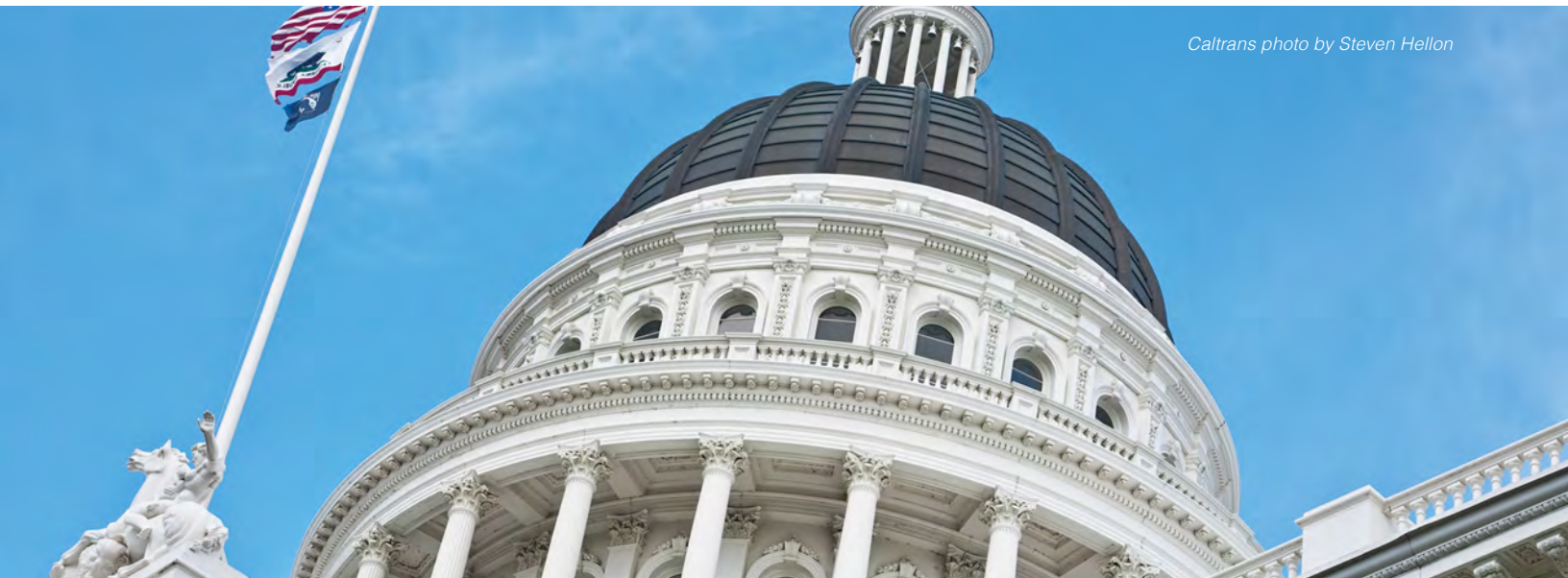


New Laws Lineup

Bills Focus on Transportation Issues



Caltrans photo by Steven Hellon

On New Year's Day, hundreds of bills passed during the 2015-16 legislative session that will become law. Here are some of the more important pieces of legislation affecting transportation that will take effect Jan. 1, 2017.

AB 1549 (Wood) – *Rural Broadband*

This bill requires Caltrans, via its website, to notify broadband companies of projects Caltrans is planning that could be suitable for installing conduits to house fiber optic cables. In addition, the bill directs Caltrans to develop guidelines to facilitate access to information on existing facilities and collaboration on future projects.

AB 1613 (Committee on Budget) – *Budget Act of 2016*

This bill continues the support of the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (cap and trade) with an appro-

priation of \$135 million from the Fund, and adds the Active Transportation Program as a recipient of cap and trade funds with an appropriation of \$10 million (see story, page 35). Both appropriations are for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

AB 2087 (Levine) – *Regional conservation strategies*

This bill establishes a pilot program for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to provide environmental mitigation credits for eight regional conservation investment strategies to public agencies for environmental conservation and rehabilitation work for future projects, subject to certain conditions relating to regional conservation plans, until Jan. 1, 2020.

AB 2126 (Mullin) – Construction Manager/General Contractor (CMGC) projects

This bill doubles, from six to 12, the number of projects where Caltrans may use the Construction Manager/General Contractor contracting method. This method is intended to reduce project costs by incorporating contractor input and ideas during the design phase of a project, which minimizes delays during construction.

AB 2289 (Gatto) – SHOPP

The repair and rehabilitation of existing state highways is funded through the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP). This bill clarifies that this funding may be used for projects that enhance the operation of current state highways.

AB 2542 (Gatto) – Reversible lanes

This bill requires any state or local automobile capacity increasing project or highway realignment project approved by the California Transportation Commission to have considered reversible lanes in the design of the project.

AB 2620 (Dababneh) – Prop 116 funds reallocation

The Clean Air and Transportation Improvement Act of 1990 (Proposition 116) provided bond funds for certain, specified passenger rail projects, with the provision the Legislature could reallocate funds ultimately not used for the projects. This bill authorizes the California Transportation Commission to reallocate those unexpended funds to existing passenger rail services consistent with Proposition 116's intent and criteria.

AB 2800 (Quirk) – Climate change and infrastructure

This bill requires state agencies to consider expected climate change impacts when planning and designing state infrastructure projects. It creates a cross-department working group to provide recommendations to the Legislature on integrating scientific climate change data into the design of infrastructure projects by July 1, 2018.

SB 438 (Hill) – Earthquake early warning system

This bill creates the California Earthquake Early Warning Advisory Board (Board) within the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to support the development of the statewide earthquake early warning system. As transportation infrastructure is critical infrastructure, a representative of the Transportation Agency is part of this Board.

SB 824 (Beall) – Low Carbon Transit Operations Program revisions

This bill gives local transit operators added flexibility in their use of Low Carbon Transit Operations Program funds. Operators will be allowed to commit funds for projects beyond a single funding cycle, loan funds to or share funds with other local transit operators, and expand the types of projects eligible to receive Program funds.

SB 838 (Budget & Fiscal Review) – HOV/HOT lane green stickers

This bill removes the existing cap of 85,000 on the number of DMV issued green decals exempting plug in hybrid vehicles from occupancy requirements on carpool lanes, and provides discounts on state owned high occupancy toll lanes and state owned Bay Area toll bridges through the expiration of the program on Jan. 1, 2019. This bill also requires Caltrans to submit a report to the Legislature on the performance of the state's carpool and high-occupancy toll lanes by Dec. 1, 2017.