



December 5, 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:

Our broad coalition — represented by environmental groups, transit advocates, labor, educational and health care institutions and business large and small — 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, address the immediate cash flow needs and create a more sustainable future for Caltrain and the communities it serves.

The Caltrain Electrification Project (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 greenhouse gas emissions every day.
- **Equity:** Caltrain Electrification will enhance access and benefit equity priority communities 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 train 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:** The Caltrain Electrification Project's success will shape the future of rail in the region, state and nation. The core of California High-Speed Rail Authority's (CHSRA) northern section will run from San Francisco to San Jose and will depend on a fully electrified Caltrain operation. In the future, CHSRA 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.
- **Electrification South of Diridon Station and fully Zero-Emission Corridor:**
The Caltrain Electrification Project's success will also provide the foundation for a future electrification project south of Tamien Station in San Jose that will extend the operational and environmental benefits of Electrified Caltrain service to southern San Jose, Unincorporated Santa Clara County, Morgan Hill, and Gilroy. To promote clean air and remove the aging diesel fleet as soon as possible, modified electric trains with a battery component (BEMUs) could be used on this corridor while the future electrification infrastructure is being constructed. Caltrain Electrification is an incremental step towards this larger corridor vision.

- **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% of the operating budget and now, as of October 2022 ridership is at 30%. 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 urge for your leadership to fully fund this project to ensure Caltrain stays on track to deliver a project that will leave a legacy for the region, state and nation. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our important request.

Most gratefully,

350 Bay Area Transportation Committee
Acterra
Alexandria Real Estate
Bay Area Council
BKF Engineers
Bohannon Development Company
Building & Construction Trades Council of San Mateo County
Burlingame/SFO Chamber of Commerce
California Apartment Association
Campbell Chamber of Commerce
Carbon Free Palo Alto
Carbon Free Silicon Valley
Chamber San Mateo County
Communications & Power Industries LLC
Commute.org
Cupertino Chamber of Commerce
DES Architects + Engineers
Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital
Eden Housing
Friends of Caltrain
Genentech
Gilroy Chamber of Commerce
Google
Greenbelt Alliance
Hines
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Silicon Valley
Housing Action Coalition
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County
IQHQ

Jay Paul Company
Joint Venture Silicon Valley
Kaiser Permanente
Kenson Ventures
Livable Sunnyvale
Longfellow
Los Altos Chamber of Commerce
Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce
Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce
Menlo Spark
Meta
Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce
Mountain View Chamber of Commerce
Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce
Peninsula Chinese Business Association
Peninsula for Everyone
Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group
Peninsula Mobility Group
Presidio Bay Ventures
Rainbow Chamber Silicon Valley
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
San Jose Chamber of Commerce
San Mateo Area Chamber of Commerce
San Mateo County Central Labor Council
San Mateo County Community College District
San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA)
Saratoga Chamber of Commerce
Sares Regis Group of Northern California
Seamless Bay Area
Seaport Industrial Association
Secure the Future 2100
Silicon Valley Black Chamber of Commerce
Silicon Valley Leadership Group
SPUR
Stanford Medicine Children's Health
Stanford University
Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce
Sustainable San Mateo County
Sutter Health
Tishman Speyer
Transbay Joint Powers Authority
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Young Professionals in Transportation - San Francisco Bay Area Chapter