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**Senator Wiener and Assemblymember Wilson Announce Next Steps
for Bay Area Transit Funding Proposal**

SACRAMENTO – Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) and Assemblymember Lori Wilson (D-Suisun City) announced a pause on SB 532, Senator Wiener’s legislation to enact a temporary \$1.50 increase to the toll on Bay Area bridges to fund public transportation and avoid service cuts. Instead of continuing through the legislative process this year, Senator Wiener and Assemblymember Wilson will convene a working group of Bay Area legislators over the fall to determine what transit funding proposals to pursue in the next legislative session to place Bay Area transit agencies on a more secure fiscal footing and avoid service cuts. Proposals that this working group will consider may include allocations from the state budget, temporary bridge toll increases, a regional transit funding measure, and other ideas.

Coming out of the pandemic, Bay Area public transportation agencies are recovering ridership and fare revenue, but not quickly enough to make up for the end of federal emergency relief. As a result, if nothing is done, transit systems will have no choice but to cut service. Transit service cuts would be devastating to the Bay Area’s economic recovery, sustainability, and quality of life. After months of advocacy from a diverse coalition of business groups, labor organizations, transit advocates, and environmentalists, this year’s state budget included \$400 million in new operational funding for Bay Area public transportation - an important step that still falls far short of the estimated \$2.5 billion Bay Area transit operational shortfall over the next 5 years. To help fill the gap, Senator Wiener introduced SB 532 - The Safe, Clean, and Reliable Bay Area Public Transportation Emergency Act - to help transit agencies avert near-term financial shortfalls and service cuts, which are expected to begin near the end of 2024 if nothing is done.

Since the introduction of SB 532, it has become apparent that there is significant support for the bill among the Bay Area legislative delegation but also significant opposition. Given this division among Bay Area legislators, Senator Wiener and Assemblymember Wilson have determined that the best course is to pause the process and engage in dialogue over the fall, so

that when the Legislature reconvenes in January, the Bay Area delegation has agreed upon goals and strategies.

“Public transportation is part of the Bay Area’s lifeblood and essential to our region’s future. We have a responsibility to do everything in our power to avoid debilitating service cuts, which would hamper our economic recovery and deeply harm the many Bay Area residents who rely on transit to get to work, school, the doctor, and other critical needs,” **said Senator Wiener**. “When the state budget process failed to yield enough funding to cover the funding shortfalls brought on by the pandemic, I introduced SB 532 as an eleventh hour effort to fill the rest of the need. While there was not enough time to reach a consensus on how to solve this looming problem, we made substantial progress on a solution. I will continue to make transit operations funding a major priority, and I look forward to continuing those discussions into the Fall. If a consensus emerges on a path forward that includes a future regional transit funding measure to generate ongoing funds so that all people have access to reliable, affordable transportation, I also look forward to taking a leadership role in developing and passing authorizing legislation.”

“Increasing tolls can be a significant burden to Bay Area commuters who are already dealing with high cost of living, inflation, and other expenses. From an equity perspective, tolls can have substantial repercussions especially for those where public transit is not a viable option.” **said Assemblymember Wilson**. “Californians deserve consistent and reliable public transportation. We need to invest in our public transit agencies in a thorough and comprehensive manner. We need to ensure there is accountability and verifiable data collection so that our proposed solutions are evidence-based and defensible to those being asked to bear the burden of this investment. I look forward to facilitating these discussions along with Senator Wiener in the Fall with interested members of the Bay Area Caucus.”

Read more about the transit fiscal cliff here:

- [Unpacking the State’s Transit Budget: A Huge Victory, But an Unfinished Fight](#) - by SPUR
- [California’s \\$3.1 Billion Transit Bailout Forces Trade-Offs](#) - by Bloomberg’s Eliyahu Kamisher, Nadia Lopez, and Skylar Woodhouse
- EDITORIAL: [Gavin Newsom can’t just let California’s public transit systems collapse](#) - by the SF Chronicle Editorial Board
- [Why California public transit is at a pivotal moment](#) - by CalMatters’s Sameea Kamal