

County Connection

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Board of Directors

Date: February 9, 2016

From: Kristina Martinez

Reviewed by:

SUBJECT: State & Federal Legislative Update

STATE LEGISLATION

MP&L Committee Discussion:

Staff brought a series of bills to the MP&L committee for discussion. The committee has forwarded the following recommendations to the Board of Directors.

Action Required:

The MP&L Committee requests that the Board of Directors discuss and take the following actions on state legislation:

- Support AB 1592 (Bonilla)
- Support and seek amendments to SB 824 (Beall)
- Support AB 1746 (Stone)

Background:

AB 1592 (Bonilla)

AB 1592 was introduced by Bonilla to begin a pilot project on autonomous vehicles. This bill would authorize Contra Costa Transportation Authority to conduct the pilot project at the Concord Naval Weapons Station. Tested vehicles would not be equipped with a steering wheel, brake pedal, accelerator, or operator and would also be limited to operate at speeds of less than 35 mph.

County Connection was specifically asked by Assembly Member Bonilla's office to support this bill with the belief that at some time in the future, this could potentially have public transit application.

SB 824 (Beall)

SB 824 was introduced in early January 2016 and proposes to modify several components of the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). This includes allowing operators to pool their funding shares with other agencies, the rollover of funds from year to year for larger projects, and reimbursement eligibility upon approval of a capital project or component to a capital project.

Similarly, staff has had discussions with Assembly Member Bonilla's office regarding greater flexibility in the expenditure of Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds. Currently, 50% of LCTOP funds received by County Connection are utilized for services in the City of Martinez, a criteria met by applying these funds towards disadvantaged communities (DAC). However, County Connection is unable to apply LCTOP funds with communities beyond the City of Martinez.

Assembly Member Bonilla has expressed a willingness to assist County Connection in gaining greater flexibility of LCTOP funds. SB 824 is likely a vehicle to use for that change as the bill presents the opportunity for Bonilla to become a co-sponsor or put forward a similar amended bill.

The MP&L Committee requests that the Board of Directors support SB 824 and seek amendments to include a broader definition of how the 50% is applied. This includes applying the 50% on a state wide versus operator basis, allowing greater flexibility of how LCTOP funds are allocated.

AB 1746 (Stone)

AB 1746 extends the ability of select counties and/or operators to run bus on shoulder transit service within the highway system. Each of the Districts and Authorities under the program intend to work closely with the California Highway Patrol in determining such corridors while maintaining the safety of both drivers and vehicles.

This legislation would allow County Connection to provide bus on shoulder service on the 680 corridor as recommended by the I-680 Transit Investment & Congestion Relief Study. The study was recently conducted by Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and is likely going to receive partial funding in any new transportation expenditure plan.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Action Required:

The MP&L Committee requests that the Board of Directors review and approve the draft 2016 County Connection Federal Legislative Program.

Background:

Staff has prepared the draft 2016 County Connection Federal Legislative Program. The program is updated annually and includes information about the Authority as well as its position on federal policies and programs. The draft has been attached for your reference.

County Connection Provides These Important Transit Benefits

- Commuter shuttles that reduce travel time, relieve congestion, and connect to regional transportation services.
- Comprehensive local services that allow students to use public transit to go to and from school.
- Direct and convenient service between communities of concern like the Monument Corridor in Concord and medical facilities like the County Hospital.
- Over 200 jobs directly and hundreds more indirectly through the purchase of vehicles and supplies.
- Alternative modes of transportation that support the local economy and environmental improvements, energy independence, senior mobility, student transportation, and connections to the Bay Area region for all activities.
- Direct connections to shopping via shuttles from neighborhoods and BART.

Stay Connected with County Connection



County Connection

2477 Arnold Industrial Way • Concord, CA 94520 • (925) 676-1976

The information in this brochure is available on the County Connection website - www.countyconnection.com

2016 Federal Legislative Program



COUNTY CONNECTION

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County Connection

County Connection is a joint powers agency that provides fixed-route and ADA paratransit services through the communities of Clayton, Concord, Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, and unincorporated communities in Central Contra Costa County. County Connection operates a fleet of 121 fully accessible transit buses and 63 paratransit vehicles and continually strives to best meet the needs of our customers, communities, and the general public.

County Connection Mission

The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA) is committed to providing transportation services within the constraints of our suburban and financial environment. CCCTA will also aggressively promote the expanded use of transit through creative implementation of programs and services to the communities we serve, in order to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion, and energy consumption.



County Connection Innovation

- County Connection is now a technologically supported bus service. As of late 2015, the Authority implemented Clipper (a Bay Area electronic fare payment system) and all buses enjoy Wi-Fi capability. County Connection customers can also use Bus Tracker, a real time bus stop information system that allows people to access real time bus arrival predictions from their laptops and smart phones.
- County Connection uses clean burning hybrid Gillig buses manufactured locally.
- County Connection has participated in the planning of innovative transit oriented development projects at both the Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek BART stations. Both stations will serve as major transit hubs for regional connectivity.



County Connection Innovation

- County Connection launched a mobility management program through the use of New Freedom funds through partnerships with other Contra Costa County operators, Social Service agencies, and the Contra Costa Mobility Management Center.
- County Connection will introduce its fully electrically powered trolley buses for its highly successful Walnut Creek downtown shuttle. This first of its kind application will rely on inductive charging and brings new private partners to the electric bus field. This was funded using a federal Clean Fuels grant in 2016.
- County Connection maintains a nationally recognized public-private partnership with the Bishop Ranch Business Park to provide frequent shuttles between Bishop Ranch and two regional rail systems, BART and the ACE Train. This features significant operating cost reimbursement as well as full fare subsidy from Bishop Ranch.



Ridership

County Connection customers rely upon public transportation and come from diverse backgrounds both socially and economically. The service area (Central Contra Costa County) is approximately 200 square miles with a population of close to 500,000. Annual ridership is estimated at 3.5 million for both fixed-route and paratransit services. County Connection customers are:

- Commuters going to work
- People connecting to regional rail like BART, Capitol Corridor and ACE Train (Altamont Commuter Express)
- Students going to school
- Seniors and persons with disabilities who are dependent on public transit
- Riders who rely on public transportation to participate in the community
- Residents who want to connect to their life activities in a manner that reduces their carbon footprint

Without County Connection services, many Central Contra Costa residents would have no transportation available for work, school, medical appointments, or to take advantage of recreational opportunities. For our residents, County Connection is a life sustaining service!

Federal Legislative Program

Legislation is a major component in determining Federal policies and programs. In turn, it widely affects the funding allocations that County Connection will utilize in its operations and budgets.

County Connection relies on over \$7 million dollars annually in federal transit funding for necessities crucial to the Authority such as federally mandated bus replacement and preventive maintenance. Moreover, sufficient federal investments in public transit will be imperative in order to attract new ridership and acquire long-term solutions to issues such as air quality and traffic congestion.

County Connection supports the following objective:

1. FY 17 Federal Funding at Authorized Levels



Position #1: FY 17 Federal Funding at Authorized Levels

County Connection relies on federal funds to maintain service levels and capital equipment to a state of good repair. The recently enacted FAST Act must be honored by appropriating to the full authorized levels of funding in FY 17.

The Authority expects to receive \$1.5 million in 5307 funds in FY 17 for the use of paratransit operating contracting. This portion of funding is 25% of the paratransit operating budget. Without this revenue, County Connection would need to transfer \$1.5 million from fixed-route operations to cover paratransit needs. Consequently, this would amount to a 10% cut of fixed-route service.

