

WTS Sacramento Chapter e-News Special Edition



Janet Dawson on Assembly Bill 28: "I've never seen the process [to approve a bill] move so fast."

Recently, WTS-Sacramento Board members Stacey Alliguie, Lauren Proctor, Meggie Elledge, and Cheryl Spatz sat down with **Chief Consultant to the Assembly Janet Dawson**, to get the insider scoop on the status of two proposed bills that will have a large impact on California's transportation industry if passed: Assembly Bill (AB) 28 and AB 1/Senate Bill (SB) 1. This Special Edition Newsletter (Part 1 of 2) will focus on AB 28.

Last year in 2016, the Assembly passed AB 2034 (Salas), which would have extended indefinitely provisions of existing law that allowed Caltrans to waive sovereign immunity and allow Caltrans to continue, indefinitely, to assume the role of the U.S. DOT for NEPA decision making. (Existing authority sunsetted on December 31, 2016, after being in place for 10 years.)

Ultimately, AB 2034 stalled in the Senate last session, despite broad support. The bill was held not for policy reasons but because of complicated negotiations involving broader discussion related to legislation to provide long-term sustainable funding for transportation. The Legislature had hoped to resolve the NEPA issue, along with the broader transportation funding issue, in special session after the November elections. That, however, was not meant to be, and the limited-term waiver of sovereign immunity expired.

To remedy this, **Assemblymember Frazier** introduced AB 28 in the new legislative session to reinstate the waiver of sovereign immunity on a permanent basis, thus reinstating Caltrans NEPA Assignment authority and allowing Caltrans to resume performing NEPA Assignment duties.

Janet outlined the journey AB 28 will need to go through to get approval and land on the Governor's desk for signature into law, and thankfully it sounds like it will be a fast one. "I've never seen the process [to approve a bill] move so fast," Janet said. Typically, policy hearings for bills begin in March, but a hearing was called this past January to hear AB 28. When asked why there was special urgency with this bill, Janet explained that the fact that there were projects that had funding and were ready to go, but couldn't proceed for lack of environmental approval, was unacceptable. AB 28 includes an urgency clause which will allow it to take effect immediately upon being signed by the Governor.

AB 28 **passed** the Assembly successfully with no "NO" votes and was heard in Senate Transportation and Housing Committee on February 28th, 2017. The Senate committee requested that the bill be amended to limit the re-enacted authority to three years, rather than extend the authority indefinitely. Assemblymember Frazier reluctantly accepted the amendment. After being heard in the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee, AB 28 has also **passed** successfully with no "NO" votes.

From there, the bill will be referred to Senate Appropriations where it is also expected to pass successfully.

Despite the small setback, Janet remains very **optimistic** that the bill will pass the Legislature and be signed by the Governor before the end of March. "The MPOs are putting pressure on the legislation. Everyone is anxious to get this through."

WTS Sacramento will continue to monitor and provide updates on the

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Upcoming Events

March Lunch Program: Stanislaus County Measure L - What's Next?

Tuesday, March 14th,
2017

11:30 am - 1:00 pm
SACOG Board Room
3rd Floor

[Register Here!](#)

WTS/APWA Public Works Roundtable Thursday, March 30th, 2017

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Dante Club

**Registration Opens
Soon!**

Spring Professional Development Series - Leadership and Effective Delegation

Thursday, April 20th, 2017
5:30 pm - 8:00 pm
AECOM

Save the Date!

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progress of AB 28.

For more on AB 28, click [here](#).

Stay tuned for Part 2 of our Special Edition Newsletter for updates on the status of funding bills AB 1/SB 1.

If there is a **hot topic** that you would like us to look into and cover in a Special Edition Newsletter, feel free to [contact](#) the WTS Sacramento Board with any ideas and/or questions!



Stacey Alliguie, Janet Dawson, Lauren Proctor and Meggie Elledge in front of the Capitol Building



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