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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In Case You Missed It: Support is Growing for AB2574 - Legislation to Allow Construction Authority to Continue Planning Gold Line to Ontario Airport *Editors Tell SANBAG to Reconsider their Position*

Below is an Editorial that ran in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune, Pasadena Star News and Inland Valley Daily Bulletin expressing support for AB2574 (Rodriguez) and recommending that SANBAG revisit their position in opposition of the legislation. The editors highlight the need to take the Gold Line light rail system to Ontario Airport, as well as the overwhelming support that exists regionally to make the airport the line's eastern terminus. Here is a quote from the Editorial:

“Anyone along the foothills of the San Gabriels from Pasadena east can see what a crucial transit link the completion of the rail line will be. Anyone in Southern California who has followed the folly that incredibly has prevented light rail reaching the most obvious terminus of all, Los Angeles International Airport, can see that this opportunity to bring such a convenient transit system to Ontario International is an opportunity that is not to be missed, and one that could in fact be key to the economic revitalization of that airport.

Given the need for Gold Line allies to work together, how on Earth could the key Inland Empire planning agency take a position adamantly at odds with unity?”

In addition to the newspapers, the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (made up of representatives from the 33 cities in the San Gabriel Valley) voted to support AB2574, with amendments to mitigate SANBAG's concerns. The Gold Line Phase 2 Joint Powers Authority board of directors (made up of the Gold Line corridor city representatives from Pasadena to Ontario) also voted to support AB2574. Finally, nearly a dozen individual cities have already sent letters of support to the state legislature.

AB2574 would extend the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority's enabling legislation, allowing the agency to continue planning the final extension of the light rail line from the Montclair TransCenter to the LA/Ontario International Airport. AB2574 would amend the agency's enabling statute by: (1) extending the jurisdictional authority from the city of Montclair to the city of Ontario, and (2) amend the project's definition to extend to the city of Ontario, as well as including the cities of Upland and Ontario to the list of “extension cities” identified in the statute. No other changes to the Construction Authority's enabling statute are proposed.

The Construction Authority board of directors will be discussing the legislation at their meeting this Wednesday, April 23, 2014 at 7:00 PM. The meeting is held at the Construction Authority's offices – 406 E. Huntington Drive, Monrovia CA 91016.

EDITORIAL: SANBAG needs to back Gold Line with vote

Given the long history of obstructionism, obfuscation and downright opposition from Los Angeles City Hall to the voter-approved extension of the Gold Line light rail east to San Bernardino County, the plan's allies have to stick together.

Mostly, they do. Anyone along the foothills of the San Gabriels from Pasadena east can see what a crucial transit link the completion of the rail line will be. Anyone in Southern California who has followed the folly that incredibly has prevented light rail reaching the most obvious terminus of all, Los Angeles International Airport, can see that this opportunity to bring such a convenient transit system to Ontario International is an opportunity that is not to be missed, and one that could in fact be key to the economic revitalization of that airport.

Given the need for Gold Line allies to work together, how on Earth could the key Inland Empire planning agency take a position adamantly at odds with unity?

But that's just what SanBAG, the San Bernardino Associated Governments board, did last week by declaring its opposition to Assembly Bill 2574, authored by Assemblyman Freddie Rodriguez, D-Chino, which would extend the Gold Line Construction Authority's jurisdiction from Montclair to Ontario, allowing it to continue the planning work required for the project.

Rather than looking at the big, regional picture, the board bases its opposition on local control issues that threaten its constituents' ability to get around without braving the daily gridlock of the 210 Freeway. Where's the civic responsibility in that?

And its members absurdly claim that it's unclear if building light rail to the Ontario airport is even a good idea in the first place, and claims that more study is needed on the issue. We haven't met a soul, locally, who agrees.

"SANBAG is deeply concerned that this bill is premature as results from the present Ontario Airport access study are not anticipated until later in 2014," the board writes. "The study is analyzing more than 30 alternatives for connections to LA/Ontario International Airport and an extension of the Gold Line is but one of these options."

Oh, yeah? What are the others? Horses and buggies? Flying cars? A practical option that ties into the rail transit system currently being built throughout Southern California is hanging in the balance here, and SanBAG is crazily giving ammunition to the many Westside forces who would happily grab our light rail funding for themselves.

The Gold Line Phase 2 Joint Powers Authority board reports that SanBAG's vote shows a clear misunderstanding of A.B. 2574's intent: "Their staff report stated that AB2574 'threatens the viability of SANBAG's Measure I by requiring uncontrolled expenditures on a project, with no authority over a project operated in our county.' However, language in the statute clearly states that the project cannot be built or operated without SANBAG's agreement and approval. Their staff report ignored this important language."

We think SanBAG should take another look at that language, and then take another vote on this vital issue. The time for Gold Line unity is now.

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