



MTC Commissioners,

We, the undersigned unions representing the dedicated employees of Alameda-Contra Costa (AC) Transit, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Caltrain, and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (MUNI) are writing to urge you to support legislation authorizing a regional revenue measure for Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco, and San Mateo counties, while allowing Marin, Santa Clara, and Sonoma Counties to opt-in. This is the last remaining opportunity to prevent multiple public transit services from collapsing causing unnecessary harm to our major job centers, working families, climate and air pollution goals, and public sector workers.

Our transit systems are facing an unprecedented crisis. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with shifts in work patterns, concerns about transit safety, and declining farebox recovery, has created a perfect storm that threatens the very foundation of the public transportation network in the Bay Area. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) projects that without new revenue sources, Bay Area transit agencies could face annual deficits exceeding \$700 million starting as early as 2026. This fiscal cliff not only jeopardizes essential services but also puts at risk the livelihoods of thousands of hardworking employees who deliver transportation services to communities in the region.

Our members have kept the Bay Area moving during the toughest times, often at great personal risk. They deserve our unwavering support. Their expertise, dedication, and institutional knowledge are invaluable assets that your constituents cannot afford to lose. Further, our transit agencies serve as the backbone of the Bay Area economy providing direct links to our downtown areas for workers and tourists, and reaching 67% of jobs in the 9-county Bay Area region through BART and one transfer at a connecting agency. Without BART, drivers would experience roughly 20 more hours in traffic per week with traffic increased by 73% on the Bay Bridge and 22% in the Caldecott Tunnel during commute hours.

To address these pressing challenges effectively while enhancing system efficiency, we stress that the legislation to authorize a revenue measure must, at minimum, incorporate the following critical provisions:

- Preservation of at least current service levels;
- Funding for transformative transit programs to improve service for riders;
- Robust annual reporting and oversight at both county and regional levels; and
- Protections for union transit workers from furloughs, layoffs, and reductions in benefits.

In addition to meeting the urgent fiscal needs of transit agencies facing imminent financial disaster, any funding sources authorized by this legislation must be designed to ensure equitable disbursement of funds while minimizing the burden on low-income communities and

transit-dependent populations. As such, we are currently opposed to the sole use of a sales tax to fund the ballot measure and recommend a regional progressive gross receipts tax or payroll tax to primarily provide the resources to address the transit fiscal cliff.

We are aware of the political realities of solely focusing on transit operational funding in a ballot measure and therefore also recommend a citizen's initiative as the vehicle to place the measure on the 2026 ballot, additional revenue generated for road and transit priority infrastructure maintenance, at least 90% of funds kept within the generating county, and a short-term length of 12 years to allow time for stabilization, identification and implementation of new funding sources by the agencies.

The scale of this crisis requires a region-wide solution. MTC must rise to this moment and act decisively to safeguard public transit, which is essential not just for mobility, but for our climate goals, economic resilience, and social equity. We urge you to vote in support of recommending a progressive tax measure on the 2026 ballot that generates enough revenue to solve the fiscal crisis, funds transit transformation programs to make the system more connected, affordable, and reliable, and provides critical resources for road repair and transit-first safe streets.

The Transit Operators Labor Unions stand ready to support this effort and collaborate with MTC in advocating for this type of measure with stakeholders and on the 2026 ballot.

Sincerely,

John Arantes, BART Chapter President, SEIU Local 1021

Matt Broad, Legislative Advocate, Amalgamated Transit Union California Conference Board

Louie Costa, Safety and Legislative Director, SMART Transportation Division

Sal Cruz, President, AFSCME Local 3993

Owen Goetze, Vice President, AFSCME Local 3916