



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 19, 2009

Contact: Eric Davis, 916-457-2625

ECOS praises Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and other state and local leaders for their vision in helping craft settlement to Highway 50 litigation

ECOS, one of two organizations that won a lawsuit earlier this year challenging the adequacy of the State's environmental analysis of the proposed expansion of Highway 50 in Sacramento County, praises Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Director Will Kempton, and other state and local leaders for their remarkable efforts in working with the environmental community to reach a settlement.

Under a settlement agreement executed late last week, ECOS and its partner, Neighbors Advocating Sustainable Transportation (NAST), agreed to forego any further judicial action in exchange for financial support for expanded light rail service on Regional Transit's Gold Line and the addition of a bicycle/pedestrian crossing over Highway 50 at Mather Field Road linking to a transit platform. These investments in transit as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities will mitigate impacts of the additional lanes on the highway by providing real options for travelers.

The agreement was negotiated between Caltrans, ECOS, and NAST, in meetings arranged and facilitated by the offices of California Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D – Sacramento) and Assembly Speaker Karen Bass (D – Los Angeles). Assembly Member Mike Feuer (D – Los Angeles) was instrumental in facilitating the discussions. Regional Transit General Manager Mike Wiley deserves credit for helping identify possible transit enhancement opportunities that were "shovel-ready" and thus could be fast-tracked. Assembly Member Dave Jones (D – Sacramento) also deserves credit for his unwavering support for ECOS and NAST on the Highway 50 expansion issue over the last many years.

"We owe a particular debt of gratitude to the Governor and his Transportation Director Will Kempton for their hard work on this agreement," said Eric Davis, ECOS spokesperson. "The flexibility and creativity demonstrated by Caltrans and the Schwarzenegger administration in compromising with us on a solution were impressive. ECOS and NAST challenged the highway expansion because of the need to address the environmental impacts. This settlement does just that, while creating thousands of jobs and expediting stimulus spending."

ECOS Executive Director Graham Brownstein, also involved in the negotiations, added: "The willingness of Governor Schwarzenegger and Caltrans Director Will Kempton to address the key concerns at issue in our lawsuit made this settlement possible. Senator Steinberg brought us to

the table and we worked through the issues over the course of a very intense week. I think we were all pleased with the substance and tone of the discussions. And we are extremely pleased with the outcome.”

ECOS is an environmental and community planning non-profit based in Sacramento that works on a range of issues related to land use, transportation and conservation with the goal of achieving regional and community sustainability and a healthy environment. For nearly 40 years, ECOS has brought together diverse organizations and individuals who care about Sacramento regional communities and the environment and work to ensure that planning decisions are made in the public and environmental interest.

* * * * *