



March 2011 Newsletter

Presented by the **2010-2011 San Diego Section Officers**

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Senate Bill 851 – Short on Solutions and Substance

On **February 18th**, **State Senator Joel Anderson** of the **36th District** (R–El Cajon) introduced **Senate Bill (SB) 851**. The current wording of the bill lacks details and simply states that it would enact "the need for highway construction" as part of a long term budget solution.

Since then, the Senator (through a press conference and an Op-Ed piece) has provided more information. He has criticized Caltrans for its "wasteful practices" and "excessive" salaries.

His remedy is to eliminate Caltrans by using local agencies to administer the work which would be done by consultants that will somehow have less than "excessive" salaries. It should be pointed out that the average pay for a Caltrans Transportation Civil Engineer is \$113,000 compared to an

average of \$226,000 for a comparable private sector engineer. So, this proposal would actually cost the State more than having Caltrans perform the work in question.

The Senator went on to specifically criticize Caltrans' participation at the 2009 Annual **AASHTO** (The American Association of **State** Highway and Transportation Officials) meeting in **Palm Desert**. These annual meetings are attended by representatives from most, if not all, of the other states as well as the federal government and it would have been highly suspect if Caltrans had not participated as this particular meeting was being held in our home state.

Considering the 2010 AASHTO Annual Meeting was held in Mississippi and the 2011 meeting will be held in Detroit, Michigan, the Senator surprisingly chose to criticize Caltrans participation in the one AASHTO annual meeting that actually brought tens of thousands of dollars of

much needed revenue into the State of California.

The Senator also went on to criticize the construction of the new Caltrans District Office in Old Town San Diego.

It should be noted that the State Department of General Services, and not Caltrans, deemed that the new complex was necessary in light of the fact that the old Caltrans District Office building on Juan Street was and still is not compliant with the latest Building Codes and contains a significant amount of asbestos. The construction of the new District Office building also created thousands of jobs and pumped millions of dollars into the local economy from 2004 through 2006.

Caltrans officially responded to Senator Anderson through Media Relations Manager Matt Rocco with the following statement:

“Caltrans agrees with Senator Anderson that state government must be as efficient as possible and shares the same goal of looking for ways to save taxpayer dollars. Caltrans is currently administering one of the largest construction programs in history with more than \$10 billion in projects underway. This is during a time when our staffing levels are the lowest they’ve been since 2004. In the past five years, Caltrans has delivered 1,388 of 1,391 highway improvement projects worth \$14.3 billion on schedule.

Working in partnership with local agencies, we are continually looking at ways to improve how we do business. In fact, over the last few years, we have significantly reduced our fleet, travel and vehicle-related spending, mobile phones, and level of management positions, saving taxpayers millions of dollars, all while maintaining more than 50,000 highway

lane-miles across the state. It should also be noted that Caltrans received national recognition for its emergency response to rebuild the MacArthur Maze interchange in 26 days following a catastrophic tanker explosion.

We extend an invitation to educate and clarify key points to Senator Anderson on the complexity of maintaining and operating one of the largest transportation networks in the world, as well as efficiency steps we have already taken over the last several years to ensure Caltrans is effectively using taxpayer dollars.”

PECG Corporate also responded to Senator Anderson by issuing the following statement:

“Caltrans is and will continue to be responsible for ensuring the safety and integrity of the state highway system,” said PECG President and State Engineer Matt Hanson. “Caltrans delivered 304 of 306 projects scheduled for bid during the 2009-2010 fiscal year. And over the past five year, Caltrans has delivered 99.8 percent of projects on or ahead of schedule.”

By contrast, the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) reported last year that, local agencies obligated only 72 percent of their federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds while Caltrans obligated 100% of its funds.

“According to the Department of Finance, it costs twice as much to outsource engineering work at Caltrans. Specifically, in the most recent budget, the Department of Finance concludes that a state engineer (including salary, benefits, overhead and equipment) costs the taxpayer \$113,000 a year while an outsourced private engineer costs an average of \$226,000 annually,” said Hanson. “Local agencies outsource

almost all of their engineering services through no-bid contracts.”

Section’s General Meeting

On **February 17th**, the Section held its first



General Meeting of the year. Our guest speaker was Corporate President **Matt Hanson** who discussed the

latest bargaining issues. He said that we need to be open-minded about our expectations. The Governor and Legislature are under tremendous pressure to reduce the budget deficit. The recent survey showed that the majority of members prefer furlough days over additional pension contributions. It also showed that pay parity should be maintained. Over 100 members were in attendance.

Officers have received complaints about holding a General Meeting off site and after hours. Please keep in mind that this is done to accommodate our field staff and to allow more time for the presenters and for members to ask questions.

Caltrans Icon Retires with 52 Years of State Service

Don Day was one of the longest serving employees in the state. On **February 24th** he held his retirement party. Don is originally from Los Angeles. His family moved to Orange



County for a while before heading down to San Diego in the late ‘40s. He started his career with Caltrans in 1955. He has worked in Reprographics, Surveys, Construction, and Design. Traffic Operations was his last stop with most of that time spent at the Traffic Management Center (TMC). Don has a daughter and a son. She is currently in Chile doing her work as a missionary. In retirement, Don plans to take it easy, visit some desert and state parks, and stop by the TMC to visit his friends.

PECG Past Director, **Fred Abdipour**, presented Don with a certificate of appreciation from PECG. He was a PECG member to the very end of his career.

When Don reached the 50 year mark of service, Caltrans Director **Will Kempton** attended his celebration to personally thank him for his dedication. We wish Don the best

PECG Members Attend Rally in Support of Wisconsin State Employees.

On **February 26th**, various PECG



members attended the “**We Are One**” Rally held by the **San Diego Labor Council**. The main purpose was to show solidarity with **Wisconsin** state employees that are in danger of losing their collective bargaining rights. Over a thousand union members and supporters were in attendance during a rainy afternoon in front

of the San Diego County Administration Building in downtown. This was just one of hundreds of rallies held throughout the country. State Senator **Juan Vargas** and Assembly member **Toni Atkins** were just some of the politicians that attended. Union representatives were allowed to speak for about 5 minutes each. One of the most memorable was a representative of the San Diego Fire Department who spoke passionately to the crowd and made the point that "public safety" unions will stand strong with the rest of the government workers even though their unions have been largely shielded from the latest austerity measures.

PECG member **John Williamson** and his



son were in attendance. He said it was "good to see workers coming together and supporting each other. My son is 7 and he really loved it and got into it."

Edmund Kennedy also attended - "Senator **Juan Vargas** gave a pretty good rabble rousing speech as did the County teacher of the year from last year."

Wisconsin state unions (safety exempted) had previously reached a tentative agreement to lower their salaries by 7%. Unions and Democrats were surprised when the Governor and Republican caucus tried to sneak in a provision within the budget bill that would eliminate most of

collective bargaining. **Indiana** and **Ohio** are also in the process of trying to eliminate most of collective bargaining.

Latest Update:

On **March 11th**, Wisconsin's Governor, Scott Walker, signed into law the bill that eliminates collective bargaining for public employees' health and benefits. The bill also limits the amount of payraises public employees may receive and removes the automatic collection of union dues.

Doug Dunaway Bridge Dedication

PECG has donated \$500 towards the naming of the New River Bridge on the State Route 78/Brawley Bypass in Imperial County. The Bridge will now be called the "**Douglas B. Dunaway Memorial Bridge.**" A dedication ceremony will be held on **March 4th**.

Twitter Account is Set Up

The Section is embracing the use of



Twitter by creating an account for our members to follow. Sign up is easy. Just go to twitter.com and click the

sign up button. The two accounts you should be "following" are:

<http://twitter.com/PECG>

http://twitter.com/PECG_SanDiego

Corporate is allocating more time and resources to keep us informed through Twitter. The Section encourages all members to sign up.

You will **not** receive text notices on your phone unless you select that option. You must select a private email account but you will only get messages when someone “follows” you. You can adjust various privacy settings depending on the level of anonymity you want.

Sunil Repaka is the Section’s **Social Networking Coordinator**. He is also on the Caltrans District Social Media Committee. Please contact him at (619) 688-6684 if you have any questions about signing up. Sunil and **Roy Flores** will be “tweeting” on the Section’s account.

The Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair

Coinciding with the recent focus by



President Obama on education, particularly math and science, the San Diego Section continues to be a major sponsor of **The 57th Annual Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair**.

Project competitions for this year’s fair will be held from **March 22nd** to the **27th** at Balboa Park Activity Center (2145 Park Blvd). There is a Junior Division (Middle School) and a Senior Division (High School).

The Section has recruited **24 members** to participate as judges on **March 23rd** from 11AM to 1 PM at Balboa Park. Winning projects will receive cash prizes and a \$1,000 scholarship will also be awarded for the top project. For more information call Naser Ghaderi at (619) 623-9035 or you

can view the Science Fair’s website at <http://www.gsdsef.org/>

Take Your Child to Work Day

The San Diego Section is the main sponsor of the TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY. This event is set for **April 28th, 2011**. Registration deadline is **March 30th, 2011**. Please call **Naser Ghaderi** at (619) 623-9035 to sign up or you can send your registrations forms to naser_ghaderi@dot.ca.gov by the due date. Chaperones are also needed for the event. Please contact Evangeline D Palma @ (619) 688-6007 to sign up as a Chaperone. Lunch will be provided by the San Diego Section PECG for all the kids.

Exam Dates – Spring 2011

PE	April 8
Seismic/Surveying	April 9
EIT/FE	April 9

Structural Engineering Exam

The **National Structural Engineering Exam** will be held on **April 8-9**. This will be a different exam from the ones previously given. The Section would appreciate any input (without disclosing specific exam questions) as to your thoughts on the new exam. Please contact **Section Director Naser Ghaderi** at (619) 623-9035 to provide your comments.

California Facts

The **Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO)** recently compiled **Cal Facts** which contains “snapshot” pieces of information on the State of California: http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2011/calfacts/calfacts_010511.pdf

This includes how much money is spent of different Departments and population earnings.

Miscellaneous Quotes

Regarding Wisconsin's State Workers

"I don't think it does anybody any good when public employees are denigrated or vilified, or their rights are infringed upon."

President Barack Obama

State Employees & Their "High" Salaries

"I'm all for state employees getting the same compensation as private employees. It's called PAY PARITY!"

Anonymous Section Member

Solution for "Out of Control" Pensions

At \$230 Billion with 1.6 million members, why don't they just cash it (CalPERS) out and give me my \$150,000 (avg. liquidation) and the State keeps giving me their contribution (for 401K) until I retire."

Anonymous Section Member

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Section Wants to Hear from At Large PEGG Members

The Section is calling for members in the At Large (non-Caltrans) State Departments to report on the current events and issues where they work. The Section needs your help with gathering this information to expand the coverage of this newsletter and to plan events to better benefit At Large members.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact **Section Advisor Roy Flores** at

(619) 688-2543 or **VP Rank and File Robert Lumahan** for more information.

PECG Member Retirements

We would like to recognize our members for their years of service and their support of PEGG.

If you are planning to retire soon or know of any member that is planning to retire, please let us know by contacting **Robert Lumahan (VP Rank & File – Retirement Honors Committee Chairman)** at robert_lumahan@dot.ca.gov.

Recruiting a New Member

Do you know of someone who is not yet a PEGG member? Would you like to receive \$25 from PEGG?

Well, all you have to do is sign up that person as a new PEGG member and you'll receive \$25 from PEGG!

Membership applications can be downloaded from the PEGG website at <http://www.pegg.org/Benefits/Application.pdf> and can be submitted to PEGG either by faxing them to **(916) 446-0489** or mailing them to:

PECG
455 Capitol Mall, Suite 501
Sacramento, CA 95814

PECG Fed PAC Helping PEGG Have a Voice in Washington, D.C.

The PEGG **Fed PAC** (Federal Political Action Committee) was created two years ago to help PEGG protect your interests in Washington, D.C.

By joining the PEGC Fed PAC you will be helping PEGC have a voice in securing federal funding for state transportation, water, energy, school, environmental and hospital programs; protecting your job from wasteful, overpriced outsourcing and providing competitive wages and benefits for public employees.

You can download the PEGC Fed PAC application at:
<http://www.pecg.org/Benefits/FED-PAC.pdf>

Join today!

PEGC ISSUES

If you have any questions or comments about bargaining, job related issues, benefits, etc please contact one of the officers listed on the first page or you can also browse through the PEGC website at: pecg.org or the Section's website at: sandiegopecg.org

Comments and Suggestions

If you have any comments/suggestions regarding this newsletter, please contact

Section President, Pedro Aguilar at:

Phone: (858) 688-1372

Email: pedro_aguilar@dot.ca.gov

Or **Section Director, Naser Ghaderi** at:

Phone: (619) 220-5468

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