

Agenda Item Number 10.b

Regional Voice, Legislative Agenda

Presenter: George Kloeppe

Action Recommended: Invite Legislative Delegation and Review/Approve Key Legislative Issues

The staff and the Executive Committee have discussed the “Regional Voice” concept with the intergovernmental professionals from Eugene and Springfield, and this recommendation stems from those conversations. This aspect of the Climate of Prosperity effort is viewed as a means of enhancing the reach and the effectiveness of the communications of local governments with the Legislature. By design, policy positions on a small number of important legislative issues would be endorsed in advance of the Session by member governments—ideally all LCOG members—and that package would be transmitted, with a strong Regional Voice, to Lane County legislators and, indeed, all members of the Legislative Assembly. In a fiscal environment that might be expected to exist in the 2011 Session, there will be many contending forces and, particularly when issues of money are involved, considerable risk to important local priorities might be anticipated. The challenge for the LCOG organization is to find those key issues upon which broad (unanimous) agreement can be reached. With such agreement, local governments in this region can have a significant voice in the State’s policy making and budgeting processes.

Under this agenda item, a list of possible legislative topics will be distributed for the Board’s review. A number of possible topics have been explored by the staff and the Executive Committee, and at this writing, the list needs further refinement. However, the thrust will undoubtedly include **opposition to mandates and preemptions, opposition to fees imposed by the State on local governments, opposition to limitations on local revenue generation options, and protection of existing revenue streams, notably “state shared revenue,” to local government.**

Board members are encouraged to discuss the proposed positions, but may wish to take a little time to consider whether a “thumbs-up” or a “thumbs-down” can be given. Only after such a review can the viability of the Regional Voice concept be known. It should be noted that the intergovernmental professionals from this region’s larger jurisdictions will be able to “carry” the Regional Voice positions in their ongoing interaction with the legislators. Hence, the combined “weight” of 28 jurisdictions of various kinds, expressing a single position, will represent a valuable tool for the IGR staff members from our largest jurisdictions. For example, in addition to telling a legislative committee a particular position supported by the City of Eugene, Brenda Wilson can say that it is also the position of the following named local governments... A stronger Regional Voice.

It is also recommended that the Board invite the members of Lane County’s legislative delegation to the September 30 meeting. The purpose would be to hear the representatives’ views about, and priorities for, the 2011 Session, and for LCOG to convey to the delegation the key policy and legislative issues upon which LCOG members have reached a united position and are thus able to speak with a Regional Voice.