Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2020

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

Dear Chair Cutter:

I write to support approval of the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Authority) request to an amend the 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP). The TEP amendment will acknowledge the Authority as a new agency in Alameda County and an eligible recipient of Measure BB funds. The amendment would also 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 Tri-Valley to advance rail connectivity to Livermore. It will also support an intermodal connection between Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system in the Tri-Valley and support the advancement of the Altamont Vision.

The Authority was created in 2017 for the purpose of planning, developing, and delivering cost-effective and responsive transit connectivity between BART and ACE rail service that reflects regional consensus and meets the goals and objectives of the San Joaquin Valley and Tri-Valley communities. Valley Link is poised to fill the need for a rail alternative across the Altamont and is slated to be a robust and sustainable passenger rail system that has widespread support from constituencies and local leaders throughout the Northern California Megaregion. The 42-mile, seven-station system would link the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station in the Tri-Valley with communities and households in northern San Joaquin Valley. With 25 daily round trips, Valley Link staff estimates the service will provide 28,000 daily rides in 2040. Further, the Authority has also committed to making Valley Link an accessible and equitable public transit option, with four of the proposed stations in San Joaquin County within disadvantaged community geographic areas or areas designated as low-income communities.

As low-wage workers and others are displaced from the Bay Area to find more affordable housing, they are forced to make lengthier and more expensive daily commutes, making a rail connection a social justice issue. Given the potential this project has to improve the lives of commuters and help protect our environment, and given the motivation of its team to see the project completed and service begin, I want to make clear my strong support for approving the Authority's Request for a 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan Amendment. This action will ensure that the Valley Link project moves forward and supports the Altamont Vision that regional agencies are diligently working jointly to advance.

Sincerely,

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

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