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**Brown Tries Again For Regional Agency
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Brown tries again for regional agency

■ 'Son of AB 4242' is introduced by Assembly speaker — but with some named differences

By DAVID HAGERTY
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State Assembly Speaker Willie Brown introduced legislation Tuesday — similar to this year's controversial Assembly Bill 4242 — that would establish regional growth management agencies in California. These agencies would coordinate activities among local officials and agencies on issues that transcend their jurisdictions.

The seven regional boards, consisting of 13 elected officials, would draft long-term growth and development plans, with elements in them regulating air and water quality, transportation, housing, open space preservation, and growth boundaries for urban areas.

Local and county plans and development projects would have to conform to the region's plan, and the regional board would have review authority over individual proposals.

In the Bay Area, several existing regulatory agencies would be subsumed by the region's new body, including the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Associa-

tion of Bay Area Governments, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and each of the local water quality boards.

All of Solano County would be included in the Bay Area's jurisdiction.

The new measure — Assembly Bill 3 — is similar to AB 4242, drafted last year by Brown, which he withdrew after it failed to win support in Assembly committees.

There are several important differences between the two bills, however.

Unlike its predecessor, the new plan would establish a state Growth Management Commission to oversee the ac-

tivities of each of the seven regional agencies. That body would draft a State Conservation-Development Plan identifying long-term goals for all of California. The 19-member commission, appointed by the governor, would have review authority over the seven regional bodies, and would also be responsible for resolving disputes between them.

The second major difference is that provisions in the new plan allow each of the seven regions to establish its own regulatory systems. Providing these alternative systems suc-

ceeded at meeting state requirements on issues such as clean air, water, traffic congestion, and waste disposal, the substitute bodies would be exempt from the legislation's mandates.

This exemption could affect the Bay Area, where several existing regional bodies, including ABAG and Bay Vision 2020, are working on their own plans to manage these large scale issues.

Mike Haymond, chairman of Bay Vision, travelled to Sacramento this week to meet with legislators on the regional government issue. Haymond concluded that Brown's bill is consistent with Bay Vision's objectives, and would — if passed — accommodate proposals made by the body for the Bay Area.

Other interested parties, including state Assemblyman Tom Hannigan, said they had not yet studied the plan thoroughly enough to take a position on it. Hannigan noted Brown made several changes in drafting the new proposal, and said he would "look at it very warily."

Solano County Supervisor Lee Simmons said although she believed some regionalization in government bodies is necessary, the issues are very complicated.

Last year, several Benicia residents convinced county supervisors to draft a letter questioning the constitutionality of Brown's regional government plan.