

Public Comment for Agenda Item No. 3

Legislative Policy Committee Meeting

April 10, 2024

9:40 AM

Location

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
First Floor Lobby Board Room
1170 W. 3rd Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion – Legislative/Public Outreach

3. Bill Position Recommendations

That the Legislative Policy Committee, on behalf of the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority Board of Directors, adopt the following recommended positions:

- A. Approve a support position on Assembly Bill 2645 by Assemblyman Tom Lackey which would require toll agencies to notify the California Highway Patrol or local law enforcement if a vehicle and license plate identified by an Emergency Alert System notice is identified by electronic toll facility equipment.
- B. Approve an oppose position on Assembly Bill 2535 by Assemblywoman Mia Bonta, which would prohibit the California Transportation Commission from allocating Trade Corridor Enhancement Program Funds to certain highway projects.

Written public comment was received and is attached for your information.

From: [Brianna Egan](#)
To: [clerkoftheboard](#)
Subject: Public comment on Legislative Policy Committee Agenda Item 3
Date: Tuesday, April 9, 2024 3:20:00 PM

To the SBCTA Legislative Policy Committee,

As a resident of San Bernardino County and a user of roads, highways, and transit throughout the county, I oppose the staff recommendation in Item 3B for an oppose position on AB 2535 (Bonta). I would like to ask that the SBCTA remain neutral and not take an oppose stance, or consider a support stance.

[AB 2535 is a clean air bill](#) supported by the Coalition for Clean Air, Environment California, Greenlining Institute, and NRDC that would support the region's shift from polluting transportation modes to zero emissions and cleaner modes. Our county consistently receives an [F grading from the American Lung Association](#) as one of the worst counties on metrics related to ozone, pollution, and other emissions. In our pollution-burdened and environmental justice communities, residents need a transportation agency that actively supports a shift to zero-emissions modes such as electric freight trucks and electric freight rail. This bill will ensure funding administered through TCEP facilitates zero-emissions freight infrastructure and reduces pollution burden on our communities to address urgent climate needs.

In addition to prioritizing zero-emissions freight, this bill will reform funding requirements by restricting funding to projects that add general purpose lanes to highways. This is a critical part of the picture as [widening highways fails to achieve stated goals of moving goods efficiently](#) and only serves to worsen traffic, pollution, smog and rates of asthma and respiratory disease. I recognize that our region is growing and relies on logistics and goods movement to power the local economy. However, we can achieve a robust logistics economy that also reduces emissions by funding a transition to zero emissions freight and reducing costly and wasteful spending on widening highways.

Staff recommendation for this item states that AB 2535 is not consistent with the legislative platform to “Advocate for equitable funding for trade corridors, gateways, intermodal connectors and freight facilities in San Bernardino County.” However, this bill *will* provide equitable funding to shift and fund zero-emissions projects for cleaner goods movement in the county. I would like to advise that an oppose position on this bill runs counter to the following [SBCTA legislative platform items](#):

- Meet the challenges of confronting climate change, while ensuring that reductions in programs such as SB 1 will be replaced with new equitable revenue streams.
- Recognize the important role goods movement plays within San Bernardino County and transportation projects that help to move goods more efficiently, while also favoring development projects that do not exacerbate existing air quality, traffic or socioeconomic issues within disadvantaged communities.
- Reduce freight-related impacts to San Bernardino County and ensure newly funded projects include necessary mitigation measures to protect impacted communities.
- Ensure appropriate funding levels from state sources to support transit operations that help to achieve GHG reduction goals.
- Increase investment in hydrogen and other zero emission technologies to meet the growing need as we deploy new technologies in the transit and freight network.

In short AB 2535 is a needed statewide reform that can assist SBCTA in achieving emissions reductions and accelerating a transition to much-needed zero emissions freight movement. Thank you for your diligent work on this committee and in your elected leadership throughout the county.

Signed,
Brianna Egan
Loma Linda, San Bernardino County

From: [Adriana Rizzo](#)
To: [clerkoftheboard](#)
Subject: 4/10 Legislative Policy Committee Meeting Public Comment Item 3 - Bill Position Recommendations
Date: Tuesday, April 9, 2024 3:27:36 PM

Dear SBCTA Board Members,

I am a Riverside resident who frequently travels through Western San Bernardino county both by car and public transit. I would like to register my disagreement with the recommendation for SBCTA to oppose AB 2535 (Bonta). AB 2535, which would prohibit allocation of Trade Corridor Enhancement Program diesel tax funds to general purpose highway lanes and divert funds to green freight infrastructure.

The Inland Empire has the worst air pollution, worst traffic, and lowest transit mode share in the country. Cars and trucks are the main source of criteria pollutants, which result in elevated [asthma rates in the Inland Empire and cause more than \\$8.5 million in annual healthcare costs](#) in the City of Riverside alone. Meanwhile, car dependence creates financial burdens for residents. Decades of public policy that has underfunded public transit (the Inland Empire has some of the lowest spending per capita on transit of any metro in the country) and continuous increases to highway capacity, which induces VMT for both freight and passenger vehicles, is directly responsible for this crisis.

[Widening highways simply does not improve traffic](#), and should not be the priority for our transportation spending. AB2535 fixes this by redirecting funds to green freight infrastructure, which is urgently needed to reduce the burden of pollution of goods movement in our communities. Many of these investments could also improve transit service in San Bernardino County due to the shared usage of most rail lines by Metrolink and freight rail:

- The bill would fund enhancements that improve freight rail capacity, which could also be used to increase service on Metrolink lines (particularly those like the IE-OC line that use freight ROW).
- This bill could fund overhead catenary electrification for freight that could also be used by passenger rail. Overhead catenary lines have powered freight rail for decades in and outside of the US, and are also being used for passenger rail in California for Caltrain, CA High Speed Rail, and the Brightline West. The higher speeds and faster acceleration associated with overhead electrification on Metrolink would result in shorter travel times and thus more frequent service for the same amount of spending. For more information about the synergy between freight and passenger rail electrification in the Inland Empire, see [this whitepaper](#).
- This bill can fund grade separations, which enable higher speed travel on passenger rail, while also alleviating traffic delays caused by long trains, a major concern for many railside communities, including my friend who lives 1 block from freight tracks in Ontario.

I urge you to reconsider your opposition to SB 2535. This bill addresses some of the most urgent needs of the IE community.

Sincerely,
Adriana Rizzo