



May 11, 2020

The Honorable Paul Van Konynenburg, Chair
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: May 13th Meeting, Item #16, 2020 Interim Timely Use of Funds Policy

Dear Chair Van Konynenburg:

I am writing on behalf of the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) to express support for the staff recommendation to approve the Interim Timely Use of Funds Policy, and in particular to support the recommended change to allow second extensions for projects which received a 20-month extension ending this coming February.

Although the circumstances leading to a 20-month project delay are certainly unfortunate, the timing impacts resulting from COVID-19 will not necessarily be limited to projects that had previously only experienced shorter delays. In particular, since allocations deadlines typically fall in June, any project that received a 20-month extension of its June 2018 allocation deadline has a new deadline of February, 2021. With no Commission meeting in February this effectively puts the deadline in January, only one month after the Interim Timely Use of Funds Policy was set to expire. Should a project experience any significant COVID-19 delay it will likely be difficult to recover in time to receive a January allocation, so the proposed change being recommended by your staff will help address delays that these projects could experience.

There is one Active Transportation project located in Ventura County affected by this change, in the small town of Ojai. The PAED for that project was delayed, causing a delay to the start of the PS&E phase. Although the extent of any COVID-19 project delays is currently unknown, there are several potential issues, including the need to set up property owner meetings to negotiate construction easements. Moreover, due to the small staff, the Public Works Director is the project manager, but because he must direct some of the COVID-19 emergency operations, his time to manage the project is being impacted. In addition, the City is currently implementing a quick-build demonstration project to demonstrate the project improvements and inform the final design, and the effectiveness of that quick-build project cannot be measured until car traffic volumes return to normal. Since Ojai had previously received a 20-month extension, solely due to a delay in the prior PAED phase, the staff recommendation will ensure that the project can be considered by the Commission for a second extension should these potential issues in fact cause a delay.

VCTC appreciates very much all of the outreach conducted by your staff in developing the proposed Policy, and staff's responsiveness in addressing the concerns raised during that process. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure successful delivery of projects in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Darren M. Kettle
Executive Director