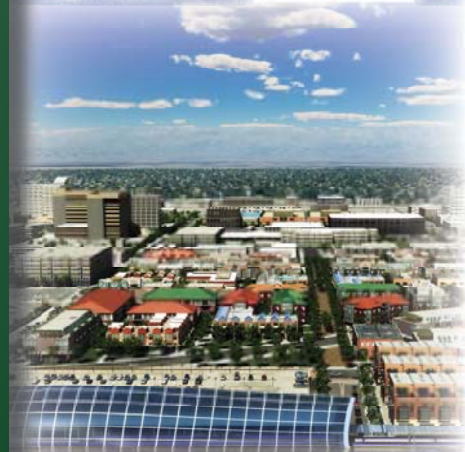
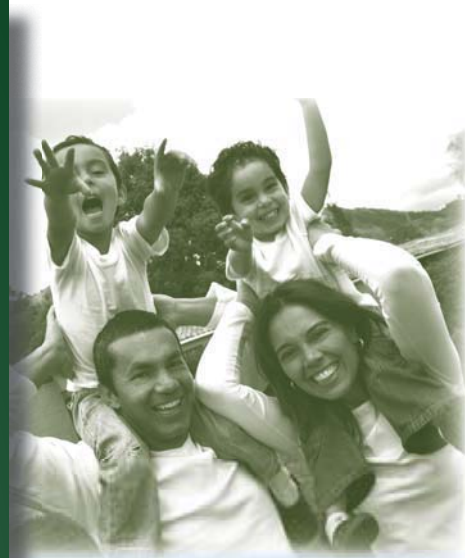




**2011**  
**Regional Issues**  
**Summary**

“One Voice” unites Fresno County communities and regional interests in a voluntary and collaborative effort to seek federal and state funds annually for projects of regional significance. All projects chosen shall contribute significantly to an improved quality of life throughout Fresno County.



## 2011 “One Voice” Participants

**Amarpreet Dhaliwal**, Mayor, City of San Joaquin, Fresno COG Policy Board Chair

**Phil Larson**, Fresno County Board of Supervisors, Supervisor, District 1

**Judy Case**, Chair, Fresno County Board of Supervisors; Supervisor, District 3

**Gabriel Jimenez**, Mayor, City of Orange Cove

**Joshua Mitchell**, Mayor, City of Sanger

**Glenda Hill**, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Orange Cove

**Nathan Magsig**, Councilmember, City of Clovis

**Daniel Parra**, Councilmember, City of Fowler

**Andreas Borgeas**, Councilmember, City of Fresno

**Anita Betancourt**, Councilmember, City of Reedley

**Jeffrey T. Roberts**, Board Member, Granville Homes, Representing the Building Industry Association

**Lydia Zabrycki**, Director of Business Partnering, Quad Knopf

**Jason Paul**, Science and Environmental Group Manager, Kleinfelder

**Dr. G. Gary Manross**, Ph.D. Chairman/CEO, Strategy Research Institute

**Kendall Groom**, Board of Directors, Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

**Tony Boren**, Executive Director, Council of Fresno County Governments

**Ed Dunkel**, Chairman, Economic Development Corporation Serving Fresno County

**Preston Prince**, Executive Director, Housing Authorities

**Kirk Hunter**, Rural Public Member at Large, Fresno County Transportation Authority

**Brian Angus**, Executive Director, Fresno County Economic Opportunities Corporation

**Walt Plachta**, Branch Manager, BSK Associates

**Frank Franco**, Business Liaison, Fresno County Economic Opportunities Corporation

**Debbie Hunsaker**, President, Alert-o-Lite

**Jose Antonio Ramirez**, City Manager, City of Firebaugh

**Rocky Rogers**, City Manager, City of Reedley

**Brian Haddix**, City Manager, City of Sanger

**Lee Ann Eager**, Vice President of Business Relations, Economic Development Corporation Serving Fresno County

**Mark Garza**, Director of Construction and Modernization, Kings Canyon Unified

**Noe Martinez**, City Engineer, City of Reedley

**Steve Wright**, Chief of Police, City of Reedley

**Katie Stevens**, Government Affairs Manager, City of Fresno

**Lacey Kiriakou**, Director, Federal Government Relations, University of California, Merced

**Anthony Ratekin**, Office of Congressman Devin Nunes

**Matt Leedy**, Government Relations Analyst, Fresno Regional Workforce Investment Board

**Barbara Steck**, Deputy Director, Council of Fresno County Governments

**Melissa Garza**, Planner, Council of Fresno County Governments

**Marla Day**, Executive Assistant, Council of Fresno County Governments

## High-Speed Rail Streamlining



### AREA AFFECTED:

San Joaquin Valley in  
Central California

### POLICY SUMMARY:

We request assistance in streamlining the environmental permitting process for high speed rail development in Fresno and the Central Valley in order to reduce the cost estimates of the project and potentially extend the length of track constructed in the initial corridor. Approximately \$5.5 billion in federal and state matching funds has already been dedicated to the California High Speed Rail Authority to date for construction of as many as 120 miles of the project's 520-mile first phase, and incorporate the Valley's largest urban centers: Bakersfield and Fresno. Efforts to provide federal flexibility and streamlined permitting processes should be sought to ensure the efficient and effective build-out of the system.

## High-Speed Rail Designation of High-Speed Rail Development Center



### AREA AFFECTED:

Fresno County

### POLICY SUMMARY:

Fresno County is proposing the designation of Fresno County as the nation's High Speed Rail Development Center. This designation would encompass the federal training, testing, certification and maintenance facilities, as well as function as the research and development center for the nation's high speed rail system.

A major outcome of Fresno County being designated as the nation's High Speed Rail Development Center would be the transformation from an area known for high poverty/high unemployment to a vibrant, economically healthy region. Fresno County is requesting the Obama Administration, through the Department of Transportation and Federal Railroad Administration, acknowledge and support Fresno County being designated as the nation's High Speed Rail Development Center.

## Department of Labor Apprenticeship Programs



**AREA AFFECTED:**  
Fresno County

### **POLICY SUMMARY:**

Under the Workforce Investment Act, the Department of Labor provides four primary performance measures for adulttagged clients. While current policy does allow for placement of an unemployed or underemployed worker into a training program leading to an apprenticeship as a successful performance outcome, there is no related waiver for limited wage (earnings) attainment as that apprentice begins his/her union career. We are seeking a waiver from the United States Department of Labor to (1) allow for lesser wage attainment for those placed in approved apprentice programs, or (2) to have the wage attainment (earnings) verified at some time later than the current six months after placement.

## Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics



**AREA AFFECTED:**  
Fresno County

### **POLICY SUMMARY:**

Under the previous administration, the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics stopped counting agricultural workers, forestry personnel, fishermen, and government workers in its compilation of mass layoff statistics. As in the Central Valley of California, farm workers, forestry personnel, fishermen and government workers are contributing members of the workforce around the country. Not counting these workers in the overall statistics produces inaccurate figures that are used to make precise decisions. We are requesting that the current administration reverse this policy to once again include these workers into the calculus of mass layoff statistics.

## Department of Labor Funding Flexibility to allow for Increased Layoff Aversion Tactics



**AREA AFFECTED:**  
Fresno County

### **POLICY SUMMARY:**

Current Workforce Investment Act regulations limit funding for Incumbent Worker Training to 20% of available Rapid Response funds, 10% of Adult funds, and 10% of Dislocated Worker funds, and only as part of lay-off aversion strategies. Local Workforce Investment Boards are also restricted to serving only low-income adults when using Adult funds for Incumbent Worker Training. We are requesting a five-year waiver from the U.S. Department of Labor to allow 15% of Dislocated Worker funds be used for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). In addition, we are requesting that the low-income stipulation be lifted from the Adult funds available for IWT, and for greater flexibility for all IWT funds. This allows a continuous assessment of the local labor market and creation of comprehensive business services that lead to job retention and workforce expansion.

## Internal Revenue Service Empowerment Zone Data



**AREA AFFECTED:**  
Fresno County

### **POLICY SUMMARY:**

The Empowerment Zone (EZ) was established to spur the creation of businesses in economically distressed areas and to create job opportunities for economically disadvantaged workers. These tax incentives are an important component of the larger economic development and revitalization strategies in these federally designated areas. The extension of these tax incentives are part of the current on-going budget negotiations. To advocate that these tax incentives be renewed, the designated regions must be able to provide accurate data that reflects the efficacy of the program. To show the efficacy of the program we are requesting that the Internal Revenue Service provide aggregate data based on the designated regions (through ZIP codes) to allow for 1) better tracking, 2) better management and 3) quantifiable defense for the renewal of this incentive program.

## FCC Narrowband Rules Reconsideration



### AREA AFFECTED:

San Joaquin Valley in  
Central California

### POLICY SUMMARY:

The FCC issued rules in 2004 that require public safety licensees in the VHF and UHF bands to migrate to narrowband operation by January 2013. Due to the economically distressed budgets of states, counties, cities and special districts over the past two and a half years, many public safety agencies have been unable to migrate to the narrowband frequencies. The Fresno Council of Governments, representing 15 cities and the County, ask that the Rule's implementation date be modified to ensure public safety agencies continue to have the necessary operability and interoperability of their radio systems. When considering whether to grant the preliminary order for relief, three factors should be considered:

- The threat of irreparable harm absent preliminary relief
- The degree of harm to the FCC or other agencies which hold frequencies would be minimal in our opinion
- Whether the preliminary order for relief would further the public interest

## Energy Efficiency



### AREA AFFECTED:

San Joaquin Valley

### POLICY SUMMARY:

We ask for continued appropriations for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program administered by the US Department of Energy. This program provides needed funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in all jurisdictions throughout the San Joaquin Valley since 2009.

Much has been accomplished as a result of this federal clean energy funding. Much more remains to be done. We ask that the EECBG be continued to enable the Valley jurisdictions to fully utilize these clean energy funds in order to reduce their energy usage/costs and further develop renewable energy capacity in their communities.

## Sustainable Communities Initiative



### AREA AFFECTED:

San Joaquin Valley in  
Central California

### POLICY SUMMARY:

We ask for continued support for the region on Sustainable Communities activities. The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program, administered by HUD, is designed to support multi-jurisdictional regional planning efforts that integrate housing, economic development, and transportation decision-making in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of economic growth, social equity, and environmental impact simultaneously. The first round of funding was completed in October 2010, but there will likely be other similar opportunities through HUD, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, working together as The Partnership for Sustainable Communities. We appreciate the support we have received to date as the Compact of Cities (Smart Valley Places) representing the 14 largest cities in the Valley received a \$4 million Sustainable Communities Planning grant in October 2010.

## Water -- Supply, Reliability and Quality



### AREA AFFECTED:

San Joaquin Valley in  
Central California

### POLICY SUMMARY:

Water is currently the most critical issue being faced by the San Joaquin Valley. Many pressing concerns—new as well as long standing—are affecting water supply reliability, quantity, and quality of the region's agricultural, urban, and environmental water needs.

The San Joaquin Valley needs the support and partnership of State and Federal legislators, and water management and infrastructure agencies as we work through the complex issues surrounding water supply, reliability, and quality. Several recommendations are included on accompanying materials.

# Air Quality Enterprise/ Empowerment Zone Designation



## Federal Tax Legislation (Authorization)

### AREA AFFECTED:

San Joaquin Valley in  
Central California

### POLICY SUMMARY:

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is seeking the establishment of a new designation as an Air Quality Enterprise/Empowerment Zone at the state and federal level. The new designation would recognize that the Valley has a unique air quality and economic situation that calls for additional state and federal resources to effectively meet the challenges that we face. Given the Valley's climate and economic situation, it is abundantly clear that aggressive regulatory measures alone will not yield the needed reductions to attain the federal air quality standards. A primary reason for this is that new tail-pipe standards for on-road and off-road engines will not produce any reduction in emissions until old engines are replaced with new cleaner engines. Without incentive grants, the full benefit of the new engine standards will not be realized for decades. Additionally, incentive grants can allow for adoption of cleaner technologies that may otherwise be unaffordable. Furthermore, industrial equipment at stationary sources could be replaced with newer and cleaner equipment with appropriate incentive funding.

# Juvenile Information Sharing



### AREA AFFECTED:

Fresno County

### POLICY SUMMARY:

This policy-focused project will improve quality of life outcomes for at-risk youth by increasing data sharing between Fresno County Department of Social Services and over 22 identified key stakeholders throughout the County, including 19 unified school districts, Probation, Children's Mental Health Services, and Fresno County Superior Court Juvenile Delinquency Division. Information sharing can ensure youth have the services they need regardless of where they move in the County, and that staff have the information needed to ensure safety at our public school campuses, at the juvenile justice campus, and our neighborhoods and communities.

We are seeking exemptions and/or waivers to certain rules and policies that create limitations in being able to adequately share information between agencies in a timely manner. Support of these exemptions/waivers in this fiscal year, will leverage available funds and provide the much needed regulatory assistance to complete a longstanding vision.

# Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program



**AREA AFFECTED:**  
Fresno County

## **POLICY SUMMARY:**

We urge the Obama Administration to support continued funding of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, as pledged during the presidential campaign. CDBG funds are used effectively and discretionally by local governments to target local priorities and positively impact unique local economies.

Annual CDBG funds are distributed to communities according to statutory formulas based on population, poverty, pre-1940 housing stock, growth lag, and housing overcrowding. Most all CDBG funds are targeted directly to low- and moderate-income persons and communities. Recipients such as Fresno County have given priority to responsible activities that are awarded and/or constructed quickly to have an immediate positive impact on those in need. Local government in Fresno County, the same as in states and other locales around the nation, have a backlog of such critical projects that are implemented efficiently and effectively and positively impact the local economy for years to come.

# Streamline Environmental Permitting



**AREA AFFECTED:**  
Fresno County

## **POLICY SUMMARY:**

Developers of real estate and renewable energy projects are often faced with the challenge of having to file, process, and secure Federal Environmental approvals for their projects. Some Federal processes have fixed timelines; some do not. Developers need to be able to have some assurance about processing times or they will not be able to secure financing or plan for construction, marketing, or sales.

We urge the Administration to explore ways to expedite and streamline environmental processing timelines for real estate and renewable energy projects. Several possible streamlining methods are included in the white paper.

# Federal Highways Administration Project eligibility and match requirements



## AREA AFFECTED:

Fresno County

## POLICY SUMMARY:

The downturn in the economy at all levels (federal, state & local) has created an undesirable situation where many of our cities are lacking the financial resources to plan and design their own local transportation projects. This resource shortage makes it impossible for cities to prepare their projects so that they are eligible for federal government construction funding.

As a practical matter, the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding delivered the majority of the “construction ready” projects. This inadvertently left the cities with very few, if any, projects that were construction eligible, and more importantly, no resources to develop the next ones. Of grave concern to our region, is the fact that should there be another federal “stimulus” bill that focuses on infrastructure, Fresno County and the San Joaquin Valley as a whole could be “shortchanged” on our fair share of funding because we have no local transportation projects that are “shovel ready” for construction.

We ask that the Federal Highways Administration consider modifying the eligibility rules for federal planning funds to allow them to be utilized for both planning and project development activities, specifically project design and engineering.

We also ask that the Federal Highways Administration consider lowering the current local match requirement for street and highway projects from its current 11.53%.



Fresno Council  
of Governments

## **One Voice History**

In 2003, the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) decided to undertake a “One Voice” effort seeking federal and/or state funding for projects of broad community-wide benefit within Fresno County. The goal was to assemble a public-private delegation, select prioritized projects, and then visit our Congressional and federal departmental representatives in Washington, D. C. to pursue funding and grant opportunities. The Fresno COG proposed this as an annual effort and has made a similar effort at the State level in Sacramento.

The message we heard during each of our visits to Washington, D.C. was that we were welcomed and encouraged to return and to continue communications, building upon the broad-based coalition we were assembling. The “One Voice” approach is positively recognized and viewed as a means of assisting our federal representatives identify, prioritize and shepherd much needed projects through the federal budget process. No accomplishments in connection with “One Voice” activities would be possible without the outstanding leadership of the Fresno COG congressional delegation.

Although the “One Voice” effort does not represent the sole advocacy for the Fresno region (Fresno County, individual cities and other public authorities pursue important objectives in Washington as well), it does provide an opportunity to give special focus to a core group of projects around which the broadest group within the county can unite.

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