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Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

**PRESENTATION OF
Mark Pisano, Executive Director,
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
April 2, 1997**

Topic: The View of Jurisdictions within Los Angeles County on County Charter Reform

Mr. Pisano congratulated the Commission on the report Review of the Relationship between Los Angeles County and State Government. This is a critical issue faced by the region.

Mr. Pisano stated in the last 5 years SCAG has restructured itself significantly. Commissioner Crowley was a member of the Pasadena Council which was part of an architectural group that redesigned SCAG. Elements of the restructuring were:

1. built a region from the bottom up.
2. decentralized - a key factor in any restructuring effort by developing more accountability.
3. enlarged their board from 21 to 71 people.
4. further developed the notion of sub-regions so every community feels that they are a part of regional decision making. This has positively impacted large scale development projects, specifically: The Metrolink and the development of the Alameda Corridor.
5. proactive approach in a regional comprehensive planning guide. The President used SCAG's economic chapter as the basis for his Economic Summit in Southern California and in many other plans he has developed since then. This plan also served as a framework for the transportation plan.

In relation to the finalization of the EEC's constitution report, SCAG's Finance Committee is continuing to focus on a bill being introduced in Sacramento relative to state surplus and the plight of local jurisdictions. They are evaluating the financial impacts of both the Sales Tax Bill and the Property Tax Bill and studying public attitude toward these proposed taxes. This is a beginning step in dealing with the proposals from the State Constitution Revision Commission.

SCAG is also focusing on sub-regions. Currently, there are 14 sub-regions, 8 of which are in Los Angeles County. The cities have been the primary motivation force behind sub-regions to further problem solving. Analyzing the EEC's report, along with evolving the sub-regions, will be an important part of organizing governmental units to deliver the goals and outcomes that the public wants.

Mr. Pisano suggested that the EEC's Constitution Revision Task Force examine how to involve sub-regions. Sub-regions are vital when addressing the critical issues of transportation and welfare reform. There are a collection of factors that will have to come together in a way they have never done before, in order to effectively address welfare reform.

Home rule, which is at the heart of decentralization, is a long term goal for SCAG. The structure that exists

has a lot of community activity and no capacity for the community to raise revenues. This is a scenario for disaster. This issue has to be addressed, if Los Angeles is to remain competitive.

Commissioner Buerk asked how SCAG plans to enable local jurisdictions to raise funds to meet their responsibilities. Mr. Pisano replied that they had not been specific because there are a number of revenue streams that need to be examined, specifically the sales tax, which is causing enormous inequities between jurisdictions.

Commissioner Hill asked for what year SCAG's population projection had been made. Mr. Pisano replied 2020, when we will have the equivalent of two Chicagos in this region. The majority of this growth will be in the eastern part of the region and not in Los Angeles County. There will be a 44% increase in growth which is why transportation is such an important issue.

Commissioner Ojeda-Kimbrough asked how communities have access to SCAG. Mr. Pisano replied that one way is through the sub-regional organization. Secondly, SCAG has put together a geographical information system which allows cities, counties, and the public to have access to all the information that they use for decision making.

Vice-Chair Farrar asked what the geographic boundaries are, what is SCAG's source of funding, and how their governance is constituted. Mr. Pisano replied that the geographic boundaries include six counties - Ventura, Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and Imperial; their budget is intergovernmental, with majority being federal; and they are a joint powers agency.

Chairperson Abel thanked Mr. Pisano for his presentation and introduce Chief Michael Freeman.

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