

NEWS RELEASE

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Transportation Agency Releases Caltrans External Review

SACRAMENTO— The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) today released the external review of Caltrans it ordered last year—which has found that over the past decades the department has not kept pace with changes in transportation policy—and called for department reforms to modernize its mission, strengthen management and performance, and match investments and resources to the state’s policy goals.

“We asked for an honest assessment because we are committed to modernizing Caltrans and improving transportation for all Californians,” said CalSTA Secretary Brian Kelly “This report describes significant challenges that built up for decades at Caltrans and we are committed to facing those challenges proactively and taking action to deliver a modern transportation system that Californians deserve.”

State Smart Transportation Initiative (SSTI) from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, which wrote the assessment, conducted more than 100 interviews with Caltrans staff, stakeholders, partners and agency representatives. In general, reviewers found a need for significant improvement in the areas of vision and mission, aligning resources and skills to realize that vision, implementing management systems to achieve success, and improving communication with stakeholders.

“Most of the recommendations are not simple check-the-box action items, but calls for hard work of collaborating, rethinking and establishing a new course,” said SSTI reviewers.

“Fortunately other DOTs have worked through similar processes, and while their stories cannot simply be copied due to different policy surrounds and other issues, they can provide both information and inspiration as reform efforts proceed in California.”

The SSTI report explains how Caltrans led the nation during construction of the interstate system after World War II, but has not adapted to modern trends in transportation including local control, more efficient land use, and demands for more mobility choices.

“Climate change puts new demands on the state transportation system,” said Kelly. “More transportation choices, efficient land use, highway preservation, sustainable movement of people

and freight—these now are the order of the day. Caltrans must modernize its mission and describe its vision to deliver on these demands.”

In response to this report, CalSTA will work with Caltrans, SSTI and stakeholders to draft a new strategic plan that is consistent with state law and policy and that delivers a transportation system capable of meeting safety, sustainability and mobility objectives.

SSTI drew on the experience of multiple transportation industry experts, including the former Secretaries of Transportation from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and North Carolina. The SSTI report is available here: [SSTI Caltrans Review](#).

The California State Transportation Agency, which was launched July 1, 2013, is responsible for transportation-related departments within the state: Board of Pilot Commissioners, California Highway Patrol, California Transportation Commission, Department of Transportation, Department of Motor Vehicles, High-Speed Rail Authority, New Motor Vehicle Board and Office of Traffic Safety. The Agency was formed as part of Governor Brown’s Government Reorganization Plan, which became law in 2012. In June, the Agency announced \$87 million in new federally-funded traffic safety grants administered by the Office of Traffic Safety. Last year, the Agency formed the California Freight Advisory Committee to help determine the state’s plans for freight-related transportation investments in California. The Agency also formed the California Transportation Infrastructure Priorities Workgroup, which will help set priorities for transportation spending and explore long-term funding options to deliver California’s infrastructure needs. For more information, visit www.calsta.ca.gov.

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