

Proposition 51: Transportation. Distribution of Existing Motor Vehicle Sales and Use Tax

What would it do?

Proposition 51 would redirect to transportation-related purposes 30% of the sales tax revenue from the lease and sale of new and used motor vehicles that currently goes to General Fund supported programs. Under the measure, these revenues would continue to be deposited in the General Fund and then transferred to a new Traffic Congestion Relief and Safe School Bus Trust Fund. The money in this new fund would be used as follows:

- 48% of the funds would go toward passenger rail and bus transit, including the construction and improvement of transit facilities and the purchase of transit vehicles
- 25% of the funds would go toward traffic congestion and safety programs
- 15% of the funds would be used on environmental projects such as wildlife habitat and land acquisition to mitigate environmental effects of transportation improvements
- 8% of the funds would be used on grants to replace older school buses and increase fleet size
- 4% of the funds would be used on bicycle and pedestrian projects, such as regional projects to improve the convenience and safety of bicycle travel and bicycle education programs and grants to enforce traffic safety laws along pedestrian and bicycle routes, and to educate the public on safe travel to school

The measure requires money in the new fund to be transferred back to the General Fund in any year in which total General Fund revenues are less than those in the previous year. Additionally, the measure requires the transfer of a smaller amount from the General Fund to the new fund if the growth in General Fund revenues over the previous year is smaller than the amount to be transferred.

Is it good for kids?

No. Proposition 51 would permanently earmark nearly \$1 billion of General Fund money annually for its special interest programs. Opponents claim that the measure contains 45 specific projects written into it which benefit contributors to the Proposition 51 campaign. Further, little or no accountability or oversight is built into the measure. Also, the measure includes several projects that are far afield from its stated purpose, possibly violating the state's "single subject" rule. Finally, the so-called Traffic Congestion Relief and Safe School Bus Trust Fund devotes only a fraction of its sizable funds to child-related programs — a mere 8% of the Fund would go toward buying new school buses.