

Date of Hearing: April 13, 2015

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Jim Frazier, Chair

AB 1043 (Salas) – As Introduced February 26, 2015

SUBJECT: Highways: State Highway Route 43

SUMMARY: Adds State Highway Route (SR) 43 to the list of interregional and intercounty highway routes that are eligible to use specific state transportation funds.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the state highway system through a listing and description of segments of the state's regional and interregional roads that are owned and operated by the Department of Transportation (Caltrans). A "state highway" is defined as any roadway that is acquired, laid out, constructed, improved, or maintained as a state highway pursuant to constitutional or legislative authorization.
- 2) Further defines the interregional road system as a subset of the state highway system.
- 3) Requires certain transportation funds to be made available for transportation capital improvement projects and to be programmed and expended for interregional and regional improvements.
- 4) Directs the allocation of funds for transportation capital improvements as follows:
 - a) Twenty-five percent for interregional improvements as identified in the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP); and,
 - b) Seventy-five percent for regional improvements, as identified in regional transportation improvement programs.
- 5) Of the 25% of funds for interregional improvements, 60% of these funds must be used for improvements on highways identified in statute as part of the interregional road system and outside the boundaries of an urban area and for intercity rail improvements; the remaining 40% of funds made available to the state for work on other state highways must be distributed 40% to northern California counties and 60% to southern California counties.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: The state highway system serves a diverse range of needs for the interregional movement of people and goods between rural and highly urbanized areas. While all state routes

are important, the interstate system, interregional road system routes, and other major freeway trade corridors form a transportation network that is most critical to interregional mobility and connectivity statewide. Together, these routes carry over 80 percent of the total vehicle miles travelled annually on the state highway system.

The interregional road system is a statutorily defined series of state highway routes, outside the urbanized areas, that provide access to, and links between, the state's economic centers, major recreation areas, and urban and rural regions. The interregional road system routes are intended to provide the following service:

- 1) Carry a major portion of the trips entering, traveling through, or leaving the state.
- 2) Serve corridors of substantial statewide, interstate, and international significance.
- 3) Connect all metropolitan areas and those urban areas with populations concentrations over 2,5000 and all county seats not otherwise served.
- 4) Serve those agricultural, natural resource areas, public-owned recreational areas, and other travel generators of statewide or major regional importance not otherwise served.

Of the 265 state highway routes, 93 are statutorily designated as interregional routes. Of these, 10 are considered focus routes--that is, routes that are the highest priority for use of ITIP funds. Improving these routes to freeway or expressway standards will provide a backbone highway system connecting regions of the state. Money to provide such improvements, however, is woefully limited. Funding identified in the 2014 ITIP is less than \$1.3 billion over the next five years. This level of funding is well below what is needed to address the preservation and expansion needs of the system.

SR 43 is located in the central San Joaquin Valley and traverses the area in a north-south direction. Agriculture is the most dominant land use along highway corridor. The route is primarily rural with the exception of segments located within the cities of Wasco, Shafter, and Selma and on the outer fringes of Corcoran and Hanford. The highway often experiences a high volume of truck traffic with several segments experiencing truck counts as high as 30% to 40% of total traffic volume.

AB 1043 would add SR 43 to the statutorily defined interregional road system, thereby making it eligible to receive ITIP funds. In theory, adding SR 43 to the list of eligible routes in an already-severely constrained program would increase the competition for funds amongst other interregional routes. In practice, it is doubtful that SR 43 will rise to the level of a high emphasis route or focus route in the foreseeable future and, consequently, may not present any real competition for these limited funds.

Writing in support of the bill, the Kern County Association of Governments notes that commuters use SR 43 from Fresno and Corcoran and Wasco to get to two state prisons that are located on SR 43 and that, in times of accidents on SR 99, SR 43 is used as an alternate route and is easily overwhelmed with traffic.

Previous legislation: AB 680 (Salas) of 2013 was nearly identical to this bill. AB 680 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee on the suspense file.

SB 532 (Cogdill), Chapter 189, Statutes of 2009, added a segment of SR 108 to the interregional road system so that an alternative project on the route could be funded in lieu of the previously programmed Oakdale Bypass project.

AB 2143 (Para) of 2006, would have added SR 43 to the interregional road system. AB 2143 failed passage on the Senate floor.

SB 532 (Torlakson) Chapter 598, Statutes of 2003, added a portion of SR 84 and all of SR 239 to the interregional road system.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Kern County Council of Governments

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Janet Dawson / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093