September 8, 2020

The Honorable Pauline Cutter, Chair
Alameda County Transportation Commission
1111 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94607

Subject: Support for ACTC Approval of Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority Request for a 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan Amendment

Dear Chair Cutter:

On behalf of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, the East Bay Leadership Council and Innovation Tri-Valley Leadership Group, which represent a broad range of private and public sector employers in Alameda County, we are writing to express our strong support of the Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Authority) request to amend the 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP). This Amendment acknowledges the Authority as a new agency in Alameda County that can be an eligible recipient of Measure BB funds and update the TEP by adding Valley Link for the $400 million Measure BB funding identified for the BART to Livermore project.

This action will fulfill a commitment made to the voters of Alameda County to advance rail connectivity to Livermore and support our economy by providing our Bay Area work force with a chance to have safe and affordable choices about where they can live and work. It will help address both immediate and long-term transportation, housing, economic, and environmental needs in Alameda County as well as provide tremendous benefits to the greater Bay Area region. The recently completed Feasibility Report provided to the state legislature demonstrates that the Project is financially viable and provides significant increases in regional rail ridership in the Altamont Corridor.

The Altamont Corridor that connects the San Joaquin Valley to Alameda County and the greater Bay Area is one of the most heavily traveled and fastest growing corridors in the Northern California megaregion. In addition, the Altamont Corridor is also the primary gateway for goods movement between the Bay Area and the Central Valley and Southern California and relieving congestion is essential for maintaining and improving the health of our state's economy. According to a recent report in the Orange County Register, commuters in Northern San Joaquin County lead the nation in "super commuters" traveling 90 miles or more to work each day, which causes significant environmental harm. Furthermore, the Bay Area Council estimated that congestion will increase an additional 75% by 2040. To achieve state and regional environmental and economic development goals, a robust passenger rail alternative is needed in the Altamont Corridor to increase mobility by providing a sustainable transportation option, provide greater connectivity, as well as a better quality of life and access to educational opportunities, health care facilities, and other regional amenities.

The Tri-Valley is a thriving Bay Area job center - with two national laboratories and headquarters for more than 450 technology companies. It has a regional gross domestic product (GDP) of an estimated $42 billion. The quality of life it affords its residents is a large part of its competitive advantage – but growing congestion and skyrocketing Bay Area housing costs put this all at risk. An estimated 93,400 Bay Area workers are now living in Northern San Joaquin County, commuting daily through the Altamont in their cars. This includes those delivering essential services to the Bay Area - firefighters, police, nurses, and teachers, many of whom have been priced out of the communities they serve by rising housing costs. Pre-pandemic, these commuters faced an average 78-minute commute each way and already there is evidence that this congestion is rapidly returning.

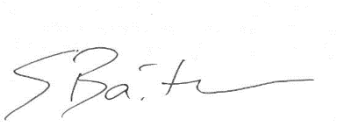
Valley Link's 42-mile, 7 station system is estimated to have a ridership of 28,000 by 2040. It will reduce the amount of greenhouse gases and air pollution emissions by diverting trips that would have previously been taken by an automobile. Specifically, this will result in the reduction of over 99.4 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and the reduction of over 33,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year. In addition, through the Board-adopted Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy, Valley Link will also support the advancement of affordable housing and TOD by fostering more compact and sustainable growth centered around a robust rail network adjacent to its stations, which will further reduce VMT and greenhouse emissions. The TOD policy mirrors the MTC policy with a corridor average threshold requirement of 2,200 homes within a ½ mile of stations, ensuring that the transportation infrastructure is a catalyst for smart growth that protects open space.

The Project would also have a transformative effect on underserved communities by providing a convenient and inexpensive alternative to the rising costs and impacts of automobile usage. Connecting San Joaquin Valley to the Bay Area's large economic centers would increase safe and affordable transportation options between these communities while also providing an opportunity to rebalance job centers equitably. The Project addresses the social justice concerns caused by the displacement of former Bay Area residents living in San Joaquin County who rely on jobs in the Bay Area for their family's economic survival. Simply put, jobs will ultimately leave the Bay Area if we do not provide a reliable transit connection for those who are most in need.

During these challenging economic times, it is also important to note that Valley Link is projected to provide an estimated 22,000 jobs during construction, and when operational, support 400 jobs per year with labor income of over $19 million per year and $69 million in business sales annually. In short, it is vital to our environment and the quality of life in our communities – and now even more vital to our economy given the recovery needs we are now facing. The project already has substantial funding, and once it clears its final hurdle early next year with approval of the Final Environmental Impact Report, the amended TEP will make the project "shovel ready" and immediately eligible for federal funding opportunities.

In summary, Valley Link is consistent with the intent of the voters of Alameda County to extend rail service into the Tri-Valley. It is consistent with the State Rail Plan, MTC Regional Rail Plan, MTC Plan Bay Area 2050, and MTC Resolutions 3829 and 2007. We urge approval of the Authority's Request for a 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan Amendment. This action will ensure that this vital project moves forward and that commitments to the Tri-Valley are long last met.

Sincerely,



Kristin Connelly	Stephen Baiter	Lynn Naylor
President & CEO	Executive Director	CEO
East Bay Leadership Council	East Bay Economic Development Alliance	Innovation Tri-Valley Leadership Group

Cc: Alameda County Transportation Commission members
Tess Lengyel, ACTC Executive Director
Michael Tree, Authority Executive Director

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East Bay Leadership Council (EBLC) is a private sector, public policy organization that advocates on issues affecting the economic vitality and quality of life of the region. EBLC's membership of East Bay employers include leaders from business, industry, health care, education, local government, labor and the nonprofit community. www.eastbayleadershipcouncil.org

East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA) is a unique cross-sector partnership of private, elected, county/city/town and nonprofit leaders in the East Bay counties of Alameda and Contra Costa, helping to establish the East Bay as a globally- recognized region to grow business and attract capital and resources to create quality jobs and preserve a high quality of life. www.EastBayEDA.org

Innovation Tri-Valley Leadership Group (ITVLG) is a business leadership association committed to connecting the businesses, research labs, educational institution and civic leaders in the Tri-Valley region of the East Bay, by generating job growth and economic vitality for a region that is globally connected, regionally united and locally unique. www.innovationtrivalley.org