

May 10, 2013

Amy Worth, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Mark Luce, President
Association of Bay Area Governments
cc: Steve Heminger, MTC Executive Director
Ezra Rapport, ABAG Executive Director
cc: League of Women Voters of the Bay Area

Dear MTC Chair Worth and ABAG President Luce:

The League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville joins with the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area in supporting the process of regional planning that has successfully coordinated land use and transportation planning for the draft Plan Bay Area. We specifically endorse the Plan's provisions that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet the region's full housing needs for people of all income levels, in accord with Senate Bill 375.

The League places a high priority on reducing carbon and other emissions from cars and light trucks that worsen air quality and the impacts of climate change. We commend the draft Plan in its provisions that would exceed the threshold of a 15% per capita reduction in greenhouse gases within the Bay Area by 2035. The Plan would promote more compact development in areas with good transit service, thus reducing the use of private vehicles.

Despite the Plan's emphasis on maintaining the existing transportation system, its two largest expenditures are slated to be for a BART extension to San Jose/Santa Clara and a regional express lane system with 120 miles of new freeway lanes. Together, these two projects would cost more than \$15 billion, according to the Plan, although neither appears as one of the top ten high-performing projects of the draft Plan. We urge you to reconsider these projects in light of your own analyses.

The Plan specifies that transit agencies are to be given funds as rewards for increasing ridership and improving productivity -- goals that do not take into account the diverse needs of many residents for affordable transit. We urge that consideration be given to shifting draft Plan funding from high cost, low cost-effective projects to transit operations and transit system maintenance, thus better meeting the public service goal of meeting the needs of all residents.

We commend the regional agencies for their collaborative work to study the rise in sea and bay water levels that will increase at an accelerating rate over the Plan's duration. We are concerned, however, that many draft Plan investments will be located in areas projected to be in flood zones as the sea levels rise. Before new infrastructure and facilities are built in flood-prone areas, risk assessments need to

be performed and mitigation measures, together with funding mechanisms to implement them, need to be designed.

We note that several of the draft Plan's alternatives contain elements that perform somewhat better than those in the "preferred" draft. For example, the "Equity, Environment and Jobs (EEJ)" alternative is judged the "environmentally preferred alternative," and the "Transit Priority Focus (TPF)" alternative is judged superior for transportation. We strongly urge that the elements of the alternatives that offer superior benefits to the environment, provide robust incentives for affordable housing and enhance the services of the transit systems be included in the draft Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the preparation of this most important document that will guide the many individual decisions in the course of developing a better Bay Area over the next 20 years.

Respectfully,

Sherry Smith, President

Nancy Bickel, President-elect