



DATE: April 11, 2017

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Alessio

SUBJECT: Council Recommendation to State Assembly Regarding AB 805 (Gonzalez Fletcher)

As the City's primary representative to the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) it has come to my attention that an Assembly Bill, AB 805 threatens the structure of SANDAG that would effectively end the ability of small cities such as La Mesa to have a voice in Regional planning and transportation issues that are decided at the SANDAG level.

17 of the 19 SANDAG member cities through their primary SANDAG representatives, including the entire County Board of Supervisors have voiced opposition to this bill. As written, it would re-structure SANDAG in a manner wherein the County of San Diego and City of San Diego would control SANDAG.

Therefore, to show unity with other member cities, I am requesting that La Mesa, the Council as a whole, officially oppose AB 805 as written and that the following letter be sent to the bill's author, Ms. Gonzalez Fletcher and every member of the California Senate.

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO AB 805 (Gonzalez-Fletcher)

The City Council of the City of La Mesa is opposed to your recently-introduced Assembly Bill (AB) 805, which would make substantive and unnecessary changes to the structure of the San Diego Association of Governments' (SANDAG) governing board and the voting process by which decisions are made at SANDAG, the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), and the North County Transit District (NCTD). It is our understanding that, among other requirements, AB 805 would impose the following:

- Require all votes to be weighted, based solely on population.
- Eliminate the requirement that allows for a majority vote of the members present to be considered.
- Delete the requirement that no city receive more than 40% of the weighted vote.
- Require SANDAG to hire an independent auditor (who would serve for a term of five years). The auditor would perform audits of the financial transactions report, expenditure plan, annual budget, and revenue forecasts.

- Require the Chair and Vice Chair of SANDAG to be the Mayors of the largest city and the second-largest city, who would alternate between serving as chairperson and vice chairperson for four-year terms.
- Require that the Mayor of each city serve on the Board of Directors, except in the case of the City of San Diego, where the Mayor and president of the City Council would serve.
- Require the chairperson of the County Board of Supervisors to serve on the Board.
- Require SANDAG to create an audit committee to direct and oversee the work of the auditor.
- Require submission of an annual report to the Legislature, developed by its transportation committee that outlines the public transit needs, transit funding, criteria, recommended transit funding levels, and additional work on public transit. The report will also specify the funds spent explicitly on public transportation.

La Mesa believes that this proposal significantly compromises the equitable distribution of authority for regional transportation funding and projects provided for under the current governing structure. As proposed, AB 805 would effectively turn SANDAG into an extension of the City of San Diego with the two largest cities (San Diego and Chula Vista) essentially running the organization without a need to consult and cooperate with other SANDAG member cities. Not only would this significantly limit any meaningful input and engagement of smaller cities such as Solana Beach in the discussion and outcome of important Board decisions, but it could also diminish and undermine the very participation of those cities in the decision-making process. This would then create an unfair advantage for San Diego and other large cities by focusing funding on projects in their communities rather than taking a more equitable, regional view.

Furthermore, the requirement that only the Mayor of each city attend the various Board meetings is not feasible for smaller cities where professional obligations, scheduling and other considerations make regular attendance more difficult. Cities with a rotating Mayor system would be further disadvantaged by the lack of continuity and consistency of representation from one year to the next.

La Mesa firmly believes that organizations work best when the people who are appointed are interested and passionate about their roles, rather than being obligated to participate. For example, the current Vice Chair of SANDAG is from the smallest City in the County and was selected based upon skill, leadership capabilities, and interest rather than a stipulated assignment imposed by the State.

For these reasons, the City of La Mesa opposes AB 805 as written.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Arapostathis, Mayor
Guy McWhirter, Vice Mayor
Kristine Alessio, Councilmember
Bill Baber, Councilmember
Colin Parent, Councilmember