

ASCE Region 9 Policy Statements

Table of Contents

ASCE Region 9 Policy Statements

ASCE R-9 Policy 1 - Transportation Policy Positions

ASCE R-9 Policy 2 - Water Policy Positions

ASCE R-9 Policy 3 - Gas Tax Support Policy

ASCE Region 9

Region 9 Policy Statements as approved by the Region 9 Board on 9/25/15

Policy Statements

ASCE R-9 Policy 1 - Transportation Policy Positions

Transportation Infrastructure includes all modes of travel which should be adequately funded, improved and maintained to meet current and projected needs. There are significant infrastructure deficiencies and shortages of funding in the State; the ASCE Region 9 2012 California Infrastructure Report Card issued a grade of C- for existing Transportation infrastructure and recommended additional funding be provided. The State's economy and good quality of life for all Californians strongly depends upon a reliable and accessible transportation system that serves the needs of all residents, businesses, visitors and goods movement. ASCE Region 9 supports and advocates the following policies regarding the improvement, operation and maintenance of Transportation Infrastructure in the State of California.

1. An additional long term public funding program for transportation infrastructure should be established to deliver a consistent funding source for the maintenance and improvement of transportation systems. Transportation funding should also be coordinated with all available Local, State and Federal sources to leverage total funding and investments.
2. All Local Governments (Counties, Cities and Transportation Agencies) should additionally be encouraged to follow the "self-help" model establishing locally committed funding sources for transportation infrastructure and systems.
3. The California Congressional Caucus should collectively work together to increase the percentage of Federal tax dollars returned to the State for use on transportation infrastructure.
4. Transportation infrastructure development should be matched with long-term State objectives for balancing the transportation systems with environmental objectives, population growth and housing and should be resilient and sustainable throughout its life-cycle.
5. All formats of project delivery should be available, on a case by case basis as determined suited for a particular project, for Agencies to use on transportation infrastructure projects.
6. Access to and use of Federal funding for transportation infrastructure should be streamlined and simplified to accelerate project delivery. Duplications of Federal and State environmental review should be eliminated. Federal Regulatory and Resource Agencies should be required to evaluate, determine the need for and issue Federal permitting of transportation infrastructure projects within a specified short time interval.
7. Project design and delivery should be performed by the professionals licensed by the State to perform such work; all project records should be readily accessible for public review; Quality Control/Quality Assurance programs should be implemented matching the size and complexity of each project.

- *Guiding Principles for the Nation's Critical Infrastructure*. Reston, VA: ASCE, 2009. Print.
- *ASCE Policy 149 - Intermodal Transportation Systems*
- *ASCE Policy 299 - Infrastructure Investment Policy*
- *ASCE Policy 382 - Transportation Funding*
- *ASCE Policy 402 - High-speed and Intercity Passenger Rail*
- *ASCE Policy 427 - Regulatory Process for Infrastructure Development*
- *ASCE Policy 451 - Life-Cycle Cost Analysis*
- *ASCE Policy 526 - Public Private Partnerships*
- *ASCE Policy 537 - Complete Streets*

ASCE Region 9
Policy Statements
ASCE R-9 Policy 2 - Water Policy Positions

The ASCE Region 9 supports and advocates the following policies regarding water resources and the environment, in recognition of the co-equal importance of environmental needs and reliable water supplies.

1. Continue to emphasize water supply reliability for all regions of the State in order to protect California's economy. In light of the risks with climate change and current constraints imposed on Delta conveyance, it is imperative that California make rapid progress in this area.
2. Enhance and support regional sustainability. Reducing dependence on imported water should be encouraged, favoring more locally available water resources where available. By practicing sustainability measures, energy costs and greenhouse emissions will decrease while becoming more environmentally balanced.
3. Support funding for water projects based on the beneficiary-pays principle and direct funds as quickly as possible to provide a Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta fix addressing the fundamental water supply risks and environmental needs in the Delta.
4. Ensure that groundwater basins are sustainably managed based on both water quality and quantity needs.
5. Continue support and funding for Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) programs. Authorize additional appropriations for Proposition 84 IRWM. Allow as much flexibility to IRWM regions as possible to solve water resource problems without excessive oversight or duplicative reviews at the State level.
6. Maximize existing storage facilities - groundwater and surface water - and provide additional storage and conveyance as necessary to capture important runoff that is excess to environmental needs before it is lost to the ocean. For regional storage for which local areas benefit, local and regional funding should be encouraged to finance the majority of the need. Where such storage provides statewide value, investment of state and federal funds is justified.
7. Support increased water use efficiency practices to meet or exceed State-wide goals of 20% reduction by the Year 2020, to achieve multiple benefits including reducing greenhouse emissions, dependence on imported water and reducing negative water quality impacts from urban runoff. In achieving this goal, governing principles for water use efficiency programs and incentives should be tailored to regional needs and recognize varied benefit and outcomes of conservation efforts.
8. Expand and encourage use of recycled water as an additional ongoing reliable water resource to serve many types of water needs. Increasing the use of recycled water will greatly increase water supply reliability and provide a much less energy dependent water supply.
9. Promote and subsidize state-of-the-art water treatment and desalination technologies including processes such as reverse osmosis, ion exchange and microfiltration including residuals treatment and brine disposal as appropriate.
10. Manage flood control systems to increase stormwater capture and recharge of groundwater aquifers. Land use practices that retain water on site for recharge through Low Impact Development practices can also provide benefits when carefully planned.

ASCE Region 9
Policy Statements
ASCE R-9 Policy 3 – Gas Tax Support Policy

Background: Between 1919 and 1930, first in States and then additionally through the Federal government, taxes on motor fuels, commonly referred to as “Gas Taxes”, otherwise known in California as Highway Users Tax Account or HUTA Funds, were implemented to provide funding for roadways, and more generally the construction and maintenance of transportation systems.

The Federal Gas Tax rate of 18.4 ¢/gal has not been changed since 1993. It is clear that the Federal Highway Trust Fund will be depleted of funds in the very near future unless Congress acts to increase funding to this program.

The State of California collects a Gasoline Tax based upon a base fixed rate of 18 ¢/gal plus a variable Excise Tax. The base fixed rate has not been changed in over 20 years, and an annually adjusted Excise Tax has replaced the former sales tax on gasoline. This variable Excise Tax was established in 2010 with the intention of being revenue neutral, meaning that there would be no net increase in funding for transportation systems construction or maintenance in California over the long term. This annual adjustment in the overall Gasoline Tax is known as the “Gas Tax Swap.” As of July 1, 2014, the combined fixed and excise tax on gasoline was 36¢/gal but as of July 1, 2015, the combined fixed and excise tax on gasoline will be 30¢/gal to reflect lower overall lower fuel prices. Consequently, reduced funding for streets, roads and highways will be available in the next year. Diesel fuels have similar, but slightly different fuel taxes. None of these funds are indexed for inflation or the cost of construction of transportation systems in current dollars.

Total California mileage driven in 2013 increased over 2007, while Gas Tax receipts decreased 5%, likely caused by continuing improvement in fuel efficient vehicles. While the Federal CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy) standards are helpful for both the environment and national energy policy, they have the unintended consequence of reducing funding to maintain the roads on which these vehicles drive.

In the recent report “California Local Streets and Roads Needs, Assessment 2014 Update” by SaveCaliforniaStreets.org, it is stated that at current funding levels, 25% of our local streets and roads will be in a failed condition in 10 years. Currently, 16% of our Highway lane miles are in a distressed condition. In 10 years, with the projected funding, 34% of our highway lane miles will also be in a distressed condition. This report also identifies the need to raise gas taxes by 54¢/gal in order to halt the pavement deterioration noted.

The implementation of “Cap and Trade” fees on fuels in January 2015 is expected to increase gasoline costs by 15 to 20 ¢/gal. Of this revenue stream, 25% would be applied to High Speed Rail and 40% would be applied to Mass Transit and Transit Oriented Development. None of these funds would be applied to the maintenance and construction of roadways and highways.

The ASCE *California Infrastructure Report Card* gives California's Transportation Infrastructure a grade of "C-". This Report Card indicates that over 3,000 bridges throughout California are "Structurally Deficient". This Report Card also notes that California's current annual Gas Tax receipts are more than \$10 billion below the funding needed to maintain our current transportation infrastructure, not including the cost of constructing new infrastructure. Finally, the Report Card concludes that an annual investment of more than \$36.5 billion is needed over the next 10 years in order to raise the Transportation Grade to a "B-."

ASCE supports Senate Bill 1077 [DeSaulnier], signed by the Governor in September 2014. This bill establishes a Pilot Program for a road usage fee system as an alternative to the gas tax.

The growing gap in transportation funding is limiting the ability of state and local governments to properly maintain California's transportation infrastructure.

The ASCE California Region represents over 19,000 members.

Gas Tax Policy: To provide adequate future funding for California's transportation infrastructure construction and maintenance, an increase in the State Gas Tax is needed to fund and sustain the State of California's transportation infrastructure. It is recommended the following be implemented:

- I. A State Gas Tax increase sufficient to cover the gap in roadway, highway and transportation systems funding;
- II. An annual percentage increase in the Gas Tax based on actual inflation as determined by the Consumer Price Index;
- III. Revenues collected in the form of HUTA funds should not be transferred to the General Fund.