



February 26, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy and Leader McConnell:

Our coalition of transportation, labor, business, infrastructure, environmental and social justice leaders thank you for your strong support for transit agencies nationwide throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergency funding provided to transit agencies by Congress last year has helped stave off the most severe service reductions and workforce layoffs, which would have devastated the communities that have continued to rely on transit service during today's public health crisis.

We strongly support H.R. 1319, the "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021," which provides more than \$30 billion in new operational funding to transit agencies nationwide. **This funding level will address the operating needs faced by the industry into 2023. Moreover, as you finalize the next round of emergency relief, we urge you to continue to ensure that California receives its fair share of total funding so that transit agencies of all sizes throughout our state can benefit from the additional operational support.**

This funding is vital to transit agencies operating in rural, urban and suburban settings as they continue to grapple with steep declines in ridership and revenues due to the pandemic-induced economic downturn.

A viable public transit network is necessary to help support essential and frontline workers as well as communities disproportionately hurt by the pandemic, to protect strong and healthy communities, avoid the loss of thousands of good-paying local jobs, and to support a balanced economic recovery.

Surveys have found that the majority of Californians who continue to rely on transit during the pandemic, are using the service to get to work, are overwhelmingly low-income and/people of color, and lack access to a personal vehicle. Reduced transit service disproportionately harms these communities, making it more difficult for them to provide for their families and threatening the health of local economies.

Transit agencies themselves have significant impacts on local economies. The California Transit Association estimates that more than 35,000 Californians are directly employed by transit agencies, but many agencies are considering or have already made cuts to personnel due to the severe budget shortfalls.

Without additional funding for transit operations, service and workforce cuts that were avoided last year will proceed this year. Moreover, transit agencies will delay capital improvement projects and transit vehicle procurements, and defer payments to contractors. These cuts will compromise the condition of transit assets, undermine the role of California's transit agencies in meeting our state's environmental goals, slow the deployment of zero-emission buses, and result in job losses in construction as well as domestic and California-based manufacturing.

The emergency funding we request today would establish funding certainty to better allow transit agencies to navigate the crisis.

Ensuring California's public transit agencies can continue to provide essential service and invest in capital projects is critical to a balanced economic recovery, our quality of life, and to achieving our state's ambitious environmental goals.

Please help us save local public transit.

Sincerely,

Michael Pimentel, Executive Director
California Transit Association

Tim Elder, President
National Federation of the Blind California

Michael Quigley, Executive Director
California Alliance for Jobs

Shane Gusman, Director
California Teamsters Public Affairs Council

Bill Higgins, Executive Director
California Association of Councils of Government (CALCOG)

Shane Gusman, Legislative Advocate
California Conference Board of the Amalgamated Transit Union

Kiana Valentine, Executive Director
Transportation California

Rick L. Callender, President
California – Hawaii State Conference NAACP

Louie Costa, Director
**California State Legislative Board
SMART-Transportation Division**

Denny Zane, Executive Director
MoveLA

Eileen Wenger Tutt, Executive Director
California Electric Transportation Coalition

Colin Fiske, Executive Director
Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities

Jason Baker, Vice President, Transportation, Housing & Community Development
Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Ruben Guerra, President and Chair
Latin Business Association

Gwen Litvak, Senior Vice President
Bay Area Council

Jonathon Kass, Interim Transportation Policy Director
SPUR

Jessica Lall, President & CEO
Central City Association – Los Angeles

John Hake, Executive Director
Rebuild SoCal Partnership

Dr. Tecoy Porter, President
National Action Network Sacramento

Barbara Leslie, Chamber President/CEO
Oakland Chamber of Commerce

Jack Swearengen, Chair
Friends of SMART

Darnell Grisby, Executive Director
TransForm

Glenda Marsh, Steering Committee
Sacramento Metro Advocates for Rail and Transportation

Rev. Jonathan Moseley, Western Regional Director
National Action Network – Los Angeles

Jacklyn Montgomery, Executive Director
California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT)

Richard Marcantonio, Managing Attorney
Public Advocates, inc.

Jay King, President
California Black Chamber of Commerce

Adrian Martinez, Staff Attorney, Right to Zero
Earthjustice

Alberto Ayala, PhD, MSE, Executive Director and Air Pollution Control Officer
Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

Michael Lawson, President & CEO
Los Angeles Urban League

Colin Parent, Executive Director & General Counsel
Circulate San Diego

Stuart Waldman, President
Valley Industry & Commerce Association

Brandon Black, Director of Public Policy
Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce

Laura Raymond, Director
Alliance for Community Transit Los Angeles

Barry Broome, President & CEO
Greater Sacramento Economic Council

Brian Ling, Executive Director
Sonoma County Alliance

Pat Fong Kushida, President & CEO
Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce

Bill Manis, President & CEO
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

Dave Campbell, Advocacy Director
Bike East Bay

CC: California Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Sherrod Brown, Chair, Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, United States Senate
Pete Buttigieg, Secretary, United States Department of Transportation
Nuria Fernandez, Acting Administrator, Federal Transit Administration
The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California
The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee, California State Senate
The Honorable Laura Friedman, Chair, Assembly Transportation Committee, California State Assembly
David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency, State of California
Members, Executive Committee, California Transit Association
Members, Federal Legislative Committee, California Transit Association
Members, COVID-19 Transit Crisis Relief Task Force, California Transit Association