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All Eyes on Special Session for Transportation Funding

Senate and Assembly Subcommittees Send Transportation Budget Proposal to Special Session

Over the past two weeks Senate and Assembly Budget Subcommittees took action to remove Gov. Jerry Brown's transportation funding proposal from the budget negotiations. This procedural move, which involves voting to reject the proposal without prejudice, puts all focus squarely on the Special Session. *For more, see Page 2.*



State Water Board's New Approach to Emergency Water Conservation Regulations

The State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) recently adopted a new emergency conservation regulation requiring locally developed conservation standards. *For more, see Page 2.*



California City Solutions: Fullerton's New Approach to Homeless Support

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](#). The Fullerton Police Department Homeless Liaison Officer Program was submitted in 2015 for the Public Safety award category. For more, see Page 2.

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While this action is simply a procedural action, it raises concerns about the timing of a vote on a funding reform package for transportation. The Special Session has not been active since Oct. 21, 2015, when the conference committee met for an [informational hearing](#) on [California's Transportation Funding Challenge](#). Much has changed in the legislature since October, and there are several procedural actions that need to take place before the Special Session Conference Committee reconvenes.

In addition, Assembly Budget Committee Chair Phil Ting tweeted on Tuesday following the Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3's vote: "We have been working on transportation funding for over a year. Overall I support the Governor's proposal and, although it has a lot of support in the Legislature, it doesn't have the votes to pass by June 15. By moving it to the policy process, we can keep these important discussions moving forward."

As of today, Senate and Assembly leadership has not revealed a timeline to restart the Special Session. Next week the Fix Our Roads Coalition, of which the League is a member, will send a letter to legislative leadership encouraging them to reenergize the Special Session Conference Committee quickly. California's transportation funding shortfall continues to grow each day the legislature delays action, and it has become too easy for the legislature to push transportation needs to the back of the line of issues to address.

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The [new regulation](#) will take effect in June 2016 and remain in effect until January 2017, replacing the Feb. 2 emergency water conservation regulation that set specific water conservation benchmarks at the state level for each urban water supplier.

The Water Board changed tactics in response both to improved drought conditions in Northern California and calls from water agencies, the League of California Cities[®] and others to better account for disparate local conditions and challenges.

Rather than its prior percentage-based water conservation targets for each agency, the Water Board pivoted to what it calls a "stress-test" approach. It requires that agencies ensure a three-year supply of water.

If the state faces drought conditions like those from 2012 to 2015, agencies that fall short of a three-year supply will be required to meet a conservation standard equal to the shortage. For example, if an agency is 12 percent short of a three-year supply, it would need to save 12 percent.

The Water Board will set the new standards using information provided by wholesale suppliers about how regional supplies would hold up under three more dry years. In doing so, the board plans to account for groundwater and stormwater as well as imported, recycled and desalinated water.

The Water Board will release the calculations and projections to the public and requires urban water suppliers to continue monthly reporting.

On May 9, Gov. Jerry Brown [issued an executive order](#) making permanent some emergency prohibitions intended to reduce the wasting of potable water. These include irrigating ornament turf in medians; hosing off sidewalks, driveways and hardscapes; washing cars with hoses that lack a shut-off nozzle; using non-recirculated water in a fountain or water feature; watering lawns within 48 hours of a measurable rainfall; and overwatering lawns to the point of causing runoff.

The Governor's order includes other long-term steps to reduce water system leaks, strengthen drought resilience and improve both agricultural water use and drought planning.

The Water Board also voted to keep other emergency steps in place, like not serving drinking water other than upon request at restaurants, bars, hotels and other public places and giving hotel guests the option of not having towels and linens laundered daily. Commercial, industrial

and institutional properties will be required to limit outdoor watering with potable water to no more than two days per week.

The Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus warned in a press release that drought conditions are “far from over.” Parts of Northern California and all of Southern California [remain at below-average precipitation](#), groundwater levels remain near historic lows in parts of the San Joaquin Valley and the statewide snowpack stands at 89 percent.

“We’ve moved to a ‘show us the water’ approach, that allows local agencies to demonstrate that they are prepared for three more lousy water years,” Marcus said. “This reporting will show us what agencies plan to do, and how they do, throughout the year. Trust, but verify.

“In the meantime, we’ll be watching and prepared to come back with the 25 percent state mandate early next year if necessary, which we hope it won’t be.”

Winter rains have also helped boost [reservoir conditions](#) in Northern California, particularly at Shasta Reservoir (92 percent of capacity as of May 18), Lake Oroville (94 percent) and Folsom Lake (86 percent). Most other reservoirs remain under 61 percent capacity.

On May 19, the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) reported that 42.9 percent of California remains in extreme drought, down from 61 percent in February. A full 94.5 percent of the state remains abnormally dry, however.

In March, [Californians doubled their February savings](#), conserving 24.3 percent compared to March 2013. From June 2015 to March 2016, Californians saved 422.2 billion gallons of water.

For more information, see the Water Board’s conservation portal [here](#).

‘CCS: Fullerton’ Continued from Page 1...

Since the 1980s, the Fullerton Police Department has had a long history of working to address the complex needs of the homeless population. Fullerton is known to have the largest homeless population in Orange County yet the department did not have the resources and training available to handle this population. In 2012, the police department partnered with Coast to Coast Foundation, a Yorba Linda-based nonprofit homeless support group, to expand its services and support local homeless residents, feed the hungry, clothe the poor, and provide real solutions to long-term complex issues to those struggling with housing.

Homelessness around the downtown area, specifically around the transportation center, has increased in recent years creating a perception of increased crime. Some of the crimes associated with policing a homeless population include panhandling, littering, urinating and defecating in public, drug use and theft. Equally challenging is recognizing and understanding mental health issues among the homeless population, and how to link the homeless to various resources. Residents, business owners and commuters expect the police department to effectively deal with the homeless population to prevent crime and promote safety. Each day, Fullerton’s officers engage in creative problem solving to meet these expectations, while considering the rights and welfare of the homelessness.

In the summer of 2012, the police chief implemented a creative strategy to increase the number of assigned homeless liaison program full-time officers from one to four, and allocated \$50,000.00 to support the program. The homeless liaison officers utilize these funds to provide food, clothing, shelter, transportation and medical care to those in need.

Policing a growing population of homeless takes true care and compassion on the part of the officers. Because of the frequency of these types of calls and the amount of time they take to complete, the department was interested in learning more about the origin of the cause. Very often these cases related to mental illness and lack of trust for the police officers and others. To help address this issue, a Coast to Coast volunteer regularly rides with the department’s homeless liaison officers to offer immediate and onsite assistance with subsistence, shelter and gift cards for food items.

Collaboration between the Coast to Coast Foundation and the Fullerton Police Department is the first of its kind wherein a municipality has pledged time, money and resources to work in conjunction with a local nonprofit run by volunteers and funded by donations. Several neighboring police departments have recently inquired about the program for their own communities, including Los Angeles, Buena Park and Garden Grove.

The Fullerton Police Department has assisted surrounding agencies including the Anaheim and Huntington Beach Police Departments with the particulars and logistics of creating a robust wrap services program in their city to care for their homeless.

The Fullerton Police Department also teamed up with Orange County Mental Health Services to offer a mental health clinician to work with officers and volunteers to provide homeless individuals with immediate mental health assistance and care. The department and county mental health together have provided assistance to more than 1,530 individuals in need of onsite mental health services.

The combined efforts of the department and nonprofit resulted in over 2,000 homeless men, women and children receiving bus passes, food gift cards, food, water, socks, clothing, sleeping bags, relocation assistance funding, hotel vouchers, backpacks, bicycles, payment of California DMV fees for identification cards, assistance with mail stops, and long-term shelter. Additionally, a total of 115 men, women and children have been relocated to permanent long-term housing thanks to the work of all entities working in partnership to end homelessness.
