

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

# SCAG SPOTLIGHT



Legislation and Policy Affecting Our Region

February 2014

## RC Report

Highlights from the Regional Council Meeting



Kevin Kelley, General Manager of the Imperial Irrigation District, outlines a new initiative to fund restoration of the Salton Sea with investments in renewable energy generation.

### INFORMATION – SALTON SEA RESTORATION UPDATE

The RC today heard an update on the status of restoring the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea is located in a closed desert basin in Riverside and Imperial Counties and is more than 200 feet below sea level with no natural outlet. Since 1905, the Salton Sea has gradually increased in salinity, leading to salt concentrations about 30 percent higher than ocean water, which will continue to increase under current conditions. Kevin Kelley, the General Manager of the Imperial Irrigation District, provided additional details on the proposed [Salton Sea Restoration & Renewable Energy Initiative](#), launched by the Imperial Irrigation District in partnership with Imperial County, would leverage funds generated by new renewable energy projects located at the sea to help finance activities for air quality management and habitat restoration.

### ACTION – RC ADOPTS 2014 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

SCAG's 2014 State & Federal Legislative Priorities were adopted today by the Regional Council. With input from the Legislative/Communications & Membership Committee and various stakeholders, the priorities build upon SCAG's RC-approved objectives and achievements from previous state and congressional legislative sessions and will continue to advance policies that will be most effective to streamline project delivery, create jobs and initiative economic recovery throughout the region. Today's RC-adopted 2014 State & Federal Legislative priorities can be viewed online on SCAG's Legislation page: <http://goo.gl/UcB9ET>.

### ACTION – RC TAKES ACTION TO ADDRESS POVERTY, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Following reports of rising levels of poverty in the region at December's Southern California Economic Recovery & Job Creation Summit, the RC today approved a slate of recommendations from SCAG's business advisory group, the Global Land Use & Economic (GLUE) Council. The GLUE Council concluded that the rise in poverty and lack of a qualified workforce are some of the biggest challenges/impediments for our member cities and business investment/expansion in Southern California. For more information please visit [economy.scag.ca.gov](http://economy.scag.ca.gov).

## From the Executive Director

Additional News for the Month

**SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS UPDATE** – As reported last month, SCAG has begun initiating the 73 [Sustainability Planning Grant](#) projects approved by the Regional Council in September 2013. To date, staff has worked with local jurisdictions to develop 27 scopes of work, issued 18 Request-for-Proposals and selected consultants for five projects. Phase III projects will proceed in FY 2015 as additional funds become available.

### SCAG RELEASES DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR REVIEW

– In advance of developing the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS, SCAG has evaluated and reviewed its public participation and outreach policies to ensure that the public is given early and meaningful opportunities to provide input on SCAG's planning activities. SCAG released a Draft 2014 Public Participation Plan on Jan. 22. The plan outlines federal and state guidelines, SCAG's principles of public participation and outreach as well strategies to engage underrepresented communities in our planning efforts. It is available for download on [our website](#) and comments will be received through March 7. Staff will review, address and incorporate as appropriate all comments received into a final draft plan, which will be presented to SCAG's Legislative/Communications & Membership Committee with a recommendation for board adoption by April 3.

### AIR RESOURCES BOARD EVALUATES SCS PROGRESS

– At their Jan. 23rd board meeting, California Air Resources Board (ARB) staff presented an update on the status of implementing SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008. The update included ARB staff's evaluation of Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) adopted by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to date, the progress in implementing currently adopted SCSs, ongoing development of data and tools for future planning activities and next steps. While there were many accomplishments highlighted, SCAG joined other MPOs in requesting additional resources and time to implement our SCS plans. Additional time will also allow the regions to assess the impact of the SCS plans on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. To allow for this, SCAG and other MPOs requested that ARB not revise regional greenhouse gas reduction targets until eight years from the previous target setting. ARB staff is scheduled to present its recommendation on updating the next set of regional greenhouse gas reduction targets to the ARB in fall 2014.

### EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION AVAILABLE FOR 2014 REGIONAL CONFERENCE & GENERAL ASSEMBLY

– SCAG's 2014 Regional Conference & General Assembly is slated for May 1-2, at the Renaissance Esmeralda Indian Wells Resort & Spa. Building on the success of last year's event, the 2014 conference will feature engaging breakout panels and thought leaders of today to discuss innovative solutions for our region's most pressing issues. The event is also the venue for the annual Compass Blueprint Recognition Awards, celebrating outstanding local planning and development efforts that exemplify the Compass Blueprint principles of Sustainability, Livability, Mobility and Prosperity. Early registration is \$150 per person until April 1, and \$250 thereafter. A limited number of discounted hotel rooms are available. To take advantage of the early registration rate and for more information, please visit [www.scag.ca.gov/ga2014](http://www.scag.ca.gov/ga2014).

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2014 Regional Conference & General Assembly  
May 1-2, 2014

Renaissance Esmeralda Indian Wells Resort & Spa  
Indian Wells, CA 92210 | [www.scag.ca.gov/ga2014](http://www.scag.ca.gov/ga2014)

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## SCAG 2014 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

APPLICATION FORMS NOW AVAILABLE AT  
[www.scag.ca.gov/scholarship](http://www.scag.ca.gov/scholarship)

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EVENTS

### FEBRUARY

- 6th Regional Council & Policy Committee Meetings
- 17th Presidents' Day – SCAG offices closed
- 18th Legislative/Communications & Membership Committee Meeting
- 24-26th SCAQMD 2014 Climate Leadership Conference
- 28th South Bay Cities COG – 15th Annual General Assembly

### MARCH

- 6th Regional Council & Policy Committee Meetings
- 8-12th National League of Cities Congressional City Conference
- 18th Legislative/Communications & Membership Committee Meeting