



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

TUESDAY | Aug. 9, 2005

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

Is Congress Shortchanging L.A.?



Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our web calendar.](#)

THU | Aug. 18

International Trade & Investment Council Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Aug. 23

Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

WED | Sept. 7

Health Care Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Sept. 13

Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

WED | Sept. 14

Member Orientation
[more info](#)

WED | Sept. 14

New Member Reception
[more info](#)

THU | Sept. 15

Environmental Quality Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

FRI | Sept. 16

Accenture Pancakes & Politics
[more info](#)

FRI | Sept. 16

Education and Workforce Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Sept. 20

Transportation & Goods Movement Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | Sept. 22

Economic Development & Land Use Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | Sept. 22

Trade Briefing: Doing Business with Israel
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, with more than 1,400 members, is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

350 S. Bixel St.
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213.580.7500 tel
213.580.7511 fax
info@lachamber.org

Over the last several years we have been singing a certain song, and many people now know the chorus. The Los Angeles area does not receive its fair share of money from Washington, D.C.--nor are we effectively organized to get it. We receive only 79 cents on every dollar we send, while many other areas receive more than they give. It just isn't fair and needs to be changed.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa deserves a lot of praise for his recent efforts in Washington, D.C. to secure more of our region's fair share of federal transportation dollars. We hope he will join us next spring as the Chamber takes our delegation to Washington for Access D.C., an annual trip run by the Chamber that has grown each year for the past four years. We take business, political and community leaders from throughout the region to Washington to lobby as a group for our interests.

When it comes to transportation, we're definitely a donor state and a donor region. This, despite the fact that California's transportation has a tremendous impact on the national economy. Forty-three percent of the nation's imports enter our country through Los Angeles County, and if our transportation system crumbles into gridlock, so will our national economy.

Thanks to the efforts of Mayor Villaraigosa and our congressional delegation, we will soon be receiving 92 cents back on each dollar generated by federal gas taxes--a modest gain.

The federal transportation dollars earmarked for L.A. County are not remarkable, nor is the success in obtaining a few more dollars than years past--especially when you compare the share of transportation dollars between Kern County (population 745,000), which received \$722 million, to L.A. County (population 10 million), which received \$625 million.

Kern County has no seaports, no international airports, nor any significant homeland security threat. So why do our neighbors to the north strike gold?

Because their single member of Congress serves as chair of arguably the most important committee in the House of Representatives, the Ways & Means Committee, which helps dole out billions of federal dollars.

L.A. County, with a population greater than 41 states in America, has one member on Ways & Means, Xavier Becerra. L.A. County has one member on the Transportation Committee, Juanita Millender-McDonald. L.A. County has one member on the powerful Appropriations Committee, Lucille Roybal-Allard.

Where is L.A. County's representation? We have great representation on committees that do not allocate money. Five, to be exact, on the House International Relations Committee (none of whom voted for CAFTA, incidentally) and four on the House Judiciary Committee. But not nearly enough on the committees that can improve our infrastructure.

Yes, L.A. County is a Democratic stronghold and the Democrats in are in the minority. But that is no excuse and has not kept Lucille Roybal-Allard, Juanita Millender-McDonald and Xavier Becerra from sending significant federal dollars our way. They have each been able to work with their Republican colleagues, some of whom are more committed than ever to secure federal funds for L.A.'s Gold Line and other important projects. We truly appreciate their efforts.

What does get in their way is too many of their colleagues having what should not be referred to as wrong priorities, but rather duplicative priorities.

Do we really need four members of our delegation on the Judiciary Committee and five on the International Relations Committee? Yes, these are important committees, but there's little to show for it in terms of direct benefits to Los Angeles. (To be fair, we commend Rep. Howard Berman, who is the second-highest-ranking member on the Judiciary, for fighting for \$130 million for extending the HOV lane on the 405 freeway).

We need more members of our congressional delegation to get on the right committees and diversify our portfolio, so that when our charismatic and energetic mayor lobbies Congress for federal dollars, his efforts can be maximized to the fullest extent--whether it be for transportation, education, health care, law enforcement or other funding needs.

And that's the *Business Perspective*.

The Business Perspective is an award-winning weekly opinion column by Rusty Hammer, President & CEO, LA Area Chamber

L.A. Business THIS WEEK

View the latest issue of the Chamber's [weekly email newsletter](#). [Contact us](#) to subscribe.



Russell J. Hammer
President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

TALK BACK TO THE CHAMBER

Please tell us your thoughts on this issue. Include your name, company and email address and your response may appear in next week's *Business Perspective*.

[Submit Response](#)

(Use this link if the above form does not work with your email program.)

Powered by



Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, 350 S. Bixel St., Los Angeles, CA 90017
213.580.7500 | fax: 213.580.7511 | info@lachamber.org | www.lachamber.org

[Modify](#) your profile or [unsubscribe](#) from this list automatically. If you request to be taken off this list, the LA Area Chamber will honor your request pursuant to [CoolerEmail's](#) permission-based email terms and conditions.
