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AB 1599: California Transit Stop Registry

SUMMARY

AB 1599 requires Caltrans to establish a centralized California Transit Stop Registry with standardized information for all public transit stops in the state.

BACKGROUND

Existing law establishes the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and grants it various powers and responsibilities, including the oversight and funding of public transit through the Mills-Alquist-Deddeh Act, also known as the Transportation Development Act (TDA).

Caltrans, as the state's lead agency for public transportation planning, administers the TDA to fund and support transit agencies across California. While the current system allows each agency to manage its own data, the lack of statewide standards hinders data interoperability, ultimately impacting the reliability and quality of information available to Consumers and planners. Strengthening statewide data standards and coordination would improve efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and enhance the overall experience for transit riders and stakeholders.

California's public transit system is operated by hundreds of local and regional agencies, each maintaining separate datasets for transit stop names, locations, and amenities, even when the stop locations are the same. These datasets are crucial for trip-planning applications, mobility platforms, researchers, and the public. The lack of a unified, standardized statewide dataset leads to inconsistencies, duplicate efforts, and data mismatches across agencies and platforms, making it difficult to provide accurate and reliable transit information.

PROBLEM

California's public transit system faces significant challenges due to fragmented and inconsistent data across agencies. Variations in transit stop names, locations, and identifiers create confusion and errors in trip-planning tools and open data platforms, making it difficult for Consumers, researchers, and third-party developers to access accurate information. Transit agencies report multiple redundant datasets and frequently address third-party data-correction requests, thereby increasing administrative burdens and diverting resources from essential operations. These inconsistencies also undermine the reliability of trip-planning apps, especially for Consumers transferring between systems, discouraging public transit use. The absence of a centralized, authoritative naming scheme and registry for transit stops perpetuates these problems, leading to ongoing discrepancies and making it difficult to target state investments to the greatest overall need. Establishing a unified registry would streamline data management, enhance interoperability, and improve the overall transit experience for Consumers, agencies and the trip planning applications that connect them.

SOLUTION

AB 1599 aims to resolve data inconsistencies in California's public transit system by establishing a centralized, standardized approach. The bill requires Caltrans to create the California Transit Stop Registry by December 31, 2026, which will include standardized information such as name, location, amenities, and a unique identifier for every transit stop in California.

Transit agencies receiving Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding must, by June 1, 2027, ensure their stop names and locations match those in the registry and use the registry's unique identifier in published datasets, including GTFS feeds, stop amenity datasets, ridership data and other relevant datasets with stop information. By creating a single statewide reference point, AB 1599 will improve data quality and interoperability, leading to more accurate trip planning, better coordination across agencies, and more efficient data management.

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