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California State Senate

SENATOR
BOB WIECKOWSKI
TENTH SENATE DISTRICT

CHAIR
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BUDGET AND FISCAL REVIEW
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
HOUSING
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TRANSPORTATION



October 11, 2022

The Honorable Alfredo Pedroza, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale Street
San Francisco CA 94105-2066

RE: Support for Valley Link as a Project Priority in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Major Project Advancement Policy

Dear Chair Pedroza,

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of the Valley Link rail transit project as a Level 2 priority in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Major Project Advancement Policy. To achieve our megaregion's goals for the economy, the environment, housing, transportation, and equity we need a robust, reliable, and sustainable transportation system that will equitably serve our residents and work force with a better quality of life and access to jobs, affordable housing, educational opportunities and health care facilities. Valley Link is a vital element of this system that is essential to the future of our megaregion.

Valley Link has widespread support from all sectors of the Northern California Megaregion. It is identified in MTC's Plan Bay Area 2050 (2021-2035 delivery period), is identified in the MTC's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Regional Grant Strategy, has been approved by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) into Project Development under the federal Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Program and has over one-third of its funding already identified as available through local sources – a total of over \$700 million. Project development continues to advance with urgency – CEQA environmental clearance is complete, NEPA environmental clearance is underway and a targeted construction date is set for 2025 supporting a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) under the CIG Program within the BIL's five-year timeframe. Consistent with MTC's Equity Priority Communities Framework and the Biden Administration's new Justice40 Initiative, Valley Link will also achieve near-term mobility, accessibility, environmental, and health benefit for the more than 100,500 Bay Area workers now commuting daily from their homes in the Northern San Joaquin Valley – a region recognized as one of the State's largest areas of California Climate Investments Priority Populations for both State designated disadvantage communities and low-income communities.

Valley Link initial operating segment between the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station and the Mountain House station, including the Isabel and South Front Street stations in Livermore, will connect tens of thousands of workers to the Tri-Valley at the center of the Northern California Megaregion - one of the fastest growing and economically robust areas in the state of California. As a thriving job center, the Tri-Valley is home to two national labs in Livermore and the headquarter location of more than 450 technology companies - with a regional gross domestic product of over \$42 billion. Improvement of transportation systems between the



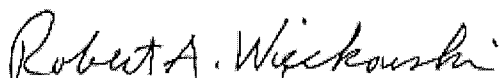
Tri-Valley and broader region are essential to the Tri-Valley economy, environment and the quality of life of its residents and work force. Valley Link will have immeasurable benefit to the megaregion and will increase the megaregional housing supply through the advancement of transit-oriented development at stations along the corridor including at the Isabel and Southfront Valley Link stations in Livermore as well as the Mountain House station in San Joaquin County. The Isabel Neighborhood Specific Plan, within an adopted MTC Priority Development Area (PDA), is complete and Southfront has recently been approved as a PDA by MTC. All three of these station areas will support MTC's recently adopted Transit Oriented Communities Policy.

Valley Link is leading innovation with a vision to be a model of environmental and economic sustainability connecting the Northern California megaregion with the first passenger rail system in California running on self-produced green hydrogen and a hydrogen fuel production facility able to support other transit and heavy truck operators. This model of sustainability and self-sufficiency is important as it inherently connects the hydrogen fuel producer and user with the goal of reducing the cost of the overall transit operations for the public and offsetting state and federal transit subsidies. In addition to the use of zero emissions vehicle and green energy production technologies, the Valley Link Board-adopted Sustainability Policy identifies implementing strategies to achieve a zero emissions system through innovation station access. This includes electric autonomous shuttles, shared mobility, and support for local transit operator alternative vehicle technology.

Valley Link provides critical passenger rail connectivity for closing the gap between BART and the state rail system — linking nearly 500 miles of commuter and intercity rail with more than 130 stations throughout the Northern California Megaregion. Consistent with the State Rail Plan and the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) Business Plan, it will expand equitable access and mobility by providing the Bay Area with integrated connectivity to the Merced – Bakersfield High-Speed Rail Interim Operating Segment and Sacramento through the existing Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and future Valley Rail passenger rail services.

Valley Link improvements are critical for the equitable and sustainable future of the Bay Area and the megaregion it is inherently a part of. I urge prioritizing this transformational project in MTC's Major Project Advancement Policy. MTC's support for this project will have a significant impact on the Bay Area economy and the transportation investment equity of the tens of thousands of Bay Area workers now commuting daily from their homes in recognized disadvantaged and low-income communities in the Northern San Joaquin Valley. At a time of unprecedented funding opportunity at both the federal and state level to maximize megaregional outcomes it is imperative that the most competitive projects are prioritized to compete.

Sincerely,



Bob Wieckowski,
Senator, 10th District

CC: Therese W. McMillan, MTC Executive Director