Date of Hearing: April 13, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
Lori D. Wilson, Chair
AB 2307 (Sanchez) – Amended April 6, 2026

SUBJECT: Transportation: traffic signal synchronization pilot program: Western Riverside Council of Governments.

SUMMARY: Authorizes the Western Riverside Council of Governments, in coordination with the California Department of Transportation to establish and administer a traffic signal synchronization pilot program until January 1, 2032. Specifically, **this bill**:

1) Authorizes the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG), in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to establish and administer a traffic signal synchronization pilot program for the local agencies constituting the WRCOG to evaluate a regional model for coordinating traffic signal timing between state highways and local street and road systems.

2) Requires Caltrans to participate in the pilot program and review work plans, data standards, and evaluation methodologies.

3) Authorizes WRCOG's member local agencies, at their own cost and in coordination with WRCOG, to conduct studies, implement coordinated signal timing plans, and deploy technology or communication upgrades necessary to improve traffic signal synchronization and operational coordination between state highways and local arterials.

4) Specifies the following eligible activities under the pilot program, including but not limited to: traffic signal synchronization studies, corridor-level operational analyses, implementation of coordinated and adaptive signal timing plans, upgrades to traffic signal hardware or software, deployment of detection and communications infrastructure, and data collection and performance monitoring related to travel time reliability, congestion reduction, safety, and emissions outcomes.

5) Requires WRCOG, in coordination with Caltrans, to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program, including assessing impacts on congestion, travel time reliability, operational efficiency, and vehicle emissions.

6) On or before January 1, 2028, requires WRCOG to submit a report to the Legislature summarizing the pilot's outcomes and performance, identifying best practices and implementation challenges, and making recommendations regarding the applicability of the pilot program statewide.

7) Sunsets and repeals the bill's language on January 1, 2032.

EXISTING LAW:

1) Authorizes local governments to time traffic signals to permit the movement of traffic in an orderly and safe manner at speeds slightly at variance from maximum speed limits (Vehicle Code §22401).

2) Pursuant to the Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, and Port Security Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 1B), approved by the voters on November 7, 2006, created the Traffic Light Synchronization Program, which authorized $250 million to fund traffic light synchronization projects and other technology-based improvements to improve safety operations and the effective capacity of local streets and roads.

3) Makes eligible for cap and invest auction revenues investments in traffic signal synchronization as a component of an eligible sustainable infrastructure project if a governing body finds that the traffic signal synchronization component is designed and implemented to achieve cost-effective reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (Streets and Highways Code §2581).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: According to a 2024 University of Michigan study, traffic congestion at more than 320,000 signalized intersections in the U.S. is estimated to cost drivers nearly $23 billion annually in direct and indirect costs. These costs include wasted fuel and excess time waiting at lights that are not synchronized.

Traffic signal retiming or synchronization generally refers to an engineering practice of sequencing the timing of traffic lights via vehicle detectors along a corridor to improve traffic flow. Synchronization calculates when a group of vehicles traveling at a set speed will reach each intersection. When signals are strategically timed, drivers arrive at the next light just as it turns green, allowing traffic to flow smoothly with minimal delay. Synchronization is widely considered one of the most cost-effective solutions for reducing congestion and fuel consumption given that few changes to infrastructure are required. Studies show that signal synchronization reduces travel delay between 13% and 94%, decreases travel times, and reduces greenhouse gas and other emissions.

Unfortunately, high installation and maintenance costs of vehicle detectors have deterred widespread use of detector-based systems. The installation costs of a detection system at a single intersection can be as high as $50,000. Thus, a large proportion of signalized intersections in the U.S. do not have detection capabilities and are still controlled by fixed-time traffic signals. Signal retiming at these intersections typically requires manual data collections and is typically only done every three to five years.

According to the author. "Riverside County is one of the fastest-growing regions in California, with cities like Murrieta consistently meeting their state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) housing targets. This growth increases the need for efficient traffic systems. Traffic signal synchronization remains one of the most cost-effective strategies to lower drive time, improve traffic flow, and reduce emissions. However, signal coordination between local agencies and Caltrans is often limited by jurisdictional boundaries and administrative delays. AB 2307 is a commonsense solution to support the region's continued growth."

Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) Pilot. WRCOG, comprised of 18 cities including the cities of Riverside, Corona, Moreno Valley, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta and Temecula, believes that this bill is necessary because many if not all of its priority intersections (e.g., east-west corridors which cross one or more freeways like I-15 and I-215) involve Caltrans' controlled signals at or adjacent to freeways. WRCOG states that while Caltrans'

signals are operated to minimize delays on freeways they have the effect of exacerbating congestion on local roads. In fact, of the more than 400 signalized intersections in the southwest area of the WRCOG (20% of which are reportedly controlled by Caltrans), only about one-third are synchronized. WRCOG also asserts that Caltrans does not inform its members when they change the timing of state signals potentially impacting local traffic congestion.

Prop 1B Funded the Traffic Light Synchronization Program. The Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, and Port Security Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 1B) authorized $250 million to fund traffic light synchronization and other similar projects. Of this amount, $150 million was earmarked for the City of Los Angeles and the balance to other projects across the state. According to the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, the city synchronized all of its more than 4,500 traffic lights by 2013, increasing travel speeds by 16% and reducing travel times by 12%. Sixty other jurisdictions also receive grant funding under this program including, of relevance to this bill, the Cities of Murrieta, Corona, and Temecula.

Committee comments. While this bill is not necessary to implement a local pilot program, WRCOG has expressed frustration about Caltrans' alleged lack of responsiveness or commitment to participate in synchronization coordination efforts. This bill could serve as a tool to help ensure Caltrans works constructively with WRCOG on signal synchronization efforts. To minimize state costs, this bill requires the pilot to be 100% locally funded though it is unclear if there would be additional costs to Caltrans.

At the same time, precedents exist of Caltrans working collaboratively with local jurisdictions on synchronization. For example, Caltrans has executed MOUs with local jurisdictions such as the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, the City of Hesperia, and the City of Riverside, a member of WRCOG. These MOUs generally require a local government to procure and install synchronization technology on Caltrans' owned signals and authorize the local government to develop signal "timing plans" in coordination with Caltrans.

Given the benefits of signal synchronization, this pilot and the required report could inform whether the Legislature should codify a statewide policy on signal synchronization to streamline local-state coordination and avoid bills requiring region-specific pilots.

The Southwest Elected Leaders Collaborative, sponsor of this bill, writes in support, "This bill establishes a carefully structured pilot program that is funded entirely by [WRCOG], leverages local expertise and real-time data, and includes CalTrans collaboration. The pilot's reporting requirements will provide the Legislature with meaningful performance data to evaluate outcomes and inform future signal synchronization policies and funding decisions. For the Southwest Riverside region, this pilot represents an opportunity to improve mobility, support economic activity, and reduce environmental impacts without costly roadway expansion. For the state, it offers a replicable model of regional collaboration that can be evaluated before broader implementation."

Related legislation. AB 1447 (Waldron), Chapter 594, Statutes of 2014 authorized moneys in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to be allocated for investments in a traffic signal synchronization component that is part of a sustainable infrastructure project if the component is designed and implemented to achieve cost-effective reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and includes specific emissions reduction targets and metrics to evaluate the project's effect.

SB 88 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 181, Statues of 2007 allocated $150 million to any city in the state with a population of over 3.5 million persons as of January 1, 2007 to upgrade and install traffic synchronization technology.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

City of Lake Elsinore
City of Menifee
City of Murrieta
City of Temecula
City of Wildomar
County of Riverside
Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce
Menifee Valley Chamber of Commerce
Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce
Riverside County Transportation Commission
Riverside Transit Agency
Temecula Chamber of Commerce
Western Riverside Council of Governments

Opposition

None on file

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