

Victory! Port Commission Approves BART-Airport Funding

The fax machine at the Bay Area Council was kept humming as members fired in letters urging the [Oakland Port Commission](#) to maintain its commitment to the Oakland Airport Connector. The project had gotten bogged down in controversy as BART unions tried to make it a negotiating point in discussions with management, and other interest groups fought to thwart the overhead rail structure so that the funds could be redirected to suit their interests. Fortunately – and perhaps boosted by all of the business community support – the Commissioners held firm, and on Tuesday night, they voted unanimously to give the project \$44 million. The light rail extension will carry BART riders the 3.2 miles between the Oakland Coliseum station and the airport. Politics is a funny business and we will vigilantly watch to ensure this project reaches completion. Thank you to our many members who helped this project succeed. Due to your efforts, the Request for Proposal is on the street and is reportedly attracting intense interest from a very hungry construction industry. Coming up in July, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission will vote on Regional Measure 2 (bridge toll) funds for the project. Then it's full speed ahead to award the construction contract in November and groundbreaking shortly thereafter.

Fighting a Losing Battle on Principal: Cities v. Unions

Unfortunately, the deteriorating economy and a broken budget and government in Sacramento are threatening to cause municipal bankruptcies across the state, such as happened in Vallejo. As a reminder, suffering from falling revenue and rising obligations to the city's public service unions, Vallejo unsuccessfully tried to renegotiate contracts with the city's unions and, as a last resort, opted for bankruptcy to get its fiscal house in order and force a renegotiation of contracts. Unions have responded with a bill, [AB 155](#), which would require local agencies contemplating bankruptcy to first obtain approval from the "California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission" before filing for bankruptcy. The effect, of course, is to make it much harder to force renegotiation of contracts through bankruptcy. Standing with our friends in the cities, counties, school districts and other local agencies, the Bay Area Council is vigorously opposing this bill, in a decidedly uphill battle. Even though many current legislators came from local government, the bill passed swiftly through the Assembly on nearly a party line vote, and is headed to the State Senate for likely the same treatment. If you would like to register your own opposition, please contact Matt Regan at the Council who can help with a letter and contacts [by email](#) or at 415-946-8710.

Video Battle of the Week

In response to a \$1 million SEIU advertising blitz featuring a [television commercial](#) that urges lawmakers to consider taxes on oil extraction, cigarettes and alcohol to avoid social services cuts, the California Republican Party countered with this [stinging video](#). The woman's "leadership" title has been called into question, but the footage is shocking.

