



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DIABLO VALLEY

◆ Alamo ◆ Antioch ◆ Bay Point ◆ Bethel Island ◆ Brentwood ◆ Byron ◆
◆ Canyon ◆ Clayton ◆ Concord ◆ Danville ◆ Diablo ◆ Discovery Bay ◆
◆ Knightsen ◆ Lafayette ◆ Martinez ◆ Moraga ◆ Oakley ◆ Orinda ◆
◆ Pacheco ◆ Pittsburg ◆ Pleasant Hill ◆ Rossmoor ◆ San Ramon ◆ Walnut Creek ◆

May 14, 2013

To: Amy Worth, Chair, MTC
Mark Luce, Chair, ABAG

The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley strongly supports the process of regional planning that has successfully coordinated land use and transportation planning for the draft Plan Bay Area.

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 are pleased that a reduction in harmful emissions is expected to be achieved as a result of the plan's encouragement for more compact development in areas with good transit service, in order to reduce the need to drive. In particular, we believe that the concept of Preferred Development Areas will encourage communities to plan for more compact and transit-efficient development and avoid sprawl. We hope that cities such as Lafayette and Danville will see the wisdom of using this concept for future development plans.

To accomplish its purpose, Plan Bay Area must relate transportation and land use in a way which makes both more efficient. On the transportation side, we believe the plan can be improved. Draft Plan Bay Area places primary emphasis on maintaining the existing transportation system. However, neither of the top two expenditures (BART to San Jose/Santa Clara and a regional express lane system) is rated highly in terms of cost effectiveness or effectiveness in meeting goals of the draft Plan.

Also, the funds allocated to transit operations in the draft Plan do not appear to be adequate to restore the service cuts made during the past few years or to meet the needs of the Bay Area's growing population. In areas such as Contra Costa County, with existing sprawl, there are diverse needs for affordable transit which cannot be served if agencies are focusing merely on cost-cutting. Transit agencies achieve their highest productivity at times of peak demand – rush hours -- and in directions of peak travel – usually to job centers. But transit services are also needed in off-peak hours and to multiple kinds of destinations to serve the needs of a diverse population, including school children and the elderly. We urge that consideration be given to shifting draft Plan funding from high-cost, less cost-effective projects to transit operations and transit system maintenance.

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. Unfortunately, areas most vulnerable to the rise contain some of the Bay Area's most significant transportation infrastructure, and the draft Plan includes projects to expand and improve many of these facilities.

The non-partisan League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in governmental processes. The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate.

500 St. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 283-2235 ◆ www.lwvdv.org



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All proposed projects in vulnerable areas need to be evaluated for their designs and their needs for mitigation.

Four alternatives to the “preferred” draft Plan were evaluated as part of the draft EIR, and several among them include elements that perform somewhat better than the draft Plan. 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.

Sincerely,

Lee Lawrence, President

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