

RICHMOND AND MARIN COALITION FOR TRANSPORTATION JUSTICE

**1501 Florida Avenue
Richmond, CA 94804**

Chairwoman Amy Worth and Commissioners
Bay Area Toll Authority
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Chairwoman Worth and Commissioners:

When CalTrans opened up a new third lane on the lower deck for drivers coming from Marin on the Richmond Bridge, they also opened up a new bike lane on the top deck as part of a 4-year pilot program.

While it's great to have a bike lane, it has come with unintended consequences.

The bike lane eliminated the shoulder on the top deck, making it impossible for cars to move out of traffic if they break down for any reason. The result is traffic backing up on the freeway, particularly during the morning commute, in Richmond and into our neighborhoods.

This brings pollution into our neighborhoods, and into our lungs.

That's why we formed the Richmond and Marin Coalition for Transportation Justice. We are made up of neighborhood council leaders, community leaders, the NAACP, labor unions, service workers and commuters, in both Richmond and Marin, who are tired of dealing with the additional congestion and resulting environmental pollution in our neighborhoods.

A Solution to Address Environmental Justice Problems in Richmond

We need a solution, so Richmond communities don't continue to suffer.

In fact, we in Richmond want the same "deal" Marin residents got.

We want to see three lanes, during the morning commute, going from Richmond to Marin, easing the backup on the freeway and into our neighborhoods.

But we don't want to eliminate the ability to use bikes to cross the bridge. We understand the desire to encourage people to get out their cars.

So, we propose a new bike lane on the bottom deck that can be used during the morning commute, particularly since the third lane on the lower deck is not needed for cars in the morning.

We understand there are plans to improve the bridge, including removing the toll booths, and improving access on both sides of the bridge. A new bike lane with a moveable barrier, on the lower deck, should be added to the plans.

Richmond should get the same "deal" as Marin. It is not only fair, but also environmental justice.

Studies of air pollution in Richmond have shown that one of the primary sources of particulate matter emissions that affects our health, comes off the freeway. This traffic congestion has made it even worse for our communities.

We are all for riding bikes as an alternative to cars, but not at the expense of our community's health and well-being.

Just the Facts

We are two years into the bike pilot project and the numbers are not good. On average, there are only 77 bikes a day and over 80,000 cars using the Richmond Bridge every day.

And in the morning commute, which has the worst impact on Richmond neighborhoods due to traffic congestion, there are only 18 bikers and over 18,000 cars.

Take a look at the following link: <https://linktr.ee/groundworkrichmond>

Particularly focus on the GWR's Source Apportionment Study; Ramboll Shair Tool; Richmond/San Pablo Hotspot Reports, and CA EnviroScreen.

This data shows clear impacts on Richmond neighborhoods around Interstate 580 with particular problems during the am peak.

The morning commute is filled with members of our Coalition - service workers, teachers, public employees, front line workers and other people who cannot afford to live in Marin but have to get to their Marin jobs at a certain time. They have no other options.

The current morning congestion is costing commuters valuable time with their families and adding to the stress of their day. They should not be forced to suffer, when there are easy solutions that can lessen their pain.

We respectfully request that the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) help find a solution to this environmental justice problem.

Thank you for your consideration.

Willie Robinson, President
Richmond NAACP

Elizabeth Rodriguez, President
Roland M. Katz, Executive Director
Marin Association of Public Employees

Joe Fisher, President
Coronado Neighborhood Council

Oscar Garcia, President
Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council

Linda Whitmore, President
Santa Fe Neighborhood Council

Pastor Ullis Redic, President
Richmond Ministerial Alliance

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church
Pastor Eric Morris
Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church

Pastor Donnell Jones
New Direction Ministries

Rigo Mendoza and Gonzalo Ochoa, Presidents
23rd Street Merchants Association

CC:

Congressman Mark DeSaulnier
Congressman John Garamendi
Senator Nancy Skinner
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
Supervisor John Gioia
Mayor Tom Butt
Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council