September 9, 2020

Via Email

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

Re: Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority Request for 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan Amendment – **SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Cutter and Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Livermore Valley Chamber of Commerce (LVCC), a business membership organization with nearly 500 members from a cross-section of private/public and non-profit industry sectors that employ nearly 20,000 workers. Ensuring that public dollars are wisely spent and that taxpayers receive a good return on their investment, while responsibly and effectively planning, funding, and maintaining and operating our transportation system, is a key policy priority for LVCC.

LVCC supports the above referenced request, advancing the efforts to close the gap in the I-580 corridor for an urgently needed and long-awaited, effective rail connection between Livermore/Eastern Alameda County and the Dublin/Pleasanton East BART station. We reiterate the support formerly expressed by LVCC over many years for planning and funding support for such a project. Advancement of a rail extension project connecting BART in the I-580 corridor has withstood challenges and opposition, oftentimes by those that are not on the ground in the Tri-Valley corridor. We recognize many do so with a view of maintaining the status quo and protecting their own interests, unwilling or unable to consider the utility of a future comprehensive and connected transportation network effectively serving all major corridors of Alameda County.

Over decades, the Tri-Valley I-580 corridor and now this project as well as the former BART extension have been studied ad nauseum. And yet, we continue to experience chronic traffic congestion and the related impacts to air quality, local roadways, the economy and general quality of life by those that travel, live or work along the I-580 corridor. We are satisfied that the TVSJVRRA Valley Link project is warranted. ACTC has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in projects that serve regional travel, beyond Alameda County borders, infrastructure necessary to support a strong regional economy. We understand the collective responsibility and benefits to us all.

Recalling the rigors and pain of developing Measure BB including the $400 million earmarked for a BART extension project to Livermore, there was little doubt that the intent was to close a crucial rail gap in the Tri-Valley I-580 corridor. Upon the failure of the BART board of directors to meet expectations to implement this project, and to ensure that this opportunity was not lost to the 20th century models of bus and BART, forward thinking leaders in the Tri-Valley acted to meet the challenge, establishing the TVSJVRRA and developing the Valley Link project.

Today as we contend with the impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency, business leaders are already looking beyond the pandemic, planning to adapt some of the changes, and strengthen their business models for the 21st Century post-COVID economy. Operating outside of our comfort zone has become an acquired skill during COVID, requiring vision and courage to move towards a safe, sustainable and successful future. We expect no less from leaders that have power over our economic transportation future.

LVCC appreciates the wisdom of the Alameda County Transportation Commission in designating $400 million of funding in Measure BB (which was supported by LVCC) to provide for a future rail connection in this corridor. In light of events that have transpired since the approval of BB, LVCC strongly urges actions necessary to amend the expenditure plan to approve the request by the Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority and move $400 million towards delivering Valley Link.

Respectfully,

Dawn P. Argula
Dawn P. Argula
CEO & President

C: ACTC Planning, Policy and Legislation Committee
Scott Haggerty, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Tess Lengyel, ACTC
John Marchand, City of Livermore
Michael Tree, Valley Link