From: Marcus Crawley
To: Vanessa Lee
Subject: Tri Valley $400 million
Date: Saturday, May 23, 2020 7:59:43 AM

Pauline Cutter, Chair, and ACTC Commissioners May 22, 2020
Alameda County Transportation Commission
1111 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, California 94607

via: e-mail to Clerk of the Commission

re: ACTC May 28, 2020 meeting, Agenda item 8.1, "Approve Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority Request for a 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan Amendment (Valley Rail)

Dear Chair Cutter:

The Alameda County Taxpayers Association (ACTA), a 501(c)(4) organization, represents the taxpayers of this County in advocating legal and productive expenditures of taxpayer funds. As such, ACTA is a statutory appointer of a member of the ACTC Independent Watchdog Committee.

Alameda County Taxpayers Association [ACTA] is troubled by plan to transfer $400 million BART funds to the Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority. The Alameda County voters approved the Special Tax of Measure BB and to be dedicated for Alameda County transportation projects such as the BART to Livermore extension. The foremost consideration of ACTC must be the will of the voters. ACTC must narrowly construe the intention of the voters regarding the 'specific purposes' of the Measure BB special sales tax. The voters did not contemplate that the Measure BB taxes would single-handedly fund multi-county projects in the absence of funds contributions from other counties. When the Tri-Valley Authority has produced its share of the project funding, the ACTC can plan how to spend Tri-Valley Authority funds. ACTA will vigorously oppose any plan to divert these funds away from a voter-approved project.

For the present ACTC must demonstrate that it can plan a viable project by solving the BART to Livermore extension. This Committee must demonstrate leadership and build consensus on existing Alameda County projects, not leap ahead to the next glorious project that has not even been planned. As a first step in leadership, the committee should use its power to make the promised annual audits of Measure BB expenditures a reality.

We call on ACTC to table this action until such time as a proper study be made of this project and the logical alternatives, including a long-haul commuter express bus network for both Eastern Alameda County along the I-580 Corridor and over the hills from the Central Valley. We certainly have no objection to working jointly with Central Valley governments and other interest groups on a project of mutual benefit. However, we do not understand why ACTC is proposing that the Alameda County taxpayers be the first to transfer funds approved by the voters to benefit primarily Alameda County residents to a project that would instead primarily benefit residents of other counties – particularly since there is no commitment from those counties, or even an idea of when such a commitment might be made.

The $400 million was originally approved by the voters as part of Measure BB in 2014 for a BART extension to Livermore. The BART Board elected not to pursue this, so we agree it is proper to study other transportation improvements in this corridor – but, we believe that the first priority should be for what the voters intended, benefits for the residents and travelers along the I-580 corridor in the Eastern Tri-Valley area.

We do not object to the study of rail alternatives in this corridor and into the Central Valley, either BART or commuter/inter-city rail. But, in our role as a taxpayer advocate, we believe that it would be improper to advocate for rail unless and until a proper, unbiased study fairly considers other options, including a bus system on dedicated lanes, that could require far less taxpayer dollars and could be completed much faster. If the study shows that Valley Rail is the best option and is fair to the taxpayers and the traveling public, and is feasible, then ACTC should consider this $400 million reallocation at that time.

We do not understand the necessity nor the benefit of making this decision so early in the planning process.

I will be commenting on this matter at the Commission meeting.

Thank you for your consideration of the position of the Alameda County Taxpayers Association on this important matter before the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcus Crawley -President of ACTA