



February 3, 2017

Chairman Jim Beall
 Senate Transportation & Housing Committee
 State Capitol, Room 2209
 Sacramento CA 95814

Chairman Jim Frazier
 Assembly Transportation Committee
 1020 N St, Room 112
 Sacramento CA 95814

Secretary Brian Kelly
 California State Transportation Agency
 915 Capitol Mall, Suite 350B
 Sacramento CA 95814

Re: Transportation Funding Proposals in Governor’s January Budget, Senate “California Rebuild” Infrastructure Package, and Assembly Bill 1

Dear Senator Beall, Assemblymember Frazier, and Secretary Kelly,

The undersigned organizations represent active transportation, public transit, public health, social justice, environmental, and environmental justice organizations that have a strong interest in how California invests federal and state transportation dollars. Our coalition has actively participated in the transportation funding dialogue throughout the last two years, and provided recommendations aimed at improving past legislative and budget proposals.

We appreciate the importance of maintaining our existing road infrastructure, and the urgency to find a funding solution as maintenance costs continue to climb. With that recognition in mind we have focused our collective position on five priority recommendations, as well as support for provisions currently in print in one or more of the funding proposals. However, we still strongly believe that funding for our roads must be balanced with investments in a future transportation system that protects our environment, promotes social and economic justice, and improves our communities.

The three transportation funding proposals under consideration--the Governor’s January Budget, SB 1, and AB 1--are not balanced. All three propose more than a billion dollars a year to build new and

expand existing roadways, in addition to several billion dollars more for road maintenance, dwarfing proposed investment to build and operate public transit systems and facilities for walking and bicycling.

We support the “fix-it-first” concept in these proposals, and the following specific provisions for investment in active transportation, public transit, and cleaner air:

- **Combine Legislative and Governor’s recommendations to the Active Transportation Program (Walking & Bicycling)** - We strongly support both the Governor’s Budget proposal for \$100 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), and the proposal in SB 1 and AB 1 for \$150 million from the State Highway Account to increase the Active Transportation Program (ATP). We recommend including both proposals in the final funding package to assist local communities in their efforts to build walking, bicycling, and safe routes to school projects and ensure that rural and urban communities alike share in the benefits of this program.
- **Increase Diesel Sales Tax 3.5% to State Transit Assistance** - Investing additional diesel sales tax of \$216 million in the State Transit Assistance Program, as proposed in SB 1 and AB 1, will be a meaningful down payment toward the larger investment needed to improve operation of existing transit service for individuals who rely on public transit to meet their daily needs.
- **Mitigate Pollution from Goods Movement per SB 4** - As outlined in SB 4, investments in electrification of freight trucks and equipment, and in freight corridors consistent with the Sustainable Freight Action Plan, would ensure cleaner air and reduction of harmful particulates for communities burdened by the freight industry.
- **Invest \$25 million for Sustainable Transportation Grants** - For years, regions have lacked the planning resources necessary to implement SB 375 (Steinberg, 2008) successfully. With the right criteria in place, this program will improve regional agencies’ ability to develop strong plans to implement climate and equity goals in their Sustainable Communities Strategies.

However, we oppose any deal that does not also include the five key principles outlined below:

1. **Advance Social and Economic Justice** - A specific provision should ensure significant investments from this package--not only from the ATP or GGRF programs--provide meaningful benefits for low income communities and people of color who are disproportionately in need of greater mobility, and bear the brunt of the health and safety impacts of our transportation system. This is especially true as vulnerable low-income individuals will pay more than their fair share of the regressive taxes proposed. No transportation investments should impose or increase harmful burdens to air quality or public health of communities, or result in displacement of households. This funding package also presents a great opportunity to create jobs for individuals with barriers to employment.
2. **Dramatically Increase Sustainable Funding for Operating Public Transit** - A significant revenue stream -- on the order of \$1 billion a year -- should be invested in boosting public transit operations and reducing fares, to provide high-quality, efficient transit service especially for low-income individuals and families.
3. **Align Transportation Investments with Our Air Quality & Climate Standards** - Transportation is the single largest emitter of air and climate pollutants in California. To attain federal, health-based clean air and our 2030 and 2050 climate standards, we must prioritize investments that reduce vehicle miles traveled, while also improving air quality, physical health, and access for those without a car. Any funding that could potentially expand freeways or add new road capacity must be tracked and mitigated with projects that contribute to attainment of our air quality and climate standards.
4. **Increase Expertise and Accountability in Decision-making** - The California Transportation Commission is responsible for oversight and approval of federal and state transportation dollars, and serves in an advisory role to the Legislature on transportation policy. As outlined in AB 179, future appointees to the Commission should be required to have expertise in social equity, sustainable transportation, and related policy areas to ensure accountability in investment of new and existing transportation revenue streams to advance state policy goals.

5. **Oppose Any Rollback of CEQA** - The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) allows agencies to review and develop critical mitigation strategies for environmental impacts created by transportation projects. CEQA compliance improves project outcomes, by offering opportunities to inform the public about project benefits, and for the public to inform the project. Sidestepping CEQA will heighten residents' suspicion about projects and undermine a review process designed to protect California's residents and valuable natural resources.

A funding package including these five reforms will ensure progress toward a transportation system that provides clean, affordable access to opportunity for all Californians, and that makes our communities healthy and safe places to live and work while addressing air quality and climate change. We look forward to working with your staff and other transportation stakeholders to find compromise on a revised transportation deal.

Sincerely,

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