

TA

CORRESPONDENCE

as of 4-23-2021



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CARTER MAU, ACTING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 16, 2021

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
U.S. House of Representatives
272 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Eshoo:

As Congress begins to consider surface transportation reauthorization legislation, I write on behalf of the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA), in the hopes that you will consider the following TA programmatic and funding priorities as part of the reauthorization package.

Transportation is the lifeblood of California's economy - *the world's fifth largest economy* - representing 12 percent of the U.S. population. Supporting additional investments in the state's transportation infrastructure and public transit system powers the entire national economy.

A robust reauthorization bill allows Congress to reaffirm their commitment to transportation and a strong national economy.

TA Reauthorization Priorities:

Support modifications to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Railway-Highway Crossings (Section 130) Program, including increased funding:

- Propose increasing the program by \$1 billion per year. The State of California's entire apportionment was only \$16,722,721 in FY 2021 and the average cost of each grade separation project is between \$150 and \$250 million dollars to complete. This is especially challenging for the Caltrain corridor here in San Mateo County; investments in grade crossing improvements and grade separations are essential priority for the communities we serve here in the County. This is an opportunity to significantly increase annual programmatic federal funding for this vital safety improvement program.
- Additionally, a portion of the funding under the Section 130 program should be set aside for a discretionary grant program that States, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, special purpose districts or public transit agencies, and tribal governments will be eligible to provide more opportunity to compete for funding for grade crossing and grade separation projects.
- Overall, ensure flexibility in funding programs for grade crossing safety improvements and grade separation programs.

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo

April 16, 2021

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Support increased funding in other formula and discretionary programs:

The TA is an active funder and partner for a wide-variety of transportation programs and projects. We regularly identify significant unmet funding needs in highway and major roadway improvements, transit, Transportation Demand Management and first/last mile connection programs, ferry service, active transportation and local street and roads infrastructure improvements. Though our County residents have repeatedly voted to support these programs through sales tax measures, there is not enough funding for these essential programs and projects in San Mateo County. We ask that you prioritize funding for programs and projects, both formula and grant based, that help increase resources for the breadth of unmet transportation needs in this County.

I want to thank you for your continued support of public transportation that is so fundamental to the vitality and health of our region, the state, and the entire country. We truly appreciate all of your efforts and we thank you in advance for considering these priorities.

Please contact Government and Community Affairs Officer, Jessica Epstein at EpsteinJ@samtrans.com if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Carter Mau
Acting Executive Director

Cc: San Mateo County Transportation Authority Board of Directors



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CARTER MAU, ACTING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 16, 2021

The Honorable Jackie Speier
U.S. House of Representatives
2465 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Speier:

As Congress begins to consider surface transportation reauthorization legislation, I write on behalf of the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA), in the hopes that you will consider the following TA programmatic and funding priorities as part of the reauthorization package.

Transportation is the lifeblood of California's economy - *the world's fifth largest economy* - representing 12 percent of the U.S. population. Supporting additional investments in the state's transportation infrastructure and public transit system powers the entire national economy.

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The Honorable Jackie Speier

April 16, 2021

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Sincerely,



Carter Mau
Acting Executive Director

Cc: San Mateo County Transportation Authority Board of Directors

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1250 SAN CARLOS AVE
SAN CARLOS, CA 94070
(650) 508-6200

April 20, 2021

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Senator, District 11
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

Re: SB 339 (Wiener) – Gas Tax Alternative Pilot - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Wiener:

On behalf of the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 339, the Gas Tax Alternative Pilot.

This bill will extend the State's ability to pilot a road user charge system, allowing for a more robust understanding of how such a system would operate and the potential benefits from replacing the gas tax with a fee associated with road use. The bill takes another step forward by allowing the practitioners of the pilot to collect the fee associated with a road user charge to test collection methodology and study revenue streams.

Although the gas tax has been the primary source of transportation infrastructure funding, the necessities for adjustment through SB 1 (Beall, 2017) showed inherent faults with our current system. As gasoline consumption continues to plummet, and electric vehicles (EV) continue to become more commonplace, the gas tax will need significant alterations, or a new system for transit funding must be adopted. Further, in its current state, the gas tax allows those with the upfront money to escape the tax through the purchase of an EV.

This transition away from combustion engines has been encouraged through policies such as Governor Newsom's executive order banning the sale of new internal combustion engine vehicles by 2035, however, this shift in California's fleet has yet to be fully reflected in our road funding, outside of small EV registration fees. This outdated reliance on the gas tax is resulting in the burden of transportation infrastructure funding being placed on the shoulders of our lower income communities. A road user charge system allows for road funding to be based on how much our roads are used by a particular individual, rather than their gasoline consumption and their vehicles fuel efficiency.

The Honorable Scott Weiner

April 20, 2021

Page 2 of 2

For these reasons, SamTrans and the TA, supports SB 339 and hopes the Legislature will take the opportunity to further study and develop the administrative capacity to prepare for the eventual transition to a road based charge.

Please contact Jessica Epstein from the Government and Community Affairs staff at epsteinj@samtrans.com if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carter Mau".

Carter Mau

Acting General Manager/Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director

Cc: San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transportation Authority Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transit District State Legislative Delegation
San Mateo County Transportation Authority State Legislative Delegation