Sacramento Area
Council of
Governments

1415 L Street,
Suite 300
Sacramento, CA
95814

tel: 916.321.9000
fax: 916.321.9551
tdd: 916.321.9550
www.sacog.org

April 27, 2012

Mr. Daniel W. Hancock
Chairman
Little Hoover Commission
925 L Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Chairman Hancock:

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the Governor's Reorganization Plan. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments represents 22 cities and six counties in the Sacramento region of 2.3 million people. We interact with state government daily, so its structure is important to us as an organization. We serve as a Regional Transportation Planning Agency, Metropolitan Planning Organization, Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways, and Airport Land Use Commission, and in those capacities we work with the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Transportation Commission (CTC), Delta Stewardship Council (DSC), Strategic Growth Council (SGC), and Air Resources Board (ARB). We also serve as a Council of Governments, and in that capacity we work with Department of Housing and Community Development and Department of Finance.

My responses are primarily directed at transportation, but mindful of the deep connection between transportation, land use and the environment. Senate Bill 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) codified this relationship, by requiring us to develop strategies to match the transportation and land use in our regions to reduce greenhouse gases.

The SACOG Board of Directors has not taken a position on the governor's reorganization plan, but they have discussed the reorganization plan at several of their meetings. The integration of the CTC, Caltrans and High-Speed Rail Authority into one Transportation Agency has the potential to benefit SACOG, but I have concerns about the separation of the transportation and housing functions in state government.

As a Council of Governments, SACOG is responsible for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process. Senate Bill 375 requires that we coordinate RHNA with our Regional Transportation Plan. The former involves a lengthy process of working with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to determine an overall regional allocation. The latter is governed in part by guidelines established by the CTC and coordination with Caltrans. The separation of these entities would make it even harder for regions to meet state goals, and potentially would further strain state-local relationships.

Auburn
Citrus Heights
Colfax
Davis
El Dorado County
Elk Grove
Folsom
Galt
Isleton
Lincoln
Live Oak
Loomis
Marysville
Placer County
Placerville
Rancho Cordova
Rocklin
Roseville
Sacramento
Sacramento County
Sutter County
West Sacramento
Wheatland
Winters
Woodland
Yolo County
Yuba City
Yuba County

The placement of HCD within the new Business and Consumer Services Agency does not seem to reflect its planning function. Although consolidation with the California Housing Finance Agency may help improve the production of housing, separating them from Caltrans and other agencies that make critical decisions that impact housing may present risks.

SGC, created at the same time as SB 375 in 2008, is an important aspect of better integration at the state level of the many aspects of transportation, land use, and environment that we cannot treat in isolation. Some of the risks of separating transportation and housing functions could be mitigated through a stronger SGC. SGC has made important contributions to regions in policy and funding, but it is underfunded and understaffed. The Administration should consider combining the resources of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research with SGC to better ensure that the state maintains a meaningful, coordinated role in local planning efforts.

Regarding the CTC, it is unclear how the proposal would affect the autonomy of the Commission. The independent role that the Commission exercises is important to regions, as it advises the Administration and the Legislature on transportation policy, and as it evaluates the effectiveness of transportation policies and initiatives.

With respect to the High Speed Rail Authority, additional state oversight has been called for by a number of individuals and organizations, and a coordinated role within the new Transportation Agency would be a positive improvement. The Authority board still has a meaningful role in delivering a system, and additional oversight would be useful.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Governor's Reorganization Plan. If I can provide additional details, please contact me at (916) 340-6205.

Sincerely,

Mike McKeever
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Brian Kelly, Acting Secretary, Business, Transportation & Housing Agency