

SB 288 (WIENER): ECONOMIC RECOVERY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION COVID-19 RECOVERY ACT

POSITION: The Chamber's Transportation & Land Development Committee voted to SUPPORT the bill on May 19, 2020. The Chamber's Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT this bill on June 9, 2020. The Chamber's Board of Directors voted to SUPPORT the bill on June 25, 2020.

RATIONALE: This bill will significantly expedite the building and repair of transit infrastructure and create thousands of jobs for the state.

STATUS: SB 288 is a 'gut and amend' bill currently moving through the State Legislative cycle. It is slated to be heard by the Committee on Elections and Redistricting in the coming weeks.

SUMMARY

SB 288 will expand CEQA statutory exemptions to fast-track sustainable transportation projects, which makes the process more streamlined and cost-effective. In turn, it will assist California's economic recovery from COVID-19, creating thousands of jobs and modernizing the state's transportation infrastructure.

INDUSTRY/IES IMPACTED

This bill will directly impact local municipalities and transit service agencies, as well as construction and engineering sectors that specialize in the building and design of transit, bridges, roads and highways.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Possible projects expedited through SB 288 are:

- Modernize and build new transit stations
- Repair and rehabilitate of 1,400+ eligible bridges
- Speed up bus service on streets and highways
- Build new maintenance, repair, and storage facilities for transit
- Install electric vehicle charging infrastructure

For the foreseeable future, cities and transit agencies will have to do more with less. Many of these projects help reduce the need for pavement maintenance and improve transit operating efficiencies, creating savings at a time when public sector budgets will be deeply limited.

Projects that are eligible for statutory exemption must also have a robust public engagement process; reduce greenhouse gas emissions, be located in an urbanized area or connect urbanized areas as defined by CEQA; receive programmatic level CEQA approval, and be located on existing public rights of way.

SUPPORTERS

- SPUR (co-author)
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group (co-author)
- Bay Area Council (co-author)

OPPONENTS

- None known

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

This bill will significantly expedite the building and repair of transit infrastructure. It will create thousands of jobs for the state and encourages

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

This bill waives too many important steps in the review process for a public project and gives the

sustainable transportation, furthering progress towards California's Climate Action goals.

government too much control without public oversight.