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SECRETARY BONNER URGES ACCELERATED TIMETABLE FOR PROP. 1B FUNDS

Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Dale E. Bonner today called for immediate and bold action to accelerate the process to fund and deliver goods movement projects based on a statewide approach. He emphasized that the key will be continued collaboration with the California Transportation Commission, the Legislature, and regional/local transportation leaders to advance the goods movement agenda for the state as a whole.

"The Governor feels strongly that the goods movement transportation needs in California should be addressed from a statewide, systemic viewpoint so that bottlenecks are not simply shifted from one area to another. Highest priority should be given to projects that improve the statewide goods movement transportation system and achieve overall positive environmental impacts," Secretary Bonner said.

Under the Administration's proposal announced today, the transportation Commission would adopt a goods movement funding program by December 2007 instead of spring 2008. By moving the deadline up to December 2007, funding for many critical goods movement projects around the state would be ready to be included in the Governor's 2008-09 budget submission in January 2008. This would allow the Legislature to also review and support the various projects during the budget process next spring. If a goods movement program is not adopted by year's end, many crucial infrastructure projects may not be funded until the 2009-10 budget cycle.

The Administration's Goods Movement Action Plan (GMAP) released in January 2007 identifies priority projects and lays out a comprehensive plan to address California's present and future goods movement needs. In addition, the California Marine and Intermodal Transportation Advisory Council (CALMITSAC) report, mandated by the Legislature in 2004 and released in April 2007, endorsed a largely overlapping set of priority projects. Both reports recognize and incorporate material from related studies and place major emphasis on infrastructure improvements, environmental impacts and remedial strategies.

"Years of under-investment and rapidly increasing demand, combined with population and trade growth, have resulted in a growing backlog of needed investments in infrastructure and environmental mitigation for goods movement, a vitally important component of California's economic engine," Secretary Bonner added.

Congestion of California trade corridors not only has adverse effects on the state's economy by hindering its trade capabilities, but can also negatively impact the everyday lives of residents. Millions of Californians get stuck in traffic on a daily basis on roadways that were not designed to support the massive population growth the state has experienced.

Voters demonstrated their desire to improve California's infrastructure last November when they overwhelmingly approved Proposition 1B: Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, and Port Security Bond Act of 2006. Secretary Bonner wants to ensure the state will deliver results to all Californians in the most effective way possible.

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