

A Pacific Institute Position Paper

The Pacific Institute opposes the California Transportation Commission's removal of air quality from the screening criteria used to guide distribution of \$2 billion in voter-approved, Proposition 1B Trade Corridor Improvement Funds (TCIF) funds. There are numerous legal, economic, and ethical reasons to consider air quality when distributing these funds.

Including air pollution as a screening criterion is the legislature's intent. The clear intent of the the TCIF creation legislation is that this funding should be spent in a manner that "reduces emissions of diesel particulate and other pollutant emissions." The State of California must therefore include air quality among the criteria for screening proposed TCIF projects.

Including air pollution as a screening criterion ensures air quality is not an afterthought. Projects must include air pollution prevention in the design stage and in the full cost estimate for the project in order to effectively improve air quality.

Including air pollution as a screening criterion is in line with Governor Schwarzenegger's Goods Movement Policy Statement. The preface to the Statement specifies "California's goods movement industry and infrastructure will be improved and expanded ... the improvements will be undertaken in a manner which will ... improve air quality and protect public health." Other concrete commitments in this plan include the concept of "simultaneous and continuous improvement," (page iv-3), and the concept that project funding must include mitigation funding internally (page vii-8).

Including air pollution as a screening criterion acknowledges the health impacts borne by Californians. Pollution from goods movement (diesel trucks, trains, ships, and machinery) is the single largest contributor to diesel pollution in California. Goods movement-related air pollution contributes to premature death, asthma, and respiratory disease; diminished childhood learning and school performance; and missed school and work days. These impacts undermine the economic benefits, and ultimately business interests in this state.

Including air pollution as a screening criterion help projects win local support. These projects also have tremendous potential to create to create win-win solutions, generating quality jobs while meeting the long-standing interests of community residents nearest goods movement hubs by cleaning up air pollution and reducing public health impacts.

Including air pollution as a screening criterion provides an opportunity to create high quality, safer jobs. Workers in jobs created by new infrastructure projects will be the greatest beneficiary of air pollution improvements in terms of occupational safety and health.

The Pacific Institute urges the CTC to include air pollution as a screening criterion for TCIF project selection. It is the voters' intent, and it is the right decision for the environment, our economy, and for all Californians.