

PRIORITY FOCUS



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LEAGUE SPONSORS LEGISLATION FOR FEDERAL ENERGY BLOCK GRANT DISTRIBUTION TO CALIFORNIA CITIES

Assembly Member Anna Caballero (D-Salinas) introduced AB 2176 on Feb. 20, which would aid in distribution of federal funds to cities and counties through the Energy Efficiency Block Grant (EEBG) program. This measure is sponsored by the League. *For more, see Page 2.*

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JOINT SENATE AND ASSEMBLY HEARING ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The Senate and Assembly held a joint hearing on transportation funding issues on Tuesday, Feb. 26. The hearing focused on the January 2008 report produced by the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission regarding recommendations for the next federal transportation reauthorization. *For more, see Page 2.*

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WORKSHOPS ACROSS THE STATE OFFERED ON CEQA AND CLIMATE CHANGE First Workshop: Oakland, March 20

City officials are cordially invited to attend one of five workshops this spring on the relationship between the California Environmental Protection Act (CEQA) and climate change. The daylong workshop, titled CEQA and Climate Change: Partnering with Local Agencies, will be held in five different cities between March 20 and May 23. *For more, see Page 2.*

'Energy Block Grants' Continued from Page 1...

The EEBG program is part of the Energy Independence and Security Act (H.R. 6), which President Bush signed into law in December 2007. The program would provide cities with federal funding for innovative practices to improve energy efficiency, lower energy usage and reduce fossil fuel emissions. Although H.R. 6 authorizes \$10 billion (\$2 billion per year 2008-2012), the funds need to be appropriated by Congress each year as part of the federal budget process.

H.R. 6 splits up the \$2 billion annual allocation into four different funding pots: 68 percent is designated for cities and counties (local government pot), 28 percent for states (state pot), 2 percent for Indian tribes, and 2 percent for competitive grants to local governments or a consortia of local governments who are ineligible for funding out of the other funding streams.

Cities with a population of 35,000 or more, and counties with a population of 200,000 or more (as well as the top 10 most populous cities and counties in each state) will be eligible for funds out of the local government pot.

AB 2176 addresses California's portion of the state funding and would establish a mechanism through which funds received by the state would then be passed on to cities and counties. H.R. 6 mandates that 60 percent of the state portion must go to cities and counties that are not eligible to receive funding out of the local government pot (those not eligible would be cities under 35,000 in population).

The League expects the bill to go to its first committee in early April. As the sponsor of AB 2176, the League is working closely with the California Energy Commission to ensure that the process is smooth once funds are ready to be distributed.

'Transportation Funding Hearing' Continued from Page 1...

Larry Patterson, public works director for the city of San Mateo and first vice president of the League's Public Works Department, represented the League at the hearing.

The League is advocating that all levels of government be included in future discussions related to transportation funding, stressing that local governments should have an integral role and local projects should be eligible for funding.

The commission's report recognizes that the federal government must partner with state and local governments to address the transportation crisis.

The Feb. 28 hearing was the first step in a long process to clearly define the scope of the next reauthorization, scheduled to occur in 2010. The League will provide updates as developments occur.

'CEQA Workshops' Continued from Page 1...

Each workshop is being co-hosted by the California Attorney General and the Local Government Commission. The League of California Cities and other organizations are co-sponsors of the events.

The workshops are designed to help answer many of the legal and practical questions cities and counties face related to climate change. Some of the questions that will be addressed include:

- How do local governments analyze the CO2 impacts of future development?
- What mitigation strategies should be employed?
- How do local governments undertake the required analysis efficiently and on a limited budget?

Case studies of the best and most innovative steps being taken by local governments across California will also be presented. Speakers will include city officials, Attorney General Jerry

Brown, representatives from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's Climate Action Team, and modeling experts.

Workshop Dates

March 20 – Oakland
April 3 – Sacramento
April 24 – Visalia
May 15 – Los Angeles
May 23 – Monterey

Registration

Registration and additional information can be found on the Local Government Commission Web site at www.lgc.org/events.

Each workshop costs \$75 to attend.

San Carlos Mayor Wins Oscar

At Sunday's Oscars in Los Angeles, one of the winners of the golden statue is one of us—a local elected official. Brad Lewis, mayor of San Carlos, was honored by the Academy when they awarded an Oscar for "Ratatouille" as best animated film.

Lewis finds himself wearing two very different hats. Elected to the city council in 2005, Lewis serves as mayor of San Carlos, a city of 28,000 in the San Francisco Bay Area. His day job however is at Pixar where he is the award-winning producer who managed the creation of "Ratatouille."

This is the first Oscar for Lewis, the recipient of several Emmys in the past. With this new award, Lewis boasts a new accomplishment as well. He's become the first mayor to win an Academy Award while in office. Clint Eastwood was mayor of Carmel from 1986-1988, but did not win any of his five Academy Awards during that time.

"Ratatouille" was nominated for five Academy Awards: animated film, original screenplay, original score, sound editing, and sound mixing.

Save the Date: League Events Scheduled for NLC 2008 Congressional City Conference, March 10-12

The League of California Cities is organizing a number of important events during the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference, March 10-12, in Washington, D.C. Meetings are being scheduled with members of the California Congressional delegation, California senators and Administration officials.

Please mark your calendars for the following activities. Additional details will follow as the conference gets closer.

Monday, March 10

- 6-7:30 p.m. - League Reception, Washington Hilton, Lincoln East Room

Tuesday, March 11

- Meeting with California Senator Barbara Boxer (time and location TBD)
- 6-8 p.m. - Capitol Hill Reception for California City Officials and California Congressional Delegation, Hart Senate Office Building, Room 902

Wednesday, March 12

- 9:30-10:30 a.m. - Roundtable discussion on energy with the California Congressional Delegation, HC-6 of the U.S. Capitol Building
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2008 Sunshine Week Spotlights Importance of Open Government

Events Scheduled March 16-22

Government officials, news media, civic groups, libraries, nonprofits, and others are gearing up for the 2008 Sunshine Week. This national effort, now in its fourth year, highlights the importance of preserving open government. Events are scheduled across the country March 16-22.

During Sunshine Week, newspapers, magazines, Web sites, radio and television outlets feature content focused on the role of open government in a democracy.

Officials from every level of government are being invited to participate. In the past, governors, state legislators, city council members, mayors and other elected officials have done so by issuing proclamations, resolutions and statements of support for Sunshine Week.

For more details, please visit www.sunshineweek.org.

League Open Government Publications

The League has a long tradition of helping local agencies understand various governmental sunshine laws. In 2007, the League released the fourth edition of *Open and Public*, our definitive guide to the Brown Act. The League will unveil its latest open government publication in May at the City Attorneys Conference with the release of *The People's Business: A Guide to the California Public Records Act*.

League publications and other resources for city officials can be purchased at CityBooks (<http://www.cacities.org/citybooks>).

Find a Bill, Legislators, Leg Committee, or Ask League Leg Staff

Visit (and bookmark!) the League's [Legislative Resources](http://www.cacities.org/legresources) Web page (www.cacities.org/legresources). You'll find a roster and contact information for the League's legislative staff; the online Bill Search program, background materials on lobbying your legislators, and more.
