

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 2, 2022

Toks Omishakin, Secretary
California State Transportation Agency
400 Capitol Mall, Suite 2340
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Caltrain's application to the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program

Dear Secretary Omishakin:

As members of the Caltrain federal delegation, we are writing to express our strong support for Caltrain's application to the Cycle 6 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Existing Projects Reserve to complete the Caltrain Electrification Project. It is critical that Caltrain receive these resources to ensure this once in a generation project is completed by fall 2024, to address immediate cash flow needs, and to create a more sustainable future for Caltrain and the communities it serves.

The Caltrain Electrification Project is at the forefront of commuter rail innovation, transitioning from a legacy diesel rail line to a cutting edge, electrified line that mitigates climate impacts while creating thousands of jobs. The project has been in construction since 2017 and will modernize a nearly 160-year-old diesel commuter rail line by increasing capacity and improving performance and safety while providing cleaner and more sustainable service. Spanning 51 miles between San Francisco and San Jose, this project will replace 75 percent of Caltrain's 30-year-old diesel fleet with high-performance electric trains. Caltrain will become California's first electrified commuter rail system and North America's first commuter rail system in 30 years to transition its trains and infrastructure from diesel to an electrified system. The local, regional, and state level benefits of this endeavor, some of which we've listed below, are significant.

- **Construction Nearly Complete:** The Caltrain Electrification Project began construction in 2017 and continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Four of the new electric trains have already been delivered to the corridor and started testing. Caltrain is well on the way to providing electrified service in less than two years if additional resources are secured.
- **Fighting Climate Change:** Caltrain Electrification and the future service vision expansion will deliver tremendous environmental benefits to the region by replacing a 30-year-old, polluting diesel fleet and expanding capacity to carry more riders and remove vehicles from the road. Electrification will directly improve air quality along the corridor by reducing 110 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions every day.
- **Equity:** Caltrain Electrification will enhance access and benefit equity priority communities and as well as help Caltrain serve a more diverse group of riders, including people with lower incomes and members of racial and ethnic minority groups. The new electric trains will significantly decrease emissions and noise pollution in the equity priority communities along the corridor. The Electrification Program will help Caltrain continue to expand midday and off-peak service levels to better serve essential workers, improve access for equity priority communities, and attract customers whose work schedules do not conform to historic peak commute hours.
- **Job Creation and Economic Growth:** The project has created thousands of jobs in California and contributed to job creation in 36 states across the country. In addition to supporting manufacturing jobs, the Caltrain Electrification Project is a vital contributor to the continued economic growth and quality of life for Silicon Valley and the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Caltrain service to the communities in which these companies are located will enable them to help drive the economy of our state, not to mention the nation.

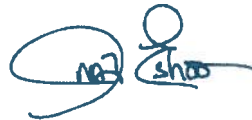
- **California High Speed Rail:** In the future, California High-Speed Rail Authority will operate on Caltrain's tracks and use the new 24KV Overhead Contact System (OCS) being installed for the Caltrain Electrification project. Essentially, the Caltrain corridor will be the first electrified section of the statewide California High-Speed Rail project.
- **Ridership and Community:** The new high-performance trains will offer a better experience for riders and the community. They will generate less noise than their diesel equivalent, making the trip more enjoyable both for riders and residents that live near Caltrain tracks. The new vehicles also offer enhanced amenities, including new digital onboard displays, power outlets at each seat, energy-efficient lighting, coat hooks, security cameras, expanded storage and ADA restrooms with baby changing tables.
- **Fiscal Benefit:** The COVID-19 pandemic's effect on Caltrain's overall financial health has been significant. Pre-pandemic, Caltrain counted on ridership to cover approximately 70 percent of the operating budget. As of October 2022, ridership is now at 30% of the prior level. Additional resources are critical because the Electrification Project will run out of funds in June 2023. Securing additional funding for the Electrification Project will not only keep this important capital project on track, but it will also help with the agency's overall financial health by making sure Caltrain isn't overly burdened with debt and that key funding sources such as Measure RR and the Low Carbon Fuel Standard that were intended for operating, safety repairs and expansion support aren't diverted to the Electrification Project. With additional resources, the Electrification Project can be completed and Caltrain will have more financial stability to continue providing quality, reliable service and expansion projects to communities along the corridor.

We are close to the finish line for this transformational project. We respectfully request your full and fair consideration of the Caltrain application to ensure that the Electrification Project stays on track to deliver a remarkable service and legacy for the region, state and nation. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

All the best,



Representative Jackie Speier



Representative Anna Eshoo



Representative Ro Khanna



Representative Jimmy Panetta



Representative Zoe Lofgren

cc: Michelle Bouchard, Acting Executive Director, Caltrain
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors