

State Climate Resilience Improvement Plan for Transportation (SCRIPT) FAQs 2024

What is the federal PROTECT Program?

As part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, otherwise known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) in 2021, the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Federal Aid Program was created. PROTECT's purpose is to help make surface transportation more resilient to natural hazards, including climate change, sea level rise, flooding, extreme weather events, and other natural disasters through support of planning activities, resilience improvements, community resilience and evacuation routes, and at-risk coastal infrastructure. From 2022 through 2026, the State of California will receive \$631 million in PROTECT formula funds to advance these resilience goals through state, regional, and local projects. For more information on the PROTECT formula funds, see [FHWA's fact sheet](#). FHWA will also allocate \$1.4 billion in [PROTECT Discretionary Grants](#) nationwide.

What is the SCRIPT?

The PROTECT Program invites state DOTs to create a Resilience Improvement Plan, an optional component that can reduce the state and local cost-share of certain identified PROTECT projects from 20% to 10%. The SCRIPT is California's version of this optional component. The SCRIPT summarizes the breadth of existing climate adaptation policies, tools, guidance, and activities that have positioned Caltrans and its partners to take a systemic approach to making immediate and long-range investments to improve the resilience of the multi-modal transportation system to climate change impacts. The time horizon of the SCRIPT is from the onset of IIJA through the aligned effective date of the [California Transportation Plan 2050](#) (2021-2050). The SCRIPT has the potential to save the state, and eligible regional and local partners, a significant amount in PROTECT matching funds.

What is included in the SCRIPT?

The SCRIPT illustrates California's plan for achieving climate resilience in both transportation planning and project delivery by:

- summarizing the California policy context of the driving legislation, executive orders, policies, and science that have advanced agency planning;
- sharing existing and planned transportation climate adaptation efforts;
- explaining the foundation of existing climate resilience planning through previously completed vulnerability and risk-based assessments of the transportation system that have allowed for data-driven investment decisions (i.e., the 2019 and 2020 Caltrans District Vulnerability Assessments & Adaptation Priority Reports);
- explaining how the PROTECT program is administered in California, specifically through programs established by Senate Bill (SB) 198 (Government Code § 14560), and;
- including an unconstrained Project Priority List identifying projects selected for PROTECT formula funding and applying for discretionary funding.

What is SB 198?

[SB 198 \(Government Code § 14560\)](#) directs the use of PROTECT Program funds to ensure alignment with existing state climate adaptation policy and guidance, including additional requirements around consideration of climate risk and alignment with [California's Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) (CAS). SB 198 established two programs to oversee the state's implementation of PROTECT funds: the State Transportation Infrastructure Climate Adaptation Program (STCAP) and the competitive Local Transportation Infrastructure Climate Adaptation Program (LTCAP). The intent of SB 198 is to leverage existing state programs and the new federal PROTECT program for the identification and assessment of climate vulnerabilities and associated risks, and the implementation of transportation projects that holistically and equitably adapt to those risks.

What does the SCRIPT mean for PROTECT nominated projects in MPO or RTPA areas? How can projects be added into the SCRIPT project list?

Certain projects included in the SCRIPT's unconstrained Project Priority List ("PPL", see Appendix F of the SCRIPT document), if subsequently awarded PROTECT funds, may receive a 10% reduction in the non-federal cost share requirement for future grant cycles. The PPL identifies projects receiving PROTECT formula funding, as well

as eligible projects that are pursuing discretionary grants in remaining cycles. The SCRIPT's PPL will be periodically updated in coordination with PROTECT stakeholders to reflect new project nominations pursuing discretionary funds in future cycles through 2026, subject to federal review and approval. To request adding a new PROTECT project nomination to the SCRIPT PPL, please submit a [SCRIPT PPL Request Intake Form](#).

Can MPOs and RTPAs create their own Resilience Improvement Plan?

Yes, though doing so is not required to receive the non-federal cost share reduction benefit for PROTECT projects in their regions, if their PROTECT project nominations are approved to be included in the SCRIPT PPL and ultimately awarded funds.

When did Caltrans conduct vulnerability and risk assessments of the State Highway System?

Caltrans conducted the [Caltrans Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments](#) (VAs) for the State Highway System in 2019, evaluating temperature, precipitation, sea level rise, cliff retreat, and wildfire risk. Subsequently, Caltrans completed [Adaptation Priority Reports](#) (APRs) in 2020, which build on the results of the VAs and prioritize potentially exposed assets in each Caltrans District by conducting risk assessments of exposure and consequence. The APRs found that statewide there are thousands of high priority assets, including roadways, bridges, and culverts, that are at risk to climate change using the methodology explained in SCRIPT section 3.2.

Caltrans launched a Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Update in June 2023 with results expected by early 2025, after which the process will be more inclusive for use in evaluating projected climate stressors on all modes of transportation. These updates will reflect strategic priorities for Caltrans by incorporating multi-modal considerations for transit, rail, and active transportation, as well as a focus on equity and integration of Caltrans' Transportation Equity Index into the analysis. The results of the updated analysis will contribute to future prioritization of adaptation projects and identification of funding needs.

How does PROTECT benefit transit, rail, and active transportation infrastructure?

Public transportation facilities or services eligible for assistance under Chapter 53 of Title 49, including transit facilities and active transportation facilities, are eligible for and are benefiting from PROTECT funding. PROTECT's intended use is to fund only the climate adaptation elements of projects involving those and other eligible facilities, i.e., shade structures or shelters at bus stops. PROTECT formula funding is (so far) supporting \$18 million in passenger rail resilience projects, and \$3.5 million in shade structure projects along transit routes to alleviate impacts of extreme temperatures in disadvantaged communities (DACs).¹ Caltrans will continue promoting resilience improvements for multi-modal infrastructure in future FHWA discretionary grant funding opportunities. Benefits to multi-modal facilities are also carefully considered in project evaluations per the [LTCAP Guidelines](#).

How is equity considered in PROTECT project prioritization/implementation?

Equity is integral to PROTECT project nomination and prioritization processes and evaluations, as driven by requirements described in the [Federal Justice40 Initiative](#), SB 198 statutes, and related existing state and department policies. SB 198 requires projects funded by the STCAP to consider the degree to which the project incorporates environmental equity, protects vulnerable and under-resourced communities, and provides benefits to underserved communities, consistent with the CAS. SB 198 also requires that for projects funded by the LTCAP, the local agency conducts outreach to under-resourced and vulnerable communities related to the proposed project, consistent with the CAS and as reflected in the LTCAP Guidelines.

Caltrans-led applications for Cycle One of the FHWA Discretionary Grants were selected by evaluating their overall alignment with SB 198, as well as the [Draft Interim Caltrans System Investment Strategy](#) policies, including benefits to DACs as a focal point. A few of the primary tools used to evaluate project proximity to identified DACs are the [Federal CEJST tool](#), [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#), and [Healthy Places Index 3.0](#). Caltrans policy emphasizes the importance of investing and administering state transportation resources in a way that recognizes past, stops current, and prevents future harm from Department actions (See [Caltrans' Equity Statement](#)). For more information on equity in PROTECT implementation, see SCRIPT sections 4.2 and 4.3.

¹ Federal definition of DACs: "disadvantaged communities are those that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution", see Executive Order 14008 (86 FR 7619), as referenced in PROTECT Guidance.