



Antelope Valley Transit Authority

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Date: January 17, 2012

AVTA SEEKS SUPPORT FROM CONGRESSMAN

LANCASTER – The valley’s congressman has decided to co-sponsor a transportation bill that strongly supports the Antelope Valley Transit Authority. AVTA officials recently met with Rep. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon to discuss the Transit System Flexibility Protection Act of 2011. The legislation would allow small transit systems, like AVTA, greater flexibility in the use of their federal funds.

Three members of AVTA’s Board of Directors and the Executive Director encouraged McKeon to be the first California Representative to co-sponsor the legislation. HR 3545 would allow small transit systems with 75 vehicles or less to use 50% of Federal 5307 funds to operate bus service. These funds are heavily restricted and cannot be easily used to cover operating expenses.

“Support of the reauthorization bill would not increase funding but would increase spending flexibility,” stated AVTA Executive Director Julie Austin. “HB 3545 is in dire need of co-sponsorship by a California Representative and it is gratifying to know we are strongly supported.”

If the legislation is passed, AVTA would have more flexibility to spend 50% of its \$4.5 million in Federal 5307 funds. Currently, AVTA can use about \$1.1 million of these federal funds to pay for operating expenses, but even this option will go away eventually if the legislation is not passed.

“Whenever you can sit down and speak directly with federal decision makers it’s invaluable,” stated Chairman of the Board Norm Hickling. “I think we made some strides and look forward to future legislative efforts that will have a positive impact on our transit system and the service provided to our community.”

McKeon was also given a tour of AVTA’s state of the art administration and maintenance facilities, including a \$9 million federally funded construction project that is currently underway.

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