



MEMO

To: NCRA Board of Directors
From: Executive Director Mitch Stogner
Date: April 8, 2009
Subject: **Agenda Item E.3 – ISTEА and Stimulus Funding**

On November 20 and February 20, 2009, Chairman Hemphill sent letters to Congressman Mike Thompson, Senator Barbara Boxer, and Senator Dianne Feinstein requesting \$36 million in Federal Stimulus funding to complete repairs on the Russian River Division from Windsor to Willits. Though less likely in terms of meeting the federal eligibility criteria, a request was also made for \$30 million in federal funds to complete repairs on a belt line from South Fork to Samoa.

The Windsor – Willits request for \$36.3 seems to fit the criteria established under the \$1.5 billion National Surface Transportation Discretionary Grants provisions of the ARRA (Stimulus) legislation. Freight rail transportation projects are specifically eligible under this program. Priority is given to projects that require an additional share of federal funds to complete financing. (Phase 1 of the Russian River Division is funded entirely with state funds. This requested increment of federal funding would complete the 142 mile Russian River Division). Priority is also given to projects expected to be completed within 3 years of ARRA (Stimulus) enactment. Final competitive program criteria will be publicized by May 17 and applications must be received by DOT by November 2009. NCRA’s \$36 million Stimulus request for Windsor – Willits has the support of the Mendocino Council of Governments and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority.

In addition to the Stimulus request for Windsor to Willits, NCRA staff has begun monthly meetings with CalTrans and FHWA staff to clarify steps required to access the \$8.85 million ISTEА grant that was designated for NCRA in 1996. With the 20% local match, NCRA’s ISTEА request would total \$11.094 million for the following projects:

- \$1.040 for Quiet Zone Warning Devices, welded rail, landscaping improvements, and fencing improvements called-for in Novato Settlement Agreement;
- \$10.054 for repairs to crossing signals, bridges, drainage facilities and track on the 23 mile stretch from Windsor – Cloverdale. (Note: If ISTEА funding is approved, the need under the Stimulus request for that section of track would be reduced by a like amount);
- If the above projects can be delivered under the estimated budget, NCRA requests the use of \$1.5 million to automate the Black Point Bridge.

Staff Recommendation: For discussion purposes only.

