

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments
Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee**

April 14, 2023

Agenda Item 3d

Assembly Bill 463 (Hart): Priority Access to Electricity for Public Transportation

Subject:

Provides public transportation access to the electric grid during emergencies.

Overview:

Current law requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to create a priority system to maintain electricity for public health and safety services during power shutoffs. The priority entities are considered “essential use customers.” Assembly Bill (AB) 463 aims to improve public transportation access to electricity during power grid disruptions, rolling blackouts, Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), or natural disasters by requiring the CPUC revise its process of identifying “essential use customers” to include “a determination of the economic, social equity, and mobility impacts of a temporary discontinuance in electrical service to the customers that rely on electrical service to operate public transit vehicles.” The bill would also newly require that electrical corporations’ wildfire mitigation plans include protocols to mitigate the impacts on public transit charging infrastructure, in addition to mitigating the effects to critical first responders, health and communication operations.

Recommendation:

Support / MTC Commission Approval

Discussion:

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) mandates that public transit agencies only operate zero-emission buses by 2040. CARB has regulated commercial harbor craft, which includes public transit ferries, since 2009 and in 2022 approved updates to the regulation aimed at accelerating the sector’s transition toward zero-emission. Additionally, CARB’s proposed “In-Use Locomotive Regulation” would require passenger rail agencies transition locomotives to reach zero-emission by 2047. (CARB is expected to vote on the proposed regulation at the Spring 2023 board hearing.)

Many Bay Area and around the state systems are moving toward zero-emission technologies that depend on the electric grid for power. The electricity demand will only grow as transit fleets transition and other industries move toward zero-emission technologies. When flex alerts are in place or during PSPS events, public transit agencies still need electricity to power their fleets and safety-related infrastructure. Emergency responders also rely on public transit agencies to support disaster response and recovery. This includes transporting emergency supplies into affected areas and relocating people with special needs, the elderly, and those without cars. MTC is working with the Bay Area’s transit operators to support an integrated fleet transition, including funding zero-emission rolling stock and infrastructure via the Transit Capital Priorities Program and spearheading the Bay Area Regional Zero Emission Transit Transition Strategy, which includes considerations related to resilience. Through this partnership, transit operators around the region have raised concerns that public safety power shutoffs and other grid disruptions would undermine their ability to provide both lifeline and emergency service. AB 463 would help alleviate some of these concerns and support Bay Area transit operators in fulfilling their role of providing mobility options during emergencies. For these reasons, we recommend a support position on AB 463.

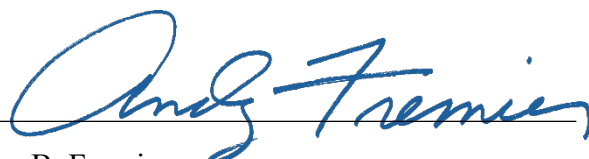
Known Positions:

Support

AC Transit (sponsor)	San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
California Transit Association (sponsor)	San Joaquin Regional Rail Transit District
Fresno County Rural Transit Agency	San Francisco Water Emergency
Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District	Transportation Authority (WETA)
Monterey-Salinas Transit District	<u>Oppose</u>
	None on file

Attachments:

- None



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