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TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE 2025

*Steering Through the Fog of Uncertainty:  
How Fast and Far Can We Go?*

June 19-20

Claremont Hotel, Berkeley

*With the return of an invigorated Trump Administration, California will be challenged to find the fast lane as we navigate a shifting federal landscape. Add in our own looming legislative actions and ongoing regulatory challenges, there is a hanging fog of uncertainty that may slow California from moving forward decisively.*

*Our 2025 Transportation Conference will peer into this tule fog and consider California's opportunities to work with the federal government when possible and to go it alone when alternatives are needed. And in the absence of clarity or collaboration, we will explore what else can be done to get on the right track towards California's more affordable, cleaner, resilient, and functional transportation future.*

## THURSDAY, JUNE 19

### Skyline A

11:30 – 12:45pm	<b>Arrival</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Check-In at Skyline A</li> <li>▪ Lunch in Lobby Lounge and Bar</li> </ul>
12:45 – 1:00pm	<b>Welcome – Conference Overview and Roundtable Introductions</b>

Preview of conference topics, speakers, and goals

**Jay Hansen**, President & CEO, CFEE

1:00 – 2:15pm	<b><u>Session 1</u></b> <b>Who's at the Wheel and Who's Backseat Driving? Trump 2.0 and California's Outlook</b>
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As California and the second Trump Administration get to know each other again, big questions related to federal funding, state exemptions, and international tariffs will play out on different timelines in different venues. Our opening panel will examine several of these federal-state fault lines, discuss their impacts on California, and consider how we can adapt and hopefully navigate and benefit during these times of change.

- What federal funds have traditionally been available for California infrastructure and transportation initiatives? How is this changing in the Trump Administration? Are there new “strings attached?”
- What federal waivers has California received historically to set its own vehicle emissions standards? How might that change in the future? How can California prepare for the potential loss of such exemptions?
- What about tariffs? How are increased levies on certain imports affecting California's transportation system and economy more broadly? Are there ways California can benefit from these tariffs if we act strategically?
- On what issues can – and should – there be alignment between the Feds and California?
- How should the Legislature and Newsom Administration prioritize resources during this period of uncertainty? And when unproductive engagement with the Trump Administration occurs, how should California proceed?

**Vince Fong**, Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives

**James Hacker**, Undersecretary, California State Transportation Agency

2:15 – 2:30pm	<b>Break</b>
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2:30 – 4:00pm

**Session 2****The Road to Affordability - Potholes, Detours, and the Fast Lane**

Driving in California can be exhilarating and exhausting all in the same trip. The same goes for the public's take on transportation and funding. In the November 2024 survey by the Public Policy Institute of California, Californians identified "getting costs and inflation under control" as the top economic priority for the state. The transportation sector – with its high gasoline prices and money-intensive infrastructure – are a key piece of the affordability puzzle. What dynamics are affecting transportation affordability, and what options do we have for managing rising costs?

- What does the California and western fuels market look like? What is driving the change in prices for gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel?
- While key pillars of our state's decarbonization strategy, regulations like Cap and Trade and the Low Carbon Fuels Standard increase costs for Californians – can we mitigate these cost impacts without undermining critical carbon reduction priorities? If we don't successfully wrestle with the affordability challenge, will public opinion sour on our climate commitments?
- How are electricity rates – which are racing far past inflation in many parts of the state – affecting the transportation sector?
- Bang for the Buck: What current policies might have outlived their cost effectiveness such as the California's fuel blend requirements?

**Siva Gunda**, Vice Chair, California Energy Commission

**Zachary Leary**, Senior Director, California Policy, Western States Petroleum Assn.

**Daniel Barad**, Western States Policy Senior Manager, Union of Concerned Scientists

**Tom Knox**, Executive Director, Valley CAN

4:00 – 4:15pm

Break

4:15 – 5:30pm

**Session 3****Balancing Growth and Mobility and Consulting Fees: What Should Be Done with SB375 (2008) and SB743 (2013)?**

Passed nearly two decades ago, SB375 was supposed to deliver an enlightened framework for regional land use and transportation planning to better align and advance climate goals. For its part, SB743 updated CEQA so that vehicles miles traveled (VMT) was the key impact to mitigate when developing specific projects. Together, it was hoped these laws would provide complementary macro and micro mechanisms to improve transportation planning, create more livable communities, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

However, the reality of both laws has been a mixed bag. Do SB375 and SB743 just need some finetuning? Or is it time for major overhauls?

- How was SB375 supposed to function?
- What is complicating SB375 regulations for regional planning agencies?
- How do state laws passed in the intervening years complement and come into conflict with SB375 requirements?
- How does SB743 fit into this vision of balancing growth and project impacts?
- What does it mean to mitigate for vehicles miles traveled?
- What have we learned about the costs and benefits of mitigating for VMT since SB743 went into effect?
- How has the world changed since SB375 and SB743 were passed, and how should we take that into account when determining what, if any, changes need to be made?

**Sam Assefa**, Director, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

**Andrew Fremier**, Executive Director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission

**Kiana Valentine**, Executive Director, Transportation California

**Carter Rubin**, Director, State Transportation Advocacy, Climate & Energy, Natural Resources Defense Council

6:00pm

**CFFEE's Reception and Special Juneteenth Dinner – Recognizing Black Leaders in California Transportation – Meritage Room**

*Our reception will begin at 6:00pm in the Meritage room with dinner to follow. Please join us as we celebrate California's black leaders in transportation.*

**FRIDAY, JUNE 20****Skyline A**

<b>7:30 – 8:45am</b>	Breakfast – Skyline A
<b>8:45 – 10:15am</b>	<b><u>Session 4</u></b> <b>Natural Disasters and Climate Change: How Can We Prepare Our Infrastructure and Workforce?</b>

Since 1980, California has endured 50 different natural disasters that caused at least one billion dollars in damage. With increasing frequency, these severe events are interrupting the infrastructural arteries of the state that keep goods, services, and Californians on the move. What more can be done to affordably build resilient infrastructure and invest in the workforce who will be constructing, operating, and maintaining these facilities?

- What is the general condition of California infrastructure, ranging from highways to dams to energy systems and broadband networks?
- What does it look like when an extreme event – like the Los Angeles Fires – overwhelms a variety of critical facilities?
- What do acute stressors like high heat and flooding due to pavement? What about longer term risks to infrastructure like sea level rise?
- How do we retrofit and design new infrastructure to withstand the variety of natural disasters that California can throw at it?
- How are construction labor groups preparing to build and maintain projects that require more advanced performance standards?
- How is labor engaged to ensure best designs and a cost efficient, resilient product is built?
- How can we keep our workforce safe when they go to urgently repair infrastructure in an environment often still unsafe from the initial disaster?
- What about emergency planning and evacuation routes? How does that fit into the need to adapt infrastructure and resources to natural disasters?
- Many of the solutions to these questions are expensive! What financing mechanisms can the state and local governments leverage to pay for the increased costs that come from building more resilient infrastructure?
- Should we expect some cost savings on the back end if facilities can better endure the initial fire/flood/earthquake/mudslide? An ounce of prevention...

**Darnell Grisby**, Chair, California Transportation Commission and Senior Fellow, Beneficial State Foundation

**Joe Cruz**, Executive Director, California State Council of Laborers

**Gary Bradford**, Supervisor, Yuba County

**Peter van der Waart**, Executive Director, Meridiam

10:15 – 10:30am	Break
10:30 – 12:00pm	<b>Session 5</b> <b>Trucks and Planes and Really Big Boats: The Ongoing Challenge to Decarbonize and Improve Local Air Quality</b>

California had (still has?) big plans to fully decarbonize medium and heavy duty vehicles. Yet the loss of a federal waiver allowing state regulation on this fleet has left the market in limbo; operators, manufacturers, and fuel providers alike. At the same time, CARB is coordinating with domestic airlines to significantly increase the use of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). What is the updated strategy to transition these carbon-intensive machines to a cleaner fuel future? Ports are facing big challenges as well with global fleets that are resistant to hugely expensive, local upgrades and remodel requests.

- How is the loss of the federal waiver affecting investments in zero-emission truck manufacturing and infrastructure? Are companies delaying or canceling planned fleet transitions due to regulatory uncertainty?
- How are fuel providers of hydrogen, biomass, and electricity responding?
- Are there alternative funding mechanisms to support private investment in clean fleet technology?
- What new and re-emphasized policy tools is the Newsom Administration exploring to encourage the transition to cleaner trucks?
- What are “sustainable aviation fuels?” What are the costs and benefits of different types of SAF? How does it compare with traditional jet fuel?
- What in-state infrastructure do we currently have to create and transport SAF to airports?
- What changes might passengers notice as airlines transition to more sustainable fuels?

**Liane Randolph**, Chair, California Air Resources Board

**Julia Levin**, Executive Director, Bioenergy Association of California

**Samir Sheikh**, Executive Director, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

**Kevin Welsh**, Vice President of Environmental Affairs and Chief Sustainability Officer at Airlines for America

12:00pm	Closing Remarks and Adjournment
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