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Assembly California Legislature



CHRIS R. HOLDEN
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May 11, 2017

John Fasana
Chair, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board
Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: State Route 710 North Study Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Chair Fasana:

I represent a significant number of the communities that will be greatly affected by the decision made by the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board in regards to the State Route 710 North Study. I strongly support a community based, open process to implement a viable solution for the 710 North Study. It is imperative that we all do our part to put a plan in place that will relieve traffic, connect communities, promote smart growth, reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and help people get to their jobs, schools, shopping, and recreation.

Unfortunately, the build alternatives in the SR-710 North Study Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) do not sufficiently balance the transportation and mobility needs of our local communities and the regional area. The deficient DEIR begins with a flawed Purpose and Needs Statement that focuses on how to move cars from point A to point B rather than how to move people in the region. Furthermore, the DEIR/EIS demonstrated that the Tunnel Alternative would be the worst alternative for the entire region, as described by the Southern California Association of Governments with respect to potential environmental impacts in the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

We have endured decades of freeway gridlock debate. Continued assertions to implement a freeway or Tunnel Alternative regardless of citizen opposition will never result in a solution. After taking account of my own history with this project, evaluating the analysis provided, I decided we need a new way forward. Business as usual has failed our communities. It's time to move forward with projects that further California's air quality and transportation goals. We need a forward-thinking approach that reflects the way we travel today, integrates with smart growth initiatives and transit oriented developments, and prepares us for the transportation trends of the future. In light of California's landmark climate legislation that mandates the rapid

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reduction of our greenhouse gas emissions, it is clear that the State Route 710 tunnel project is a misguided and obsolete solution.

I introduced Assembly Bill 287 to move us in a different direction. The bill requires Caltrans and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board to create an advisory group with the impacted communities and allows them to be a part of the decision making process. This ensures the project proposed to the community at large will have true regional consensus and support. The bill also removes the tunnel from consideration as an alternative.

The Tunnel Alternative will cause more problems than it solves. First, the funding is not available. The cost of \$5 billion or more is a price Los Angeles County residents cannot and should not have to pay, especially with the potential for the project to go over budget. Second, it fails to relieve traffic in the region since it only shifts traffic from one area to another. Third, according to the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the conclusions of the EIR do not accurately reflect the analysis in the report; therefore additional analysis would need to be conducted to ensure the affected areas will not be overly burdened with increased air pollution.

The Metro Board will soon decide whether they should certify the State Route 710 North Study Environmental Impact Report. Certifying the EIR will set into motion an opposition that cripples the solution making process. This will divert attention from finding a solution to stopping the EIR process.

We currently stand at an important crossroad for the State Route 710 North Study. For the reasons stated above I urge you to:

- Remove the tunnel from consideration as an alternative for SR 710
- Not finalize or certify the Environmental Impact Report
- Create a transparent process for the affected communities to come together and develop consensus on real solutions for the region
- Immediately begin to allocate Measure R funds to projects in the study area that help traffic congestion and benefit the community

Now is the time to focus on solutions that work and can bring the community together to move us closer to our environmental sustainability goals. I look forward to working with you and Metro on this matter.

Sincerely



CHRIS R. HOLDEN
Assembly Member, 41st District

CH: nf: gm

cc: Brian Kelly, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
Members of Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board
Adam Schiff, Representative, District 28
Judy Chu, Representative, District 27
Anthony Portantino, Senator, District 25
Laura Friedman, Assembly Member, District 43
Ed Chau, Assembly Member, District 49
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