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September 20, 2007

TO: Regional Transportation Planning Agencies

California statute requires each Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA) to adopt and submit an updated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to the California Transportation Commission (Commission) and the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) every four years in urban regions and every five years in non-urban regions (Pursuant to Government Code Section 65080 [c]). To ensure a degree of statewide consistency in the development of RTPs, the Commission is authorized under Government Code Section 14522 to prepare RTP Guidelines, in cooperation with the RTPAs and Caltrans. The Commission adopted these RTP Guidelines on September 20, 2007.

Along with the RTP Guidelines, the Commission adopted a policy, beginning with the 2002 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), requiring that an RTPA have a current RTP that addresses the requirements in the RTP Guidelines as a condition of accepting a Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) for inclusion in the STIP. A "current RTP" is an RTP adopted within four years of the date of the STIP adoption in urban regions and five years in non-urban regions.

These guidelines reflect new transportation planning requirements resulting from the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Several of the new items addressed in the 2007 RTP Guidelines include:

Project Estimate Costs – Transportation projects identified in the RTP must use "year of expenditure dollars" to reflect inflation rates and the estimated increased construction costs when the project will be built.

Consultation & Coordination – RTPs shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State and tribal wildlife, land management, resource agencies and regulatory agencies.

Identify Mitigation Activities – An RTP shall include a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James C. Ghielmetti".

JAMES C. GHIEMMETTI
Chair