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# Los Angeles Section

## *Monthly: Est. 1913*

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### *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

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



### **Membership Has Its Privileges – And Responsibilities**

The Los Angeles Section is one of the largest geographic Sections in the American Society of Civil Engineers – we regularly trade the honor of being the largest section in the Society with the Texas Section, which encompasses that entire State, whereas we are but one of four Sections that make up Region Nine, covering all of California. ASCE's National headquarters staff does a marvelous job of helping us keep track of our diverse membership, providing us with a massively detailed (and carefully secured) spreadsheet containing detailed information about our 8,000+ members, including contact information, membership history, and a wealth of related data. The Society is, of course, a non-profit membership organization, with the lion's share of operating expenses coming from annual dues, voluntary contributions and other payments made by its members. Costs incurred by the Society and by its numerous sub-groups – the ten Regions, the Sections, their individual Branches, the Younger Member Forums, Student Chapters, Technical Forums, etc. are significant. The National office in Reston, VA has over 200 full-time employees.

The Los Angeles section is perhaps typical of many of the other geographical sections; we contract with Gayle Stewart Enterprises for a full suite of services that contribute to the smooth day-to-day operations of the Section. Ms. Stewart's staff has assisted the Section for many years, and provides a level of continuity and institutional knowledge that would be difficult or impossible to achieve in an organization like ours where the leadership progresses and changes annually.

Many of our Branches also incur administrative costs, with the scope of paid staff assistance dependent largely upon membership size, but also upon the changing circumstances of the individual volunteer members who happen to hold volunteer positions at any one time. One Branch had contracted for years with a small company to publish and print their monthly newsletter. Recently, they realized that the skill and creativeness of their own Board members – and the availability of publishing software – would enable them to eliminate the publishing contract and publish the newsletter themselves. They still use the same contractor to maintain their mailing list, but they eliminated considerable expense by becoming their own publisher.

Returning to the question of costs and budgets – the Section and its Branches are largely at the mercy of ASCE National, which distributes dues according to definitive guidelines. We receive per-capita payments for each Section, Branch, YMF member, Student Chapter member etc., based upon paid dues. Therein lies the rub: not all members are as conscientious about paying their dues as the rest of us, and various levels of encouragement are required. Organizing and managing a follow-up system to encourage dues payments, answering questions about the benefits of membership, bringing marginally interested engineers back into the fold – all of these and more make

*continued on page 3*

# Hot Topics in Transportation Engineering in California

by David M. Schwegel, P.E., Region 9 Transportation Committee Chair



The ASCE Region 9 Transportation Committee has been collaborating with several agencies in connection with organizing the 2016 California Infrastructure Symposium & Region 9 Awards Dinner event to be held on March 18 at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento. Based on this collaboration, these four hot topics were identified and will be highlighted at the event:

**1. Intercity and Commuter Rail:** This topic refers to the statewide-integrated passenger rail network. The High Speed Rail Authority ([www.hsr.ca.gov](http://www.hsr.ca.gov)) is vetting 36 expressions of interest from engineering firms worldwide to define contracting opportunities and refine project milestones moving forward. Their 2016 Business Plan comes out in February. The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), the provider of passenger rail service between Auburn and San Jose via Sacramento and Oakland, was identified as an *Infrastructure Report Card (2013)* ([www.infrastructurereportcard.org](http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org)) success story based on its ability to successfully integrate multiple agencies. As a result, the Amtrak Capitol Corridor has the third highest ridership and highest on-time performance in the nationwide Amtrak system. A "third track" project is underway along an 18-mile portion of the Capitol Corridor that would result in a 10-fold increase in round-trip trains between Sacramento and Roseville. The Golden 1 Center opens in October in downtown Sacramento. The Sacramento Regional Transit is upgrading light rail service to encourage use by patrons traveling to and from events at this venue, especially Sacramento Kings basketball games.

**2. Connectivity and Economic Prosperity:** This topic refers to development around stations to encourage mass transit use while stimulating the local economy. The San Francisco's Transbay Center ([www.transbaycenter.org](http://www.transbaycenter.org)), scheduled to open in 2017, is a "living example" that is bringing nearly two-dozen new high rises (including San Francisco's tallest) to the station area. Innovative planning is essential to ensure that station cities become "robust job centers" and not "bedroom communities" while avoiding the unintended consequence of "gentrification" (pricing out lower income households) in the station area. Roseville has a constrained downtown core divided by a large rail yard posing unique and innovative opportunities for redefining the core to accommodate a projected significant increase in passenger rail traffic. The Sacramento region can learn about effective practices for establishing a strong connection between investing in transportation infrastructure and stimulating the economy from recent successes in Phoenix. The station area development topic will also be deeply explored at a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Conference, May 3-5, at Los Angeles Metro Headquarters ([www.tod.org](http://www.tod.org)).

**3. Regional Roadways and Aviation:** This topic focuses on how regional roadway and aviation concepts in the local Sacramento

region can be applied statewide. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) ([www.sacog.org](http://www.sacog.org)) has a Rural Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) identifying options for strengthening the ties between urban and rural interests. The \$1.1 billion "Big Build" Terminal B project opened at the Sacramento International Airport in October 2011, paving the way for additional connectivity options such as increasing mass transit options to downtown. The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) is able to use a massive interchange improvement project to encourage voters to approve a half-cent sales tax measure this November. This project would result in significant mobility improvements over the current congested and collision prone SR 65/I-80 interchange.

**4. Transportation Funding:** This topic ties into ASCE's Grand Challenge of closing the ever-widening gap between infrastructure needs and available funding by "reducing the life-cycle cost of infrastructure by 50% within 10 years". Caltrans can build on its recent successes of delivering high-profile highway improvement projects such as the SR 65 Lincoln Bypass (the longest new stretch of state highway in decades) and the Highway 101 Willits Bypass projects. The "big picture" in statewide infrastructure investment can be explored to discover the transportation funding limitations under current law, the history of transportation funding in California, and possible fixes. The prospect of a road charge could be explored among the options for more sustainable funding streams to the gas tax and the general fund. The *Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment* provides insight on the vital role that local roads play in the larger statewide system.

ASCE Members statewide are always encouraged to collaborate with like-minded professionals both within and beyond the Civil Engineering profession. Specifically, members are encouraged to explore these hot topics more deeply at the 2016 California Infrastructure Symposium on March 18 where subject matter experts will be addressing each one in depth. Water resources engineers will have their own parallel track with its own set of hot topics. For more information on ASCE's Grand Challenge, visit <http://blogs.asce.org/a-challenge-for-the-profession/>. For more information on the Symposium including the presenters on these and other hot topics, and to register to attend the Symposium, visit [www.cais16.org](http://www.cais16.org).



up the job description of the Section's Membership Chair, and his counterparts in the seven branches.

Our previous Membership Chair, Darwin Vargas, was transferred by his employer, CALTRANS, to Sacramento. Our loss will undoubtedly be the Sacramento Section's gain. But we are very fortunate to have identified Darwin's successor. Ziad Mazboudi is a long time ASCE member, past-president of the Orange County Branch in 2010-2011, recently returned from a year-long assignment in the Middle East, and currently employed by the City of Laguna Niguel. Ziad will be working closely with the Branch's local Membership Chairs, with a goal of making individual contact with as many members as possible, encouraging renewals and renewing interest.

At the same time, we hope he will be able to make progress in an even more difficult area, encouraging non-member Civil Engineers to join the Society. In the small community where I live and work, in southern Riverside County (it's small by Los Angeles standards, but the combined population of Temecula and Murrieta is larger than the State capitals of Idaho or Louisiana) there are many Civil Engineers in both public- and private-sector jobs who are not ASCE members. They have a multitude of reasons – too busy, too expensive, a lack of perceived benefits, membership is only valuable for those working for large companies, etc. Our obligation here is to assist these individuals in changing this perspective, in convincing them that they have a place in ASCE.

Please offer your assistance, to Ziad Mazboudi, to me, and to your Section and Branch Boards, in helping us to improve this membership situation, to our mutual benefit.

## A DIFFERENT PROBLEM

The Los Angeles Section and many of its branches over the years have accumulated a collection of certificates, award plaques and trophies of all sorts. We have received colorful proclamations from City Councils, Boards of Supervisors, the California Assembly and Senate recognizing our history, our accomplishments, all of the good things that we have done over the years as Civil Engineers. One Director of the Life Member Forum has a City proclamation hanging in his spare bedroom – because there is no other place to put it.

I recently attended a meeting at the Engineering Center in Boston. Housed in the Phillips-Winthrop House, designed by Charles Bullfinch in 1804, the classic red brick building's owners include the Boston Society of Civil Engineers Section of ASCE, the American Council of Engineering Societies of Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Association of Land Surveyors and Civil Engineers. This wonderful old building, facing Boston Commons across Beacon Street, provides ample space to house the collected memorabilia of its member organizations.

As an aside, the Boston Society of Civil Engineers predates ASCE by 4 years! Founded in 1848, it is the oldest engineering society in the United States. They may be older, but we're bigger.

Los Angeles being a City where landmarks are regularly scrapped (how many of us have had projects that we designed and shepherded through construction, replaced by something newer, larger, different, not necessarily better?), we're soliciting ideas. Where can we best house our collection of plaques and proclamations, someplace more accessible than the back room of one of our past Directors?

## ARTICLE

# ASCE Society Election Information

by Jay H Higgins, P.E., ENV SP, F.ASCE, Region 9 Director



As we gear up for the 2016 Society election, ASCE members are being reminded of the following important information:

**ELIGIBLE VOTERS:** Members at the grade of Associate, Member, Fellow or Dist.M.ASCE who are current on their membership dues as of March 15th are eligible to participate in the election. Institute only members are not eligible to vote. If a member pays dues or upgrades their membership after the March 15th deadline, they may not participate in this year's election. All transactions must be completed by close of business on March 15th.

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** Members should be sure they have a valid email address on file by March 15th in order to receive their voting credentials electronically.

**VOTER CREDENTIALS:** Election credentials will be sent to eligible voters by email on May 1, 2016. Times often the email message will go to the member's spam folder, so please set your email filters to allow ASCE email.

For members who do not have an email address, they will receive a letter from the election vendor with their voting credentials and instructions how to access the electronic ballot. Members who have not received voting credentials by May 2nd may contact ASCE Customer Service at 800/548-2723.

Eligible members who prefer a paper ballot should contact Patty Jones at pjones@asce.org by May 1st.

**ELECTION DATES:** The election will open at 12:59am Central time on May 1, 2016 and remain open until 5:00pm Central time on June 1, 2016.

**ELECTION RESULTS:** The election results will be released the afternoon of June 3, 2016.

# State Investments and Legislative Update

by Richard Markuson, CA Region 9 Legislative Advocate



The State Legislature is in month two of its 2016 session, and many infrastructure issues – including the transportation special session – are still pending.

The two special session transportation bills – ABX1 3 (Frazier) and SBX1 4 (Beall) that “declare the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to establish permanent, sustainable sources of transportation funding to maintain and repair highways, local roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure” remain in conference.

Assembly Transportation Chairman Jim Frazier introduced AB 1591 in the regular session that would create the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program to address deferred maintenance on the state highway system and the local street and road system. The bill would require the California Transportation Commission to adopt performance criteria to ensure efficient use of the funds available for the program.

Republican Mark Steinorth is the author of AB 1569 that would exempt from CEQA a project, or the issuance of a permit for a project, that consists of the inspection, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, replacement, or removal of, or the addition of an auxiliary lane or bikeway to, existing transportation infrastructure and that meets certain requirements.

Senate Republicans have introduced three transportation measures. SB 901 (Bates) would create the Advanced Mitigation Program in Caltrans to implement environmental mitigation measures in advance of future transportation projects. The bill would require the department to set aside certain amounts of future appropriations for this purpose. SB 902 (Cannella), Current law until January 1, 2017, provides that the State of California consents to the jurisdiction of the federal courts with regard to the compliance, discharge, or enforcement of the responsibilities the Department of Transportation assumed as a participant in the surface transportation project delivery program. SB 902 extends that waiver until January 1, 2021. SB 903 (Nguyen) Would acknowledge, as of June 30, 2015, \$879,000,000 in outstanding loans of certain transportation revenues, and would require this amount to be repaid from the General Fund by June 30, 2016, to the Traffic Congestion Relief Fund for allocation to the Traffic Congestion Relief Program, the Trade Corridors Improvement Fund, the Public Transportation Account, and the State Highway Account, as specified.

Assemblyman Jimmy Gomez amended AB 581 to require all river, lake, stream, coastal water, and watershed protection and restoration projects that receive state funds from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1) to post signs acknowledging state support of the project. Prop 1 made nearly \$1.5 billion available for competitive grants for multi-benefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects. While there

is a general assertion in Proposition 1 that all projects receiving Proposition 1 support acknowledge the state as a source of funds there are no requirements or guidelines on how to do so.

Assemblyman Devin Mathis introduced several water bills including: AB 1586 that would prohibit a court, in an action or proceeding brought alleging a violation of CEQA, from staying or enjoining the construction or operation of the Temperance Flat Reservoir unless the court makes either of the following findings: (A) The continued construction or operation of the project presents an imminent threat to public health and safety. (B) The project site contains unforeseen important Native American artifacts or unforeseen important historical, archaeological, or ecological values that would be materially, permanently, and adversely affected by the continued construction or operation of the project unless the courts stays or enjoins the construction or operation of the project; AB 1587 that, in implementing the competitive grants in Prop 1, for those projects that develop and implement groundwater planning requirements, would require special consideration be given to those projects that would create groundwater recharge basins in areas of fallow farmland. This bill would appropriate \$50,000,000 from the proceeds of the bond act for the purpose of that competitive grant program; AB 1588 that would require the State Water Resources Control Board to establish a program to provide low-interest loans and grants to local agencies for low-interest loans and grants to eligible applicants for specified purposes relating to drinking water and wastewater treatment. This bill would create the Water and Wastewater Loan and Grant Fund and provide that the moneys in this fund are available to the board for expenditure to the program. This bill would transfer to the Water and Wastewater Loan and Grant Fund \$20,000,000 from the General Fund; AB 1589 that would, for the duration of a state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor due to drought, flood, or fire, exempt from the requirements of CEQA projects that are undertaken, carried out, or approved by a public agency to mitigate the effects of, or conditions caused by, drought, flood, or fire; and AB 1590 that would require that an additional four members be appointed to the State Water Resources Control Board by the Legislature. The bill would require that one member each be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, the Assembly Minority Leader, the President pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Senate Minority Leader.

Assembly Member Waldron introduced AB 1647, a bill that exempts from CEQA, projects to expand the storage capacity of an existing surface water storage facility, or to replace an existing surface water storage facility, that is owned and operated by a public entity if that public entity adopts, by resolution, findings and declarations that the project meets specified criteria.

Assemblyman Rudy Salas introduced AB 1649 that states the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to ensure surface water storage is funded and built consistent with the goals of Proposition 1 and that the commission fulfills the original intent of the water storage project provisions of Proposition 1. The bill would make findings and

declarations of the Legislature, including, but not limited to, that, of the water storage projects available, the Temperance Flat Dam and Sites Reservoir will meet statewide goals and provide those specified public benefits to the greatest extent.

Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell is author of AB 1657 that would establish the Zero- and Near-Zero-Emission Intermodal Terminals Program to be administered by the State Air Resources Board to fund equipment upgrades and investments at intermodal terminals to help transition the state's freight system to be zero-emission and near-zero-emission operations. The bill would authorize the program to be implemented with moneys from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. This bill contains other related provisions and other existing laws

Senator Jerry Hill introduced SB 814 that would declare that excessive water use, as defined by each urban retail water supplier, is a waste or unreasonable use of water. This bill would prohibit excessive water use by a residential customer and would make a violation of this prohibition an infraction punishable by a fine of at least \$500 per 100 cubic feet of water used above the excessive water use definition in a billing cycle.

#### Appointments

**Senate Rules** appointed to *California High-Speed Rail Authority*: Lorraine Paskett, Los Angeles, attorney and CEO of Cambridge LCF Group, Lavette Properties, and Paskett Winery. Term ends December 31, 2020.

**Speaker Toni Atkins** appointed to *California High-Speed Rail Authority*: **Bonnie Lowenthal**, Long Beach, unemployed, she replaces Vice-Chair Thea Selby effective January 27.

#### Recent Reports

**The California State Auditor** released [Central Basin Municipal Water District: Its Board of Directors Has Failed to Provide the Leadership Necessary for It to Effectively Fulfill Its Responsibilities](#). The California State Auditor's recent audit of the Central Basin Municipal Water District determined that executive management instability, a lack of essential policies, loss of liability coverage, improper establishment of a legal trust fund, questionable contracting policies, spending unrelated to its mission, and a lack of adherence to hiring policies—all due to a lack of poor management by the Board—have rendered the district unable to fulfill its responsibilities. The report summarizes the situation and offers recommendations for improvement of the situation to get the Board back on a proper track.

**UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies** released [A Global High Shift Cycling Scenario: The Potential for Dramatically Increasing Bicycle and E-bike Use in Cities Around the World, with Estimated Energy, CO<sub>2</sub>, and Cost Impacts](#). "Cycling plays a major role in personal mobility around the world, but it could play a much bigger role. Given the convenience, health benefits, and affordability of bicycles, they could provide a far greater proportion of urban passenger transportation, helping reduce energy use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions worldwide. This report presents a new look at the future of cycling for urban transportation (rather than recreation), and the potential contribution it could make to mobility as well as sustainability. The results show that a world with a dramatic increase in cycling could save society US\$24 trillion cumulatively between 2015 and 2050, and cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from urban passenger transport by

nearly 11% in 2050 compared to a High Shift scenario without a strong cycling emphasis."

**California Water Foundation** released [Transitioning to Sustainability: Modeling Groundwater Sustainability in the Kings-Tulare Lake Region](#). This study analyzes the groundwater sub-basins located within Tulare, Kings, and Fresno counties. Data modeling reveals the complex and interdependent nature of water exchange between the sub-basins over an 88-year period. Using longitudinal data from the Department of Water Resources and regional water agencies, the study concludes that the sub-basins have been consistently overdrafted for decades, because the extraction of water exceeds the recharge of water back into the sub-basins. To achieve stable groundwater elevation, the study recommends a reduction in groundwater extraction by 15-20%.

**Pacific Institute** released [Oil, Food, and Water: Challenges and Opportunities for California Agriculture](#). This study looks at the energy-food-water nexus in California through oil and gas exploration and production. It analyzes "the water-related interactions between oil and gas production and agriculture," and "describe(s) some of the water-related challenges that arise when these industries operate alongside one another." Also considered are concerns "related to emerging issues such as hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking." The authors found that unlined percolation pits are a significant risk to groundwater; injected wastewater potentially affects drinking, irrigation, and livestock water; and fracking chemicals have an unknown impact upon farmworkers, crops, and livestock.

**Governor's Office of Planning and Research** released [A Strategy for California @ 50 Million: Supporting California's Climate Change Goals](#). This report updates the 1978 Environmental Goals and Policy study entitled Urban Strategy for California, and revisits the strategy and advances a vision for California geared toward sustainable growth in anticipation of estimates suggesting the state will reach 50 million residents by 2050. The components of this vision include increasing the share of renewable energy; reducing petroleum use; increasing energy efficiency; reducing emissions; and stewarding natural resources. Goals for this strategy include: reduce land consumed for development, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and prioritize conservation of agricultural land.

## SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

### CALL FOR MEMBERS

[http://www.ascelasection.org/main/groups/sustainability\\_committee](http://www.ascelasection.org/main/groups/sustainability_committee)

Conference calls on every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month

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For more information please contact:  
Tyler Whaley, Sacramento Section Sustainability Committee, [tyler.whaley@kimley-horn.com](mailto:tyler.whaley@kimley-horn.com)

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