



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE BAY AREA
An Inter-League Organization of the San Francisco Bay Area



Marie Pang, Environmental Manager
Caltrain
P. O. Box 3006
San Carlos Ca 94070-1306

November 29, 2006

dumbarton_comments@caltrain.com

Dear Ms. Pang:

RE: Dumbarton Rail Corridor Project EIR Scoping

We had requested to speak at the Belle Haven meeting in Menlo Park to provide these comments, but were not recognized to speak. These are the comments we would have made.

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area supports a multi-modal, convenient, cost-effective, equitable, safe, regional transportation system planned in concert with land use and viable alternatives to reduce vehicle miles traveled and single-occupancy vehicle use. We believe it is important to maintain transit system options to mitigate possible interruptions in service across the Bay. We especially request that there be criteria to evaluate environmental effects on health (including air and water quality, noise reduction) We are reflecting not only concerns from a Bay Area standpoint, but we have also received and are including comments and suggestions from the League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, Union City and the LWV of South San Mateo County.

Our organization has an interest in and supports the kind of project that Dumbarton Rail Corridor Project is trying to be: a connection between a number of existing north-south transportation systems, relieving traffic on the Dumbarton Bridge, particularly commutes from the East Bay to the Peninsula and return, and use of an existing rail line and bridge.

- 1) We encourage the Joint Powers Board, as lead agency, to work closely and continuously with all the cities on the proposed Project line and to consider the differing impacts that the project may pose to each.
- 2) We applaud the creation of a Citizens Panel. It should include persons from all the affected jurisdictions.
- 3) We urge the retention of the long term vision for the project need. When it was initially proposed, commute traffic on the Dumbarton Bridge was at gridlock. Since then the economy, on the west side particularly, has slowed down, and key businesses have moved out of the immediate area. Given the cost issues, we would favor a phased approach should immediate funds not be available. How will future delay-caused cost escalations be resolved? What additional sources of funds can be applied to the Project?
- 4) Key impacts that have been identified are related to noise. What measures will be taken to mitigate noise associated with heavy diesel trains affecting residential neighborhoods on both sides of the Bay, including noise impacts of large curves in the tracks? Are there alternative modes, such as light rail or quieter engines, that could use the right-of-way (which must be

renovated anyway) that would have less noise impact? Alternative modes should also be evaluated for costs. How will negative impacts of vibration be mitigated?

- 5) How will impacts of the location of the layover yard on nearby housing be mitigated?
- 6) The impact of freight traffic, especially through the Centerville area of Fremont, vs. the potential regional improvements of getting truck freight traffic off the highway onto rails, must be evaluated in terms of noise and air and water quality.
- 7) Concerns about safety and train speed have been expressed about the potential impact of freight traffic at the curve in Newark as it might affect a major water supply pipeline (near Niles).
- 8) In many project areas there is concern about the delay, safety, and other impacts of street level grade crossings. Since there are few grade separations planned in the project at this time (and this would further add to the cost), how can this be mitigated?
- 9) The Menlo Park station location is currently in question because the Tyco property is for sale and the city can not predict how a buyer would develop the property. The City Council is proceeding to coordinate an agreement for the use of the Tyco site for an auto mall to enhance city revenues and may need to locate the station in an alternate location. The potential alternative station sites must be evaluated for impacts on ridership derived from both commercial and residential development.
- 10) We ask that if there are differing environmental standards as compared to Federal and local ordinances that the most stringent ones be use for evaluation of the project alternatives.
- 11) Mitigation of environmental impacts needs to have clear plans for implementation and criteria that can be monitored as to their successful effect.

We request that the comments made by us and others, which were made regarding the scoping, be included in the Environmental Impact Report in an Appendix, so that it can be determined that those concerns have been included.

Please keep us on the list for future notices on this project.

Linda Craig, President
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