

Napolitano: Invest in transit infrastructure_12/1/11

Veteran congresswoman Grace Napolitano, D-Santa Fe Springs, sees major transit needs in her 38th District and across the San Gabriel Valley, with some important projects under way to help alleviate problem areas, like busy railroad crossings.

A top concern is the need for more transit infrastructure, and better funding "We have so many projects that are aging, where the infrastructure hasn't been kept up because of lack of funding," Napolitano said.

Key transit issues facing the San Gabriel Valley include the 57-60 freeway interchange, railroad crossing projects in cities like San Gabriel and Industry, and commuter buses and rail projects, according to Napolitano.

The 57/60 freeway convergence forces drivers to merge in a relatively short distance and also causes them to weave across lanes to get onto their desired freeway.

"That is a mess and there are no earmarks," Napolitano said.

She said she and fellow local legislators are working to push road improvement projects forward for the interchange.

Napolitano also said railroad crossing improvement projects, currently under way by Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority, are key for the San Gabriel Valley.

The projects aim to reduce traffic congestion and help improve air quality by building bridges, underpasses and a trench at the busiest railroad crossings in the San Gabriel Valley.

"It reduces the pollutants in the air for the communities and it also reduces road rage," she pointed out. "That's a win-win."

ACE is building a railroad trench to alleviate traffic at four heavily impacted crossings in San Gabriel.

The congresswoman stressed the need for more mass transit, including buses and rail.

Napolitano also said legislators have also had successes getting funding to help Foothill Transit introduce environmentally friendly electric buses.

"Foothill Transit has gone above and beyond, including their Ecoliner buses," Napolitano said. "We were able to get them \$10 million for those electric buses."

She said she's hoping to see the Metro Goldline extension help ease the traffic jams that plague the 10 Freeway as commuters trek in and out of Los Angeles for their workdays.

"I'm hoping that will go all the way out to the Inland Empire," she said. "We've reached \$7 million (in funding) with the help of Adam Schiff (D-Pasadena)."

Napolitano urged her constituents to let their representatives know what they feel transportation priorities should be.

"Let us know so we can alert our transportation staff to what we need to know to move things forward and move things along," she said.

by Bethania Palma 12-1-11