

# Mendocino Council of Governments

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**To: Mendocino County News Media**

**Contact:** Phil Dow, Executive Director, Mendocino Council of Governments

## **MCOG Opposes Prop 51**

The Mendocino Council of Governments board of directors has unanimously voted to endorse the “No on Proposition 51” campaign. While the title, “Transportation Congestion Relief and Safe School Bus Act” sounds like something the regional transportation planning agency would support, MCOG strongly disagrees with the initiative’s method and approach.

“I do not follow every proposition on the ballot,” Executive Director Phil Dow reported to the Council, “However, I believe this one would be particularly damaging.”

Dow testified before a joint committee meeting of the State Legislature on September 25, giving reasons not to support the measure. Soon after, at their regular meeting on September 30, MCOG adopted a resolution emphasizing these points.

- Proposition 51 would circumvent the local and state transportation planning process, having been crafted without input from regional transportation planning agencies, undermining the democratic authority of RTPAs to prioritize local needs.
- It is inconsistent with the national trend toward locally flexible funding initiated under the landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), continued under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA21).
- It would create inflexible new funding categories in California that could not be adjusted except by statewide vote.

- The proposition focuses on a long list of earmarked projects (i.e. “pork barrel”) of questionable transportation value, while ignoring many real transportation priorities already identified through the local, regional, and state planning process.
- A number of rural areas such as Mendocino County would not receive a fair share of the funding, which is targeted toward urban areas.
- Prop 51 appears to be a product of development interests and special interests that have contributed to the campaign and will clearly gain if this measure is approved by the voters (i.e. “pay to play”).
- It could adversely affect the ability of cities and counties to pass “self-help” local transportation sales tax measures.
- It would decrease the amount of discretionary funding available to the state, resulting in even more bad news for local governments’ ability to provide services.

In addition, the State’s Legislative Analyst has stated that Prop 51 violates the single issue law for legislation. If passed, this proposition could be stalled in the courts for some time. Other groups opposing Prop 51 include the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG), California League of Women Voters, California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and California Tax Reform Association.

Acting as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, MCOG programs or allocates various types of state and federal transportation funds to Caltrans, the County of Mendocino and the four incorporated Cities of Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Willits, and Point Arena. In addition to projects on state highways and within its five member jurisdictions, MCOG helps support transportation activities of the North Coast Rail Authority, California Western Railroad, Mendocino Transit Authority, local airports, and others. Projects involve planning, capital improvements, rehabilitation and maintenance, fleet replacement, and intermodal transit centers. For more information, call the MCOG office at 463-1859 or consult the agency's web site at [www.mendocinocog.org](http://www.mendocinocog.org).

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