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Subject: SCAG Liaison Report July 2025

To: Council of Governments Governing Board of Directors

From: Erik Rodriguez, SCAG Government Affairs Officer

CALIFORNIA STATE BUDGET REDUCES BARRIERS TO HOUSING PRODUCTION AND EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR REGIONAL EARLY ACTION PLANNING (REAP 2.0) PROGRAM

Earlier this week, the governor signed the 2025-2026 state budget, which includes [a suite of reforms](#) to reduce barriers to housing production. The two budget trailer bills, AB130 and AB131, include several provisions to streamline application of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to housing development. These reforms are consistent with long-standing priorities in SCAG's legislative platform and provisions previously included in SB 607, which SCAG's Regional Council [voted to support](#).

The trailer bills also include a six-month extension for expenditures under the [Regional Early Action Planning \(REAP\) program](#). This extension helps to make up for time lost during [proposed cuts](#) to the REAP program during the 2024 state budget process, which jeopardized SCAG's \$231 million in funding from this program, most of which had been granted to [projects throughout Southern California](#). SCAG staff will work with California Department of Housing and Development (HCD) to determine how the time extension will be administered and how this affects SCAG's timeline for delivery of the program.

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

EXECUTIVE/ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE KICKS OFF THE YEAR WITH ANNUAL RETREAT

The Executive/Administration Committee met for its annual retreat in Long Beach on June 19 and 20. During the meeting, Regional Council President Cindy Allen went over the priorities for her term: housing, regional planning in preparation for the 2028 Summer Olympic & Paralympic Games, and clean transportation technology. The agenda also included presentations by Chief Planning Officer Sarah Jepson on emerging issues related to SCAG's work, with focus on SCAG's economic analysis and state climate policy, as well as an outlook for the year's Regional Council and Policy Committee meetings. Chief Legal Counsel Jeff Elder outlined the Regional Council Policy Manual Amendments and Chief Government and Public Affairs Officer Javiera Cartagena presented on SCAG's signature events.

The full presentation can be found in the [meeting agenda packet](#).

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SCAG RELEASES TWO NEW REPORTS ON EXPANDING ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

SCAG's two new reports—“Addressing Barriers to Economic Opportunities” and “Apprenticeships: Expanding Economic Opportunities in Southern California”—look at expanding access to quality jobs, training, and long-term economic mobility, especially for historically underrepresented communities.

The “[Addressing Barriers to Economic Opportunities](#)” report identifies structural barriers, such as housing costs, limited transportation options, skills mismatch, and lack of affordable childcare. It also outlines targeted policy solutions like universal basic mobility, safer infrastructure, and workforce-centric planning.

The “[Apprenticeships: Expanding Economic Opportunities in Southern California](#)” report highlights how apprenticeships can bridge workforce gaps and provide debt-free pathways to employment. Featuring case studies and strategies across industries, it offers recommendations to strengthen and scale apprenticeship programs across the SCAG region.

Both reports were produced under SCAG's [Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy \(IERS\)](#) and provide a roadmap for building a more resilient regional economy. To read both reports, visit [SCAG's IERS webpage](#).

SCAG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KOME AJISE AWARDED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

SCAG Executive Director Kome Ajise received the Heinz Heckeroth Lifetime Achievement Award at the California Transportation Foundation's 36th Annual Transportation Awards Gala on June 12. Ajise previously served as chair of the California Transportation Foundation and was honored in recognition of his long public service career in transportation.

The award is named for Heinz Heckeroth, who was Caltrans District 7 Director during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and founded the California Transportation Foundation, where he spent 30 years volunteering as the organization's first Executive Director. A former Caltrans executive officer and now SCAG Executive Director, Ajise, in his remarks, said he is grateful to receive an award created to honor the legacy of an individual who made an invaluable impact on our region and California.

REAP 2.0 LASTING AFFORDABILITY PROGRAM—\$5M DISBURSED TO CENTURY AFFORDABLE DEVELOPMENT, INC. CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

SCAG processed its second REAP 2.0 Lasting Affordability Program payment directly supporting a regional lending program, disbursing \$5 million to Century Affordable Development, Inc. (CADI) Catalytic Development Fund (CDF). The CDF is a revolving line of credit for programmatic investment in infill projects that are part of large master-planned communities or mid-size multi-phase developments.

The REAP 2.0 contribution is expected to directly support financing for an estimated 984 affordable units, benefiting households earning between 30% and 70% Area Median Income (AMI). With this investment, the CDF now totals \$14.6 million, creating a renewable and long-term source of funding for housing development in the region. This award brings the total REAP 2.0 program investments in revolving loan programs to \$10 million to date.

GO HUMAN SUPPORTS TRAFFIC SAFETY EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

During the month of June, SCAG's *Go Human* program supported three partners in hosting traffic safety events within the SCAG region. These partners included DEV Partnerships with their Juneteenth Jam in Rialto on June 19, Stronger Together Now for their Juneteenth Block Party in Downtown San Bernardino on June 20, and Active SGV at their Open Streets event: Mission at Twilight on June 22. *Go Human* supports partners across the region with funding for traffic safety, education, helmet purchases and distribution.