

Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) began its “One Voice” effort in 2003 to seek federal funding for projects that benefit the community of Fresno County. The public-private delegation selected prioritized projects and visited Congressional and federal departmental representatives in Washington, D.C., to pursue funding and grant opportunities. Fresno COG continued the annual effort until 2020, taking a four-year hiatus from 2020 to 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, it renewed the One Voice D.C. tradition in 2024, advocating for funding programs crucial to regional projects that may collectively seek hundreds of millions of dollars through federal discretionary grant programs.

Building on the broad-based coalition Fresno COG assembles, Congressional representatives and their staff welcome and encourage the communications to assist federal representatives identify, prioritize, and shepherd much-needed projects and programs through the federal budgetary process. One Voice focuses on a core group of regional projects and priorities around which the broadest group of public and private leaders unite. Fresno COG’s One Voice delegation seeks funding sources for projects that appeal to federal decision-makers and advocates for congressional and federal agency support during the competitive grant process. The delegation also advocates for policy and regulatory reform. In doing so, Fresno COG's “One Voice” has been responsible for legislation that today streamlines how federal and state agencies work together. The program continues to help eliminate unnecessary procedures so that government agencies and the business community can work together seamlessly toward job creation for our communities.



Fresno COG’s One Voice D.C. efforts reap a considerable harvest. The “fruits” of One Voice include the following: Congress has enacted transportation legislation that contained many of the policy positions advocated by “One Voice” in recent years, including:

- In 2024, two One Voice priorities received Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending allocations: The Parlier to Reedley Education Trail and the FAT Terminal Expansion
- In 2019, the City of Fresno received \$10.5 million for the Veterans Boulevard interchange project from the federal Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program - a project for which One Voice lobbied extensively for a decade
- Passed five-year surface transportation reauthorization bills
- Established both formula and discretionary grant programs to fund critical transportation projects that would benefit freight movement
- Authorized funding for the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) program at \$4.5 billion through 2020
- Approximately \$1.5 billion in discretionary funding available through Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grants in Fiscal Year 2018 for various transportation projects
- Department of Transportation (DOT) extended the Local Hire Initiative, which explores new ways to make it easier for states and cities to hire residents for transportation projects
- In 2017, the One Voice delegation united behind an \$18 million request for the long-awaited State Route 269 Bridge Project in the City of Huron. The bridge and a 2.1-mile stretch of the corridor were completed in 2019

***Both the House and Senate worked towards authorizing legislation to respond to the crisis resulting from the California drought, including:***

- The House approved Rep. Valadao’s drought legislation, the Western Water and American Food Security Act of 2015 (H.R. 2898), as well as H.R. 23, the Gaining Responsibility on Water Act of 2017
- Senator Dianne Feinstein introduced the California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2015 (S.1894)
- The departments of Commerce and Interior exercised regulatory flexibility to increase pumping operations and water supplies during spring storms

### ***Other Federal Priorities***

Congress and the Administration continue to ensure that competitive discretionary grant programs are available throughout the legislative sessions, many of which continued as high priorities during “One Voice” advocacy efforts. These include, but are not limited to:

- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Department of Interior (DOI) Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)
- Department of Commerce (DOC) Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant programs
- Department of Agriculture (USDA) Pest Prevention Program, Agriculture Canine Inspection, and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP).