

Sacramento Update

Coast Observations

At the end of a chaotic session, several other items also passed, which we will cover in an update in the next edition.

Here are the details we had at press time:

AB 888 DelaTorre Rail Air Pollution

Would authorize the South Coast air district to establish a railyard equipment emission reduction program. Would permit the district to adopt regulations requiring owner or lessee of any heavy-duty motor vehicle, nonroad engine, or nonroad vehicle to install retrofit controls or replace existing equipment with clean technologies to reduce emissions of air contaminants to the maximum extent feasible. Limited to vehicles or engines operated substantially in a railyard within the South Coast district, as determined by the district. The bill would delay implementation until January 1, 2008. **Status:** in Senate Appropriations.

AB 1157 Frommer Rail Safety and Traffic Mitigation Bond Act of 2006

This bill would state intent of the Legislature to put a \$500 million general obligation bond initiative on the ballot to fund elimination of the most dangerous railroad-highway grade crossings in the state, as identified by the Public Utilities Commission, with funds to be allocated by the California Transportation Commission. **Status:** referred a second time to Committee on Housing and Transportation.

AB 1699 Frommer Push-Pull Study

Under existing law, federal agencies regulate rail safety and equipment issues. Existing law limits the Public Utilities Commission's responsibilities relative to railroad safety. Under existing law Caltrans funds the UC Institute of Transportation Studies (ITS) for research. This bill requires Caltrans to contract with ITS to conduct a study of the safety of push-pull commuter rail and intercity rail passenger operations in California, and sets a delivery date of June 1, 2008. TRAC was active in turning this bill from a prohibition of push-pull to a safety study. **Status:** in Senate Appropriations

AB 1935 Bermudez Railroads:

maintenance and safety Would require that inspection of railroad locomotives, equipment, and facilities occur not less frequently than every 120 days, and commencing July 1, 2008, in addition to those minimum inspections, that the Public Utilities Commission conduct focused inspections, as prescribed, of railroad yards and track, either in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration, or as the commission determines to be necessary. **Status:** Senate Appropriations. Bill passed out of Transportation and Housing on 08/08. Bill has not received a single NO vote.

SB 760 Lowenthal Port Congestion Relief

This bill would impose a fee of \$30 per twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) on each shipping container processed at the Ports of Los Angeles or Long Beach, payable by each marine terminal operator to the port. The bill would require ports to retain 1/3 of the funds and transmit half the remainder to a new Port Congestion Relief Trust Fund, and half to the South Coast Air district. Ports can use their 1/3 only for projects to improve the security of the port in consultation with federal security authorities. Moneys transmitted to the congestion fund are for expenditure by the California Transportation Commission only for projects to improve the rail system moving cargo to and from the ports. The bill would prohibit loans or transfers of port congestion funds to the General Fund or use for highways. The bill would require the CTC to consult with LACTC, OCTA, and Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura county agencies on project selection. The bill would require the South Coast air district to use its share to mitigate pollution caused by port traffic via all surface modes. Sanctioned proj-

ects include reducing emissions at ports. The bill would establish a state-mandated local program by imposing these additional duties upon the ports and the district. **Status:** passed by Assembly 8/30/06; to Senate

SB 1010 Florez Shafter Rail Service This bill would authorize the City of Shafter to establish a separate governing body for the purpose of operating an intermodal rail facility within the City of Shafter and to obtain financing, or enter into other leases or contracts relating to the financing, construction, operation, or use of an intermodal rail facility, subject to certain conditions and requirements. The bill would require the City of Shafter to use all revenues received from the operations of an intermodal rail facility solely for public or municipal purposes, as defined. **Status:** passed by Senate 8/21/2006, on Governor's desk.

SB 1384 Kuehl Los Angeles-Exposition Line light rail project.

This bill would require the construction authority, upon allocation of federal, state, and local funds by the LACMTA for these purposes, to conduct environmental studies in addition to the financial studies and the planning and engineering necessary for completion of the project. The bill would authorize members or employees of certain local government authorities that appoint members to the construction authority to also be appointed as members of the board of the construction authority. The bill would revise the provisions requiring the LACMTA to enter into an agreement with the construction authority to hold in trust certain property and assets. The bill would require the LACMTA to assume responsibility for operating the project upon completion of the project or any of its phases. **Status:** passed by Senate 8/29/2006, on Governor's desk.

SB 1611 Simitian Congestion Fees

This bill would authorize a congestion management agency, or where none exists, boards of supervisors, to place a majority vote ballot measure before the voters of a county authorizing an annual fee of up to \$25 on each motor vehicle registered within the county for transportation projects and programs with a relationship or benefit to the persons paying the fee. The bill would require the ballot measure resolution to be adopted by a majority vote of the board at a noticed public hearing and require the resolution to contain a specified finding of fact. The bill would require the DMV, if requested, to collect the fee and distribute the proceeds, to the agency or the board of supervisors, as appropriate. **Status:** second hearing set.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 123 Florez Joint High-speed Rail Committee

This measure would establish, until December 31, 2008, the Joint Legislative Committee on High-Speed Trains, composed of 5 Senators and 5 Members of the Assembly, to hold public hearings to receive public comment and review the work of the High-Speed Rail Authority and the plans for a high-speed train system in California. The measure would prescribe the powers and duties of the committee and would authorize the Senate and Assembly Rules Committees to make money available to the Joint Committee. **Status:** Read and adopted 8/22/2006 (Ayes 31, Noes 3.) On Assembly floor.

Senate Joint Resolution 13 Escutia

Railroad Safety This measure would urge the President and the Congress of the United States to amend the Federal Railroad Safety Act to allow state and local regulation, so long as the state or local regulation does not conflict with federal law, nor impose an unreasonable burden on interstate commerce. **Status:** Signed by Governor, Chaptered by the Secretary of State, Chapter Number 112, Statutes of 2006

THE BRITISH AIR SECURITY CRISIS caused a local travel surge, as Britons stayed closer to home. Richard Dyer, an aviation activist for UK Friends of the Earth, told the Guardian: "As well as helping reduce global warming it will benefit our economy. We spend £15bn more overseas on holidays than we earn from tourism in the UK." UK Friends of the Earth urged travellers to replace air journeys with train travel. Eurostar said bookings were up 27 per cent last year and West Coast mainline train operator Virgin reported extra demand... **CAPITOL CORRIDOR** service went to 16 trains each way weekdays between Oakland and Sacramento on August 28, a new high point for California intercity service. Only Caltrain and Metrolink's San Bernardino line have more frequent service on railroads. Reliability has turned out to be very good, especially for a new schedule, a real accomplishment for the CCJPA... **NEW RAIL2BUS2RAIL** connection links three ACE and San Joaquin schedules in Stockton with a bus shuttle from August 28. It is a valiant effort at collaboration, but real ridership growth from Amtrak-ACE connections will not occur until the trains actually share a station, hopefully within a year or two?... **IN OCEANSIDE**, NCTD unveiled its first Sprinter Diesel multiple unit train, which uses Siemens European technology. The Sprinter will run on a 22-mile existing freight line between Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos and Escondido. Capable of 55 mph, the car will more stops in less time than the existing express bus and can still save riders 16 minutes, making the trip between Oceanside and Escondido in just under an hour... **WANT A CHEAPER TICKET** between the Bay Area and Los Angeles? The single-connection Pacific Surfliner bus-train is as much as \$15 cheaper than the double-bus connection San Joaquin service, and matches the speed between SF/San Jose and Los Angeles. It is no surprise the bus is setting ridership records... **HISTORIC HIGH** San Joaquin fares powered by Amtrak yield management software held down ridership gains in July, despite record gasoline prices. The problem seems to be fleet capacity. Typically, 27 cars are on the San Joaquin and 37 on the Capitols. This appears to violate the agreement for a 50/50 split of the fleet signed by Caltrans and the Capitol Corridor, but who's counting besides squeezed and gouged San Joaquin passengers?... **SPEAKING OF GOUGING**, 2nd Quarter 2006 oil company profit reports included: ExxonMobil \$10.36B, BP \$7.27B, Royal Dutch Shell \$6.3B, ConocoPhillips \$5.19B, Chevron \$4.35B... **LIGHT RAIL TRACK** is approaching Sacramento Amtrak station, and Regional Transit hopes for a November service start for the long awaited direct connection. Some observers believe the new link could produce as much as a 25 percent increase in Amtrak ridership, as the station is currently very hard to access as a pedestrian or driver... **JUST AS THE TRAINS** get close, some forces want to break up the connection. Union Pacific and its developer client Thomas Enterprises are eager to move the Amtrak tracks away from the light rail connection before passengers get comfortable with the arrangement, perhaps as soon as a year from now...