

# Los Angeles Section

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John Rogers, P.E., F.ASCE  
Los Angeles Section President

VOL. LV NO. 9

<b>In This Issue</b>	<i>page</i>
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE .....	1
USING THE ENVISION TOOL .....	2
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE .....	3-5
PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY .....	6-7



## New President



Greetings to all of you, my fellow Civil Engineers. Our profession is grand, of historical significance and precedent, and we have an enviable reputation among the public. Look at any recent survey of public perception; Engineers are right at the top, ahead of attorneys, ministers and (unfortunately) elected officials. Engineers are trusted by the public; we can be counted on to deal in facts, to provide reasoned arguments on sometimes unpopular realities (think sea level rise, earthquake preparedness, deterioration of highway pavements and bridges.)

We can maintain an arms-length impartialness to legislators and the voting, tax-paying public when they ask, "OK Ms. Engineer, what's our next move?" I have been a proud member of this sometime conflicted group for way too many years.

Let me introduce myself. I am John Rogers, president of your Los Angeles Section of ASCE for 2015-2016. I'm a very ordinary Engineer with a pretty typical background. I was raised in Northern New Jersey, the son of a graduate Civil Engineer (University of Michigan, 1922) who started in street railway engineering in Grand Rapids, Michigan, but spent the rest of his career in the casualty insurance business. I received a Bachelor of Engineering from Yale University, shortly before that august institution decided that the practical skills (Civil, Mechanical, etc.) should make way for the Arts and Sciences. So I'm a bit of an orphan in that respect. My first real job was Instrument man on Parsons Brinkerhoff's New York City survey crew, where I learned the ropes from a very savvy Irish party chief named Dick Dowling.

After a few years in Vietnam (the Navy commissioned almost all of the Yale ROTC Engineers, and sent them all to sea except for a few Electrical Engineering types who became Civil Engineer Corps officers) I worked for several years for Sverdrup & Parcel (later merged with Jacobs Engineering) in San Francisco, then for a local firm, SB&O, in San Diego. All of these firms shared one very important attribute: each one provided me with one or more mentors who kicked my immature rear, showed me how to do things, demonstrated to me in no uncertain terms that they were smarter than I was, had the patience to allow me to make mistakes, and showed me how, when I got it right, I could add value to project to benefit the clients, both public and private, and the Company.

I carried those lessons into a 15-year stretch where, with and without a partner, I proved that it is possible to make a living as an independent Civil Engineer. It is terrifying, exhausting, exhilarating and rewarding, all at the same time. I subsequently spent 6 years managing a small public agency, and know from first-hand experience what it is like to be fired by a 3-2 vote of your Board of Directors.

Currently I am a Vice President of CLE Engineering, a small bi-coastal firm known for their expertise in ports, harbors, rivers and design of underwater structures. At CLE, I am forever grateful for the time I get to spend working with and for some exceedingly bright people. This doesn't always happen in a typical Engineering career; you just have to be smart enough to recognize it and flexible enough to take advantage of the opportunities when they arrive.

My ASCE involvement began as a Student Member at Yale; I joined as an Associate Member in 1965. I am currently a Fellow. I am looking forward to a very fruitful year ahead of us!

# Using the Envision Tool for Sustainability

by Mark R. Norton PE, LEED AP, ENV SP



Upon recently reading our ASCE Executive Director, Tom Smith's, July 2015 Leadership Letter to ASCE members, I was particularly impressed with two things. First, I never noticed this before but Tom Smith has ENV SP listed as his first credential after his name. As many people know, Tom is also an attorney and a civil engineer. To show his ENV SP credential first after his name to me sends a message about how important this credential is to him.

One of ASCE's three major strategic initiatives is as follows: *"Sustainability - Embrace and encourage civil engineers' role as contributors to a sustainable world"*. Tom, like many other civil engineers, has embraced the Institute of Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision rating tool and become an Envision Sustainability Professional to become familiar and practice what "sustainable infrastructure" is all about. Tom is leading by example, walking the talk as they say, by becoming an ENV SP.

Second, Tom's recent message highlights how far the ISI Envision rating tool has come. See this excerpt from his message.

*In case you missed it, the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision rating tool was featured in the June 22, 2015 edition of **Engineering News-Record**. The comprehensive article provides an overview of Envision and how it **"is fast becoming the tool of choice for infrastructure owners, designers and builders to measure project success in sustainability – and beyond."** Numerous ASCE members are quoted, including ASCE's appointed directors on ISI's board, Michael Mucha, founding director Wayne Klotz, and our new director Greg DiLoreto.*

As the first Chair of the ASCE Region 9 Sustainability Committee and founder of the Sustainability Committee for the ASCE LA Section back in 2007, I have a passion for helping civil engineers apply sustainability to their practice. The concept of sustainability is not a new one though. For over a decade, the principles of sustainability have been promoted in various national and international organizations as well as through ASCE. I recall when I first got actively involved with an ASCE Branch leadership in the mid 90s, a fellow board member, Kevin Josker, prepared a series of Branch newsletter articles about sustainability as a member of the ASCE International Committee. With increasing concerns over our need to reduce carbon emissions and pollution, conserve water and recycle available resources, his call to action applies to the modern civil engineer even more today. Further, as stated in the ASCE Vision for Civil Engineering in 2025, civil engineers have been entrusted to create a sustainable world.

In my own experience as a water resources engineer and planner, the need for sustainability in the field of water resources is taken very

seriously. Being in a semi-arid environment here in Southern California, water managers realize that preparing for drought conditions must be a major focus in all water resource planning. With California now in the midst of one of the worst droughts for the past 1300 years according to the recent studies, the seriousness of a sustainable water supply has come home to roost. Water concerns are no longer limited to water suppliers but has become something that even the general public must learn about, adapt to and reduce their water use to fit the climate they live in. Climate change is no longer viewed with speculation but instead is now accepted as a reality that we clearly must incorporate within our infrastructure designs.

To deal with the growing needs to expand water supply reliability and promote sustainability, we as civil engineers must take an active leadership role as quickly as possible to reverse these alarming trends. Through the ASCE Sustainability Committees across the State we are teaching and promoting sustainability programs and practices that span all forms of infrastructure that civil engineers design for. These committees are also active in teaming with other organizations and associations such as the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program in teaching about sustainability and encouraging sustainability practices at the local, regional and State level. In my view, sustainability should no longer be just relegated to just specific committees, events or programs but should in fact be integrated into all ASCE functions and civil engineer practices.

For now, until the full integration occurs, your involvement and support are needed to spearhead greater understanding about sustainability and the Envision rating tool. I invite you to become involved in your local sustainability committee through your ASCE Branch, YMF or Section. If your local organization doesn't have one, consider starting a new one. We are looking for champions for these causes who have a passion and recognition that action must be taken now. Finally, if ENV SP does not follow your name, it is time to take on ENV SP online learning process, take the test and start applying sustainability practices to your civil engineering today. Let's encourage every ASCE member to become an ENV SP.



# State Investments and Legislative Update

*by Richard Markuson, CA Region 9 Legislative Advocate*



The State Legislature resumed their work at the State Capitol on August 17. Adjournment of the regular session is September but the two special sessions (transportation and health care funding) could continue until 2016.

The Governor asked the Legislature to enact permanent and sustainable funding to maintain and repair the state's transportation and critical infrastructure, improve the state's key trade corridors and complement local infrastructure efforts.

But while the Legislature has introduced a package of special session bills, little action took place in August.

Bill	Subject	Status
ABX1 1 (Alejo D)	Accelerates repayment of transportation loans to general fund, retains the weight fee revenues in the State Highway Account.	No action
ABX1 2 (Perea D)	Extends existing P3 authority indefinitely.	No action
ABX1 3 (Frazier D)	Declares the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to establish permanent, sustainable sources of transportation funding to maintain and repair the state's highways, local roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure.	Without reference to committee. Assembly Rule 63 suspended. (Ayes 51. Noes 27.) Read second time. Ordered to third reading
ABX1 4 (Frazier D)	Declares the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to establish permanent, sustainable sources of transportation funding to improve the state's key trade corridors and support efforts by local governments to repair and improve local transportation infrastructure.	Without reference to committee. Assembly Rule 63 suspended. (Ayes 51. Noes 27.) Read second time. Ordered to third reading
ABX1 7 (Nazarian D)	This bill would continuously appropriate 20% of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund annual proceeds to the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program, and 10% of those annual proceeds to the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program.	No action
ABX1 8 (Chiu D)	Would, effective July 1, 2016, increase the additional sales and use tax rate on diesel fuel to 5.25%.	No action
SBX1 1 (Beall D)	Would create the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program to address deferred maintenance on the state highway system and the local street and road system.	Approved by Senate Transportation, sent to appropriations
SBX1 2 (Huff R)	Would provide that Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund proceeds from fuel sale shall be appropriated by the Legislature for transportation infrastructure, including public streets and highways, but excluding high-speed rail.	No action
SBX1 3 (Vidak R)	Would provide that no further bonds shall be sold for high-speed rail purposes pursuant to the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century, except as specifically provided with respect to an existing appropriation for high-speed rail purposes for early improvement projects in the Phase 1 blended system.	Failed in Senate Transportation 3-9
SBX1 4 (Beall D)	Would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to establish permanent, sustainable sources of transportation funding to maintain and repair the state's highways, local roads, bridges, and other critical transportation infrastructure.	Sent to third reading
SBX1 5 (Beall D)	Would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to establish permanent, sustainable sources of transportation funding to improve the state's key trade corridors and support efforts by local governments to repair and improve local transportation infrastructure.	Sent to third reading

SBX1 6 (Runner R)	Would delete the continuous appropriations from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for the high-speed rail project.	No action
SBX1 7 (Allen)	Would, as of July 1, 2016, increase the additional sales and use tax rate on diesel fuel to 5.25%.	No action
SBX1 8 (Hill D)	This bill would continuously appropriate 20% of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund annual proceeds to the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program, and 10% of those annual proceeds to the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program.	No action
SBX1 9 (Moorlach R)	This bill would prohibit Caltrans from using any nonrecurring funds, including, but not limited to, loan repayments, bond funds, or grant funds, to pay the salaries or benefits of any permanent civil service position within the department.	Failed in Senate Transportation 3-9
SBX1 10 (Bates R)	This bill would revise the process for programming and allocating the 75% share of state and federal funds available for regional transportation improvement projects.	Hearing postponed by committee
SBX1 11 (Berryhill R)	This bill would extend the current CEQA exemption for a project or an activity to repair, maintain, or make minor alterations to an existing roadway until January 1, 2025, and deletes the limitation of the exemption to projects or activities in cities and counties with a population of less than 100,000 persons.	First hearing canceled at the request of author
SBX1 12 (Runner R)	Would exclude the California Transportation Commission from the Transportation Agency, establish it as an entity in state government, and require it to act in an independent oversight role.	Approved by Senate Transportation, sent to appropriations
SBX1 13 (Vidak R)	Would create the Office of the Transportation Inspector General in state government as an independent office that would not be a subdivision of any other government entity, to ensure that all state agencies expending state transportation funds are operating efficiently, effectively, and in compliance with federal and state laws.	Approved by Senate Transportation, sent to appropriations
SBX1 14 (Canella R)	Extends existing P3 authority indefinitely.	First hearing canceled at the request of author
SCAX1 1 (Huff R)	Would prohibit the Legislature from borrowing revenues from fees and taxes imposed by the state on vehicles or their use or operation, and from using those revenues other than as specifically permitted by Article XIX.	Testimony taken. Hearing postponed by committee

### Other Bills

AB 194 (Support) by Assembly Member Frazier that authorizes regional transportation agencies and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to develop high-occupancy toll lanes and other toll facilities without limitation.

### Appointments

Governor Brown has made the following appointments:

As Chief Counsel at the California Department of Transportation: **Jeanne Scherer Dixon**, Acting Chief Counsel since 2014 and deputy chief counsel since 2012.

Senate Rule Committee made the following appointment:

To Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists: **Chelsea Esquibas**, Bakersfield, workforce development administrator for Goodwill Industries of South Central CA. Term ends June 30, 2019.

### Recent Reports

**UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences** released *Economic Analysis of the 2015 Drought for California Agriculture*. "The UC Davis team used computer models and the latest estimates of surface water availability from state and federal water projects and local water districts. They forecast several drought-related impacts in the state's major agricultural regions for the current growing season.... The direct costs of drought to agriculture will be \$1.84 billion for 2015. The total impact to all economic sectors is an estimated \$2.74 billion, compared with \$2.2 billion in 2014. The state's farmers and ranchers currently receive more than \$46 billion annually in gross revenues, a small fraction of California's \$1.9 trillion-a-year economy.... Net water shortages of 2.7 million acre-feet will cause roughly 542,000 acres to be idled—114,000 more acres than

the researchers' 2014 drought estimate. Most idled land is in the Tulare Basin."

**TRIP** released *Bumpy Roads Ahead: America's Roughest Rides and Strategies to Make Our Roads Smoother*. "In this report, TRIP examines the condition of the nation's major urban roads, including pavement condition data for America's most populous urban areas, recent trends in travel, the latest developments in repairing roads and building them to last longer, and the funding levels needed to adequately address America's deteriorated roadways.... More than a quarter of the nation's major urban roads are rated in substandard or poor condition, providing motorists and truckers with a rough ride and increasing the cost of operating a vehicle." San Francisco—Oakland area leads Top 25 urban regions with 74% of major roads and highways in poor condition.

**Center for Energy Policy and the Environment at the Manhattan Institute** released *Less Carbon, Higher Prices: How California's Climate Policies Affect Lower-Income Residents*. "By 2020, California will require that one-third of electricity consumed in the state be generated from renewable sources. California has also pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. This paper examines the Golden State's history of renewable-energy mandates, as well as its carbon cap-and-trade program; its tiered system of electricity pricing; how prices vary by county; and the impact of energy prices on households." The paper suggests that rising prices have created an energy tax that is regressive and facilitates "energy poverty" (i.e., energy expenditures exceeding 10% of household income). To correct this situation, it suggests a cost-benefit review and changes to the state's tariff structure.

**Environmental Science & Technology** released *Metrics for Assessing the Quality of Groundwater Used for Public Supply, CA, USA: Equivalent-Population Area*. "Data from 11,000 public supply wells in 87 study areas were used to assess the quality of nearly all of the groundwater used for public supply in California. Two metrics were developed for quantifying groundwater quality: area with high concentrations (km<sup>2</sup> or proportion) and equivalent-population relying upon groundwater with high concentrations (number of people or proportion). Concentrations are considered high if they are above a human-health benchmark.... On a statewide-scale, about 20% of the groundwater used for public supply has high concentrations for one or more constituents (23% by area and 18% by equivalent-population)."

The **California Office of Traffic Safety** released *Observational Study of Cell Phone and Texting Use Among California Drivers 2015 and Comparison to 2011 through 2014 Data*. This California study looks at distracted driving caused by electronic devices used by drivers. Factors such as gender, location, age of driver, time of observation, region, presence of children, passenger and vehicle characteristics are considered. Overall, distracted driving due to device use has increased by 1.6% since 2014. Holding a phone to the ear (0.6%), use of a headset (0.5%), and manipulating a handheld

device (1.1%) also increased. More males in suburban areas and in the 16-24 age range used electronic devices when driving. Drivers in the Central region were observed using fewer electronic devices, whereas drivers in the Southern region used more of them.

**Dept. of Water Resources** has released "Perspectives and Guidance for Climate Change Analysis" by its Climate Change Technical Advisory Group, discusses "the scientific aspects of climate change" and "its impact on water resources," recommendations include using "several simulations" from global climate models for use in planning studies, which would help account for "the range and uncertainty of future climate projections."

**Air Resources Board** has released results from the Aug. 18 cap-and-trade auction, the state's 12th and the fourth held jointly with Quebec; 73,429,360 "2015 Vintage" credits sold at \$12.52 and 10,431,500 "2018 Vintage" credits sold at \$12.30.

**State Water Resources Control Board** has released its water conservation data for July, finds "California water use drops 31.3%" exceeding Gov. Brown's 25% mandate for second month in a row; also says the amount of water saved in July 2015 (74.6 billion gallons) is more than four times the amount of water saved in July 2014 (18.0 billion gallons), when the State's voluntary 20 percent conservation goal was in effect.

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**Reminder:**

*Copy deadline for the November 2015 issue is October 1, 2015; copy  
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