

El Dorado officials blast transit bill

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Published Wednesday, May. 06, 2009

Legislation by freshman Assemblywoman Alyson Huber to give El Dorado Hills constituents more say in how transportation dollars are spent in El Dorado County is being condemned by local officials as an attempt to aid developers.

Huber on April 15 amended Assembly Bill 1204 to expand the six-member El Dorado County Transportation Commission with three appointments by the El Dorado Hills Community Services District. In its current form, the commission comprises three county supervisors and three Placerville City Council members.

Huber did not consult commission members until after the amendments were introduced. By then several of them had learned about it from other sources.

"I'm outraged, to say the least. It is sneaky," said Pierre Rivas of the Placerville City Council, which last week voted to oppose the bill.

"It would have been nice to have had some advance knowledge," said El Dorado Hills resident and county Supervisor John Knight, who said he favors a change in membership but questioned extending special representation to one unincorporated community and not others.

Huber said she was trying to beat a legislative deadline and didn't have time to talk to commissioners first.

"The language that is proposed, I don't even agree with," she said, adding that she is seeking alternatives that would be fair to the entire county.

Huber said she will attend Thursday's Transportation Commission meeting.

The commission allocates Transportation Development Act funds in western El Dorado County, but the county and city determine what projects to pursue in their respective jurisdictions.

El Dorado Hills residents have complained that their community, the most populous in the county, has been shortchanged by a commission makeup that favors Placerville.

Knight said he has reviewed transportation projects and funding and doesn't believe any area has been shortchanged.

Of funds allocated for projects from 1995-2006, Placerville City Manager John Driscoll said, the city received \$4.1 million, or 7 percent, and the county received \$53 million, or 93 percent. Driscoll said he did not include the \$43.5 million improvement to Highway 50 through Placerville because it was a state project.

City officials said they feared Huber's bill was influenced by development interests and would result in the diversion of funds to projects that are supposed to be covered by fees levied on developers.

Kathryn Mathews, the El Dorado County commission's executive director, said the composition of other transportation commissions varies.

Thursday's Transportation Commission meeting will begin at 2 p.m. in the Building C Hearing Room, 2850 Fair Lane Court, Placerville.

Call The Bee's Cathy Locke, (916) 608-7451.