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League Leadership Meets with State Leaders to Discuss League's Strategic Goals

On Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2016 League President and Rancho Cucamonga Mayor Dennis Michael led a team of League officers and staff in a series of meetings with Gov. Jerry Brown, legislative leaders from both parties, and other key legislators and staff about the League's 2016 strategic goals. President Michael was joined by First Vice President and Lodi Council Member JoAnne Mounce, Second Vice President and Palos Verdes Estates Mayor Jim Goodhart, Past President and Scotts Valley Council Member Stephany Aguilar, Executive Director Chris McKenzie, Legislative Director Dan Carrigg, and other key legislative staff depending on the meeting. *For more, see Page 2.*



New HUTA Estimates from DOF Now Available

In conjunction with Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed FY 2016-17 state budget, the Department of Finance (DOF) released estimates of statewide collections of motor vehicle fuel tax revenues (Highway User Tax Account or HUTA) for FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17. California City Finance has updated estimated allocations for each city based on the DOF estimates.

A briefing paper explaining the complex allocation formulas and providing these updated estimates is available on CaliforniaCityFinance.com.



Updated California Water Action Plan Released

The Natural Resources Agency, Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday announced the release of an [updated California Water Action Plan](#). The updated plan comes two years after the first release and reflects progress on the goals established in January 2014 on sustainable water management. Much of the progress shows the response to California's historic drought and efforts to focus resources to water saving measures.

In all of the meetings the League officers urged their state partners to support passage of a comprehensive transportation funding program to help address the mounting local and state road and bridge maintenance deficits, provide new local financing tools for water infrastructure, and to improve housing affordability, including for the chronically homeless. Governor Brown spent time exploring the affordable housing and homelessness problems facing cities, and ways to address the growing crisis. Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de Leon (D-Los Angeles) offered support for passage of a transportation funding package and his new proposed program for housing the chronically mentally ill.

Assembly Republican Leader Chad Mayes (R-Yucca Valley) discussed the priorities of his caucus on public safety and infrastructure. Senate Republican Leader Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield), discussed water and transportation infrastructure issues with the League officers, expressing sensitivity to the serious infrastructure challenges facing the state and how her caucus believes they can be addressed. She also indicated considerable concern about the need to respond to the growing homelessness problem in the state. Assembly Speaker-Elect Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood) expressed interest in our efforts to give local agencies additional tools to deal with stormwater and water conservation issues and discussed the prospects for action on transportation funding.

In a meeting with the new chair of the Assembly Housing Committee, Assembly Member David Chiu (D-San Francisco), the officers discussed how to develop support for additional funding for affordable housing. With Assembly Member Jay Obernolte (R-Big Bear), who serves on the legislative conference committee on transportation, the officers discussed prospects for legislative action on transportation funding and tax reform were the main topics of discussion. Finally, the Special Assistant to Speaker Toni Atkins (D-San Diego), Katie Kolitsos, met with the officers on all priority issues and pledged to work with us on them closely this session.

"We were delighted that part or all of the League's strategic goals are shared by the Governor and so many legislative leaders," President Dennis Michael noted. "We assured each of them that we were ready to work closely with them in partnership to advance our common goals to adequately fund transportation maintenance, expand tools for funding needed water infrastructure, and expand housing affordability, including for the chronically homeless. We deeply appreciated their time and interest."

California City Solutions: GreenBiz Cupertino Helps Local Businesses Achieve Sustainability Certification

This story is part of an ongoing series featuring Helen Putnam Award entries. The 2015 entries are available on the League's website as a resource for cities in a searchable database called [California City Solutions](#). GreenBiz Cupertino was submitted in 2015 for the League Partners Award for Excellence in City-Business Relations award category.

GreenBiz Cupertino launched in September 2010 to boost sustainability and support the local community. The city created the program after certifying multiple city facilities in 2010. This experience lead city leaders to realize that for small to medium sized businesses, the process for Green Business Certification can be overwhelming with little support or guidance.

[GreenBiz Cupertino](#) is the city's free support service to assists local businesses in pursuing Green Business Certification under the statewide [California Green Business Program](#). The program recognizes businesses that surpass regulatory compliance by implementing practices to conserve energy, water and other resources, reduce waste, and prevent pollution. In 2010, working toward goals outlined in the Sustainability Element of its General Plan, the city certified seven facilities through the [Bay Area Green Business Program](#), a regional affiliate and founding member of the California Green Business Program. This process involved navigating a long checklist of close to 200 energy, water, and materials measures.

While the city had the in-house capacity to tackle the process, staff understood that many small businesses may not. Participation in this regional program was low and the drop-out rate was

high. City leaders thought that creating GreenBiz Cupertino would help address this issue and bring the benefits of green business certification to the business community (the majority of which are small to medium-sized).

GreenBiz Cupertino acts as a pro bono consultancy for businesses that want to be environmental stewards but do not know [where to start](#). The program offers free certification assistance and differentiates businesses for their environmental leadership.

The city's service program includes:

- Assistance with the arduous certification application;
- Access to free equipment including low-flow water-saving fixtures, environmentally preferable product samples, indoor recycling and composting containers;
- Connection with regional no-cost services including free energy and water audits, rebates for energy and water conservation projects, waste management consultation, etc.; and
- Public recognition for achievements, including recognition events, networking and training events, and marketing channels including increased web presence and green business discount cards for residents.

GreenBiz also advances Cupertino's broader environmental and economic development goals. The program serves as a direct outreach outlet, regulatory compliance support service, and economic development service for local businesses. It not only educates businesses on how to improve operations, but can catch regulatory issues before they impact a business' bottom line or the local environment. These measures also contribute to the city's greenhouse gas reduction goals outlined in Cupertino's [Climate Action Plan](#).

Although the city has an aggressive portfolio of business requirements including green building, water efficient landscaping, construction demolition debris, and mandatory recycling ordinances, few offer the opportunity to address business' operational environmental impacts. Because commercial electricity and natural gas use accounts for 31 percent of Cupertino's total emissions, GreenBiz teams with commercial partners to co-design facility improvements that reduce energy use and associated costs and emissions.

GreenBiz's main objectives are to:

- Increase number of certified businesses in Cupertino;
- Recognize business environmental leaders and advance economic development goals; and
- Strengthen the city's quality of life.

Collaboration helps the GreenBiz program reach its objectives while helping its partners to reach their service goals as directed by the Public Utilities Commission or boards of directors. GreenBiz works with a number of organizations such as PG&E, Recology, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Silicon Valley Energy Watch, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce, Cupertino Chamber of Commerce, San José Water Company, Santa Clara County, Acterra, US Environmental Protection Agency, Ecology Action (Right Lights), Clean Water Fund, and ICLEI USA.

GreenBiz is Cupertino's direct connector to small businesses, and helps create strong city-business relationships, build access to a strong assistance network, and align policy development across business and community goals. The city has engaged over 200 businesses in GreenBiz and has more than tripled its number of certified businesses. Actions taken toward certification achieve real resource savings: the Bay Area Green Business Program estimates that certified Cupertino businesses annually save 1,338,744 pounds CO₂ from entering the atmosphere, 592,848 kWh of energy, 1,736,176 gallons of water, and 3,447,622 pounds of waste from going to the landfill. Conserving energy, water, and materials translates into cost savings for businesses; the above metrics parallel an estimated \$593,859 saved among all participants. The city's model helped increase certified businesses from just 10 in 2010 to more than 50 by 2015, with another 15 in progress. The city of Cupertino received the 2013 Business Environmental Award in the category of Environmental Project for its GreenBiz Cupertino program. View a video with more information about the program [online](#).

