

April 30, 2013

Amy Worth, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Mark Luce, President
Association of Bay Area Governments

101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear MTC Chair Worth and ABAG President Luce:

We strongly support regional planning that coordinates Bay Area transportation and housing/land use decisions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to meet the region's full housing needs for people of all incomes, in accordance with SB375. Done well, regional planning will protect our environment, improve our economy, increase social equity, conserve agricultural lands and make our lives safer and more secure. These are issues of region-wide importance that require thoughtful regional policies.

The recently released Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and Equity Analysis provide a wealth of information that should be used to improve the Draft Plan Bay Area approved for study last summer. In particular, we note that the DEIR identifies the Environment, Equity, and Jobs (EEJ) scenario (Alternative 5) as the "environmentally superior alternative among the scenarios analyzed." The EEJ alternative also outperforms the other alternatives on most of the performance targets and equity metrics your agencies have adopted.

Compared to all the other alternatives, the EEJ alternative would bring us less traffic, healthier residents, fewer traffic deaths, more affordable neighborhoods, and it would do a better job of allowing our most vulnerable neighbors to stay in their homes.

We urge MTC and ABAG to incorporate the best elements from the EEJ Alternative and add key mitigations into the Final Plan Bay Area to improve outcomes on a host of issues vital to the future of the region. The following policies should be considered to improve the Draft Plan and mitigate its impacts. Because environmental protection, public health, economic prosperity, and social equity of our region are interconnected, addressing each of these issues will benefit multiple bottom lines. In brief, we urge you to improve the Draft Plan's performance in the following ways:

- **Transit:** Substantially increase funding for transit operations and institute a regional youth bus pass.
- **Highways:** Ensure Express Lanes expand transportation choices, mitigate impacts on low-income commuters, and optimize use of existing highways without building new lanes.
- **Affordable Housing:** Plan for sufficient housing affordable to low-wage workers in all infill locations with access to jobs or transit.
- **Displacement:** Strengthen OneBayArea Grant program to better incentivize local anti-displacement and affordable housing policies. Fund mitigations, such as land banking and housing rehab.

- **Health and Active Transportation:** Fund more active transportation and complete streets programs to maximize health co-benefits of physical activity and transit use. Better mitigate air pollution.
- **Jobs:** Quantify construction jobs and ripple economic impacts from infrastructure investments. Work to ensure that the plan creates local jobs with decent wages, benefits, and career ladders.
- **Sea Level rise:** Incorporate stronger mitigations in impacted areas, embracing emissions reductions strategies, such as setbacks, wetland restoration, and other green infrastructure solutions.
- **Conservation:** Strengthen policies to conserve and invest in parks, open space, habitat, and working lands. Incorporate conservation data into plans and project development and approvals.

Many of us will submit more detailed recommendations on specific elements of the plan, and we are participating in the public workshops and other opportunities to respond to the draft documents. We ask that your staff present options for better addressing these critical issues in the Final Plan by incorporating these and other policies. If we all work together over the next few months, we are confident that the final Plan Bay Area can build on the Bay Area’s strengths to lead the way for the rest of California and the nation.

To follow up on this letter please contact Sam Tepperman-Gelfant with Public Advocates (stepperman-gelfant@publicadvocates.org, 415.431.7430 x324) and Clarrissa Cabansagan with TransForm (ccabansagan@transformca.org, 510.740.3150 x333).

Sincerely,

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Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Wendy Alfsen, Executive Director
California WALKS

Tim Frank, Director
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Cc: Steve Heminger, MTC Executive Director
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