the Federal Highway Administration. Specifically, this bill would require that FHWA evaluate a project as a whole, rather than determining the applicability of “Buy America” by evaluating each specific contract within an overall project. For the Bay Area, the bill has the effect of singling out the construction of the East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge with a ‘look back’ provision that would apply the new terms to past actions by FHWA, resulting in potential sanctions. Commissioner Haggerty moved and Commissioner Yeager seconded a position of “oppose” on H.R. 1984, which the committee unanimously referred to Commission.

Tom Bulger’s Report was received by the committee.

Other Business/Public Comment/Next Meeting

Under other business, Catalina Alvarado provided a brief status report on MTC’s Draft Public Participation Plan that went out on May 4 for public review, is available on MTC’s Web site, and is scheduled to go before the Legislation Committee in final draft form as an action item in July 2007. The next meeting was scheduled for July 13, 2007. The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.