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New Leadership Announced

Michael Pimentel to Lead California Transit Association

Pimentel replaces Joshua W. Shaw as Association Executive Director effective Jan 1, 2021

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California Transit Association announces the installation of Michael Pimentel as the Association’s new Executive Director. Pimentel assumed the Association’s top position on January 1, 2021, following Joshua W. Shaw’s resignation from the position last month, and through appointment by the Association’s Executive Committee. Shaw, who has served as the Association’s Executive Director since 1999, will continue to support the Association as Senior Counselor for Policy & Education.

As Executive Director, Pimentel will support 230 member organizations by managing the Association’s strategic advocacy efforts and member services, focused on bringing fully funded, efficient and effective public transit service to all Californians. He comes to the position with a notable track record, including being part of the advocacy team that helped secure more than \$700 million annually in new dedicated funding for transit agencies through California’s Senate Bill 1, and leading the industry’s negotiations with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) on a first-of-its-kind state regulation to convert all transit buses in the state to zero-emission technologies by 2040. Throughout 2020, Pimentel led the Association’s advocacy and education efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to secure two rounds of federal emergency relief funding for California transit agencies and advocating for a series of state-level statutory and regulatory relief measures that have shielded California transit agencies from an unwarranted redirection of limited resources.

“We are extremely pleased to have Michael lead the California Transit Association,” said Association Executive Committee Chair Kate Breen, Director of Government Affairs for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. “He brings an extensive background and incredible industry acumen to the job. Plus, Michael possesses the relationships and regard both inside and outside of the State Capitol to push the Association’s agenda forward in ways that meet the public transportation needs of the future.”

COVID-19 layered on additional hardships that have further threatened the short- and long-term viability of public transit service across the nation by hollowing out transit operating budgets, dramatically changing commute habits, and creating undue skepticism about the safety of riding public transit.

“State and federal lawmakers must take emergency action in 2021 to ensure that all California transit agencies have the funding necessary to continue to provide essential service to communities across our state. As the pandemic eventually subsides and we begin to rebuild transit service, our industry is

committed to continuing to improve on how we engage and serve the communities that rely on public transit, to forging new partnerships that improve our efficiency and access to mobility, and to building a more equitable transportation network for all Californians,” said Pimentel.

In his new role, Pimentel will focus on keeping California’s transit agencies the nation’s leaders in the deployment of zero-emission heavy-duty vehicle technologies and supporting the industry’s full transition to zero-emission technologies.

“It is essential that state and federal governments recognize that California’s transit agencies are key partners in advancing these technologies and developing the componentry, supply chains, workforce, and experience necessary to significantly reduce transportation sector emissions. Both levels of government must prioritize transit agencies in all funding programs that support zero-emission heavy-duty vehicle deployment,” said Pimentel.

By its recent appointments to the federal transportation transition team and its early policy indications, the incoming Biden-Harris Administration is signaling its position on the importance of public transportation – and California specifically – to the broader transportation network and to the fight against climate change. Pimentel intends to put the Association at the center of those efforts.

“The California Transit Association aims to forge a strategic alliance with the incoming Administration and partner with Congress to secure another round of critical emergency relief for California’s transit agencies, while we build toward a federal surface transportation reauthorization bill that strengthens the federal government’s support for transit projects that reduce emissions, create good paying jobs, and that expand access to affordable mobility options,” said Pimentel. “California has long been a leader on the deployment of zero-emission heavy-duty vehicle technologies and the implementation of pro-transit policies. We are fully ready and positioned to share our best practices with the nation.”

Pimentel will remain the Association’s primary advocate at the California Air Resources Board, the California Energy Commission, and the California Public Utilities Commission. He previously served as the Association’s Legislative and Regulatory Advocate before becoming Deputy Executive Director in February 2020. Prior to joining the Association, Pimentel held various appointed positions in the administration of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., including most recently at the California High-Speed Rail Authority where he managed the Authority’s legislative program and advised its CEO on legislative and budgetary issues impacting the project. Pimentel holds a Master’s degree from the University of California, Berkeley’s Goldman School of Public Policy and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

“In so many ways, Michael could not be better suited to take the reins of the Association at this very unique time,” Breen said. “Rapidly changing technologies and big shifts in lifestyle require us to rethink how we design, manage, and fuel the state’s mobility framework. Michael’s vast experience sets us up to seize our opportunities and address our challenges head on.”

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