CALTRANS IMPLEMENTATION OF SB 743

CEQA Now Aimed at Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled

Ellen Greenberg & Chris Schmidt
Presentation Outline

1. Policy Priorities for a Better Future
2. SB 743 CEQA Changes
3. Project Delivery Impact
4. Stakeholder Outreach
Policy Priorities

- Transportation Improvements
- Climate
- Housing
- Environmental Protections
GHG Reduction Projections
Statewide GHG Emissions from Transportation

Possible Federal Rollback of CA Emission Standards
(Rulemaking pending)

Source: California Air Resources Board, Mobile Source Strategy 2016
SB 743 Timeline

- SB 743
- CEQA Guidelines
- Caltrans Implements
- Future Efforts

- 2013
- 2018
- 2020
- 2020+
Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a cumulative measure of distance driven by passenger vehicles (freight vehicle travel is excluded by SB 743).

Factors that affect VMT include:
- Travel Demand Fundamentals
- Average length of vehicle trips
- Average vehicle occupancy
- Trip chaining (combining purposes)
- Mode share
Projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop, a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor, or those that reduce VMT compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact. (Source: CA Code of Reg. §15064.3)

Automobile delay is no longer considered a CEQA impact for development projects in any location.
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is generally the most “appropriate measure” to evaluate transportation impacts – Caltrans will use this measure in CEQA analysis and significance determinations.

Projects that reduce VMT are presumed to have a less than significant impact.
SB 743: Potential Benefits

Land Use
• Streamline infill development and affordable housing to create communities that are less auto dependent; make active transportation and transit more attractive

Transportation Projects
• Transportation investments aligned to achieving state climate and air quality goals
SB 743 makes infill land development approvals easier, and it doesn’t make safety and maintenance projects any harder.
How Do CEQA Changes Support a Better Future?

- CEQA Guidelines and ARB 2017 Scoping Plan identify VMT reductions as necessary to meet the State’s goals
- Now analyze, disclose, select and consider alternatives, and identify mitigation differently
- Align project-level decision making with achieving overall climate change goals
CEQA Changes to Transportation Project Analysis with SB 743

Induced travel demand = CEQA Impact
Evaluating Capacity-Increasing Projects

- **Total VMT**
- **VMT Induced by the Project**

- **Time**
  - VMT at Project Opening
  - VMT With Project
  - VMT Without Project

- **Horizon Year**

- **Existing Conditions**

- **PROJECT OPENING**
VMT Induced by the Project

- Not about changes in overall travel behavior associated with population and economic growth
- About increased driving due to driver response to additional capacity
Mitigating VMT Impacts

- Follows established CEQA procedures, including those related to mitigation
- Strategies: mode shift, higher vehicle occupancy, shorter vehicle trips, and transportation demand management
- Explore compatible VMT and GHG mitigation measures
Anticipated risks:

- Implementation timing
  - Already-certified projects not affected
- Project-level risk
- Enterprise risk
Plan Objective: Hwy 99 becomes a 6-lane minimum freeway thru SJ Valley

Discusses completed projects funded by Prop. 1B and STIP, and

Provides details of 84 remaining projects
  • Capacity-increasing projects
  • Operational improvements
  • New interchanges
SB 743 Outreach

- Large cities
- MPO CEOs
- Self-help counties
- County transportation commissions
- Rural counties
- Advocacy stakeholders
- Partner state agencies
- Industry
Thank you.
Questions?