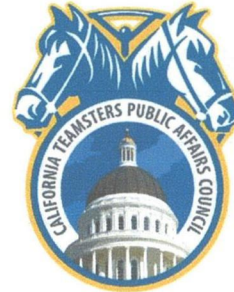


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SEP 17 2020

MTC



September 8, 2020

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale St., Ste 700
San Francisco, Ca 94105

Dear Chair Sperring and Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Taskforce Members:

Transit drivers have been among the hardest hit in this pandemic. Our brothers and sisters across this country have been sickened, brought illness home to family members, endured prolonged suffering from the virus, and hundreds have died.

Public transit is an essential service. We keep this economy moving and we are entrusted to help California's workforce, as well as our community's most vulnerable, travel safely. We cannot protect public safety unless transit drivers have a voice in how we provide services in the midst of a pandemic.

At the July 22 Commission meeting, more than twenty representatives for drivers and riders asked that a draft report on public transit safety be made public so that workers and community could review and comment. We were dismayed to see you instead release a final report, "Riding Together: Bay Area Healthy Transit Plan," that was drafted without any input from transit drivers or passengers. We are the ones on the frontlines everyday, with the practical knowledge and experience needed to adapt to a new reality. We are the ones with the most at stake. We are the ones who know better than anyone what is needed to keep our passengers and each other healthy and safe. Yet we were excluded from this process entirely.

It is no wonder that the recommendations produced without any worker input are deeply flawed. In fact, they fall far short of the Cal/Osha guidelines established for public transit. Even the scientific basis for the proposal, which cites close contact and droplet transmittal as the sources of spread, appears outdated based on recent revelations that the virus is airborne.

Cal/Osha guidance clearly states that a distance of six feet between operators and passengers must be maintained. It specifies that seats within 6 feet of the operator must be cordoned off and made

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unavailable to passengers. This plan makes no mention of this requirement and instead inexplicably substitutes its own standard of just three feet of distance and only where practicable.

Public health guidance is clear that a mask is intended to be complimentary to-but not in place of-proper social distancing of 6 feet. This plan contradicts that standard, stating: "Using other prevention measures in combination with social distancing, such as wearing a mask, will modify the threshold of Social Distancing, and thus enable to increase the occupancy rate of the trains." This modification lacks any scientific basis.

There is nothing more important to transit drivers than knowing our vehicles are safe, for us, for our families, for our passengers. That is why we urge you to listen to the voices of drivers and collaborate with us on a revised plan to ensure a safe and healthy future for Bay Area public transit.

California Conference Board, Amalgamated Transit Union

California State Conference, Transport Workers Union

California Teamsters Public Affairs Council