

**From:** Jacob Denney

**Sent:** Monday, November 8, 2021 12:38 PM

**To:** Therese W. McMillan <[tmcmillan@bayareametro.gov](mailto:tmcmillan@bayareametro.gov)>; Alfredo Pedroza <[Alfredo.Pedroza@countyofnapa.org](mailto:Alfredo.Pedroza@countyofnapa.org)>; Amy Worth <[aworth@cityoforinda.org](mailto:aworth@cityoforinda.org)>

**Subject:** Recommendations on equity in bridge toll systems

**\*External Email\***

Good afternoon,

On behalf of a coalition of Bay Area nonprofits, government entities, and philanthropic organizations, I submit the attached letter asking Commissioners and staff to continue to seek bold and transformational policies that would make MTC a national leader on promoting equity in tolling.

We would like to thank the BATA oversight committee and staff for the proposal and decision to reduce the fines and fees associated with unpaid toll violations, as well as the commitment to further evaluation of the toll systems. Your decisions will bring substantial relief to communities of color and lower-income communities across the Bay Area. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to building an equitable Bay Area. The changes adopted at the October BATA oversight meeting are an important first step. We are excited about additional changes that are being contemplated and hope to work closely with Commissioners and staff to help build a truly equitable system.

Respectfully,  
Jacob Denney

--

Jacob Denney (he/they)  
Economic Justice Policy Director

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



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The Honorable Therese McMillan  
Executive Director  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
375 Beale St #800  
San Francisco, CA 94105

The Honorable Amy Worth  
Chair, BATA Oversight Committee  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
375 Beale St #800  
San Francisco, CA 94105

The Honorable Alfredo Pedroza  
Chair  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
375 Beale St #800  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Cc: Metropolitan Transportation Commissioners

November 8, 2021

**Re: Appreciation for progress on bridge toll fines and fees and ongoing support**

Dear Executive Director McMillan, Chair Pedroza, and Chair Worth,

Thank you for your commitment to equity and your efforts to make the unpaid toll system less harmful for low-income people and people of color across the Bay Area. Your recent decision to reduce the total possible fines and fees from a total of \$70 to \$20 starting in January 2022 is a meaningful shift towards a more equitable and less punitive system. This change will bring substantial relief to hundreds of thousands of people across our region. We were gratified that both the MTC commissioners and staff described this action as a meaningful “first step” and that you will be advancing additional reforms. As the Commission looks to future changes in the pursuit of equity, we encourage you to continue to seek bold and transformational policies that would make the Commission a national leader on promoting equity in tolling.

As the Commission considers further updating their tolling equity policies, we would like to offer any assistance in identifying solutions to the problems we and the Commission have identified. As a coalition of researchers, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations that work with impacted communities throughout the Bay Area, we are well positioned to uplift the concerns of communities who are most impacted by the toll system and can connect the Commission with impacted drivers. Our coalition is also made up of technical and subject matter experts, and we are willing to meet with the Commission and staff to develop policies.

We want to share a list of the most important issues we recommend the MTC examine in the next phase of updates to the tolling equity policies. We believe that these changes are vital for building a truly equitable system. We recommend that the Commission:

- **End the use of DMV holds for people who cannot afford to pay their toll debts**
- **Eliminate the fee at second notice**
- **Establish no-fee payment plans for all unpaid toll related debts**
- **End fines for low-income people**
- **Commit to modernizing and improving the notification system, moving beyond the statutory requirements of mail notification**
- **Forgive all past fines and fees owed**

In the coming weeks we would like to meet with relevant Commissioners and staff to discuss the ways we can work together to further your efforts to develop an equitable tolling system. Jacob Denney ([jdenney@spur.org](mailto:jdenney@spur.org)) is taking the lead on coordinating our coalition, and can help organize a meeting with us.

The changes adopted at the October BATA Oversight meeting are an important first step. We are excited about additional changes that are being contemplated and hope to work closely with Commissioners and staff to help build a truly equitable system. This is an important opportunity for MTC to become a national leader on equitable tolling practices.

Sincerely,

ACLU Foundation of Northern California

All of Us or None

Anti Police-Terror Project

GLIDE

Insight Center for Community Economic Development

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area

San Francisco Foundation

San Francisco Taxpayers for Public Safety

SF Human Rights Commission

SPUR

The San Francisco Financial Justice Project

Young Women's Freedom Center