

May 10, 2023

Tanisha Taylor, Interim Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS-52
P.O. Box 942873
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SCTA Support for Bay Area Infrastructure Financing Authority State Route 37 Tolling Application

Dear Ms. Taylor:

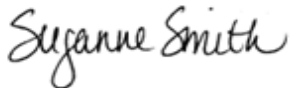
I am writing to express the Sonoma County Transportation Authority's strong support for the Bay Area Infrastructure Financing Authority (BAIFA) request for tolling authority on State Route (SR) 37 between Sears Point and Mare Island as allowed under Section 149.7 of the California Streets and Highways Code, as amended by AB 194 (2015). SR 37 is a vital transportation corridor in the North Bay and functions as an important emergency evacuation route. This route provides a critical east-west freight connection between two major trade corridors and runs through the ecologically rich San Pablo Baylands. Climate change-fueled storms periodically flood the route and, by 2050, portions of SR 37 are projected to be permanently inundated due to the impacts of sea level rise. Pollution from idling vehicles also contributes to climate related impacts and threaten the sensitive Baylands habitat nearby. SR 37 is also one of the Bay Area's most congested corridors in terms of vehicle delay. Under optimal conditions, it takes 20 minutes to travel on SR 37 between SR 29 and US 101. However, due to a lack of capacity and transit options, travel times along the corridor are forecast to be 100 minutes by 2025 during peak periods. The future of this corridor demands finding solutions to chronic traffic congestion and periodic flooding. But it will also require balancing transportation needs with protecting and enhancing sensitive marshland habitats.

The Sears Point to Mare Island Improvement Project is a component of the Resilient State Route 37 program, a suite of near-term and long-term improvements to preserve and protect the SR 37 corridor, enhance quality of life, and support ecological restoration, including through using natural infrastructure to enhance corridor resilience. BAIFA and Caltrans, in partnership with the four North Bay County Transportation Agencies, are implementing corridor improvements to improve traffic flow and peak travel times, increase vehicle occupancy, enhance residents' quality of life, improve freight throughput, support multimodal travel, improve safety and public access, preserve and protect surrounding ecosystems, and improve corridor resilience against flooding in the near term. These improvements include converting the existing general purposes lanes to High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, adding one tolled general purpose lane in each direction, providing corridor-wide Intelligent Transportation Systems, new signs and lighting, California Highway Patrol observation areas, maintenance vehicle pullout areas, new traffic signals at Noble Road and intersection modifications at SR 121, slope protection and reinforcement, environmental and public access enhancements, and providing new transit service between Solano County and Marin County.

Means-based tolling is needed to both mitigate Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and generate funding to advance the near and long term Resilient SR37 program. The toll revenue will be utilized to advance activities that support resiliency to sea-level rise, protect critical marsh and tidal habitats, reduce transportation inequities, and incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, transit and carpool options for travelers. Planning a long-term solution presents an opportunity to provide bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and carpool options for all travelers.

The SCTA values our partnership with BAIFA to help deliver on the equity and mobility goals envisioned for the SR37 corridor. The proposed project will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve safety and quality of life, and improve access to equity priority communities. We fully support the request to the CTC for tolling authority for the SR37 corridor and thank you for your consideration of this critical project. Should you have any questions, please contact James Cameron of my staff at (707) 565-5377 or james.cameron@scta.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Smith
Executive Director, SCTA

cc: Paul Golaszewski, CTC
Zack Taylor, CTC
James Cameron, SCTA
David Ripperda, SCTA

From: Chris C.

Sent: Wednesday, May 3, 2023 1:33 PM

To: State Route 37@DOT <stateroute37@dot.ca.gov>

Cc: California Transportation Commission@CATC <ctc@catc.ca.gov>

Subject: Toll Road Proposal for Route 37

EXTERNAL EMAIL. Links/attachments may not be safe.

Dear State Route 37 Corridor Staff,

I recently learned that there was a meeting last week about a new plan to toll the people of Solano County trying to travel West along Route 37.

It appears that Solano County is being targeted by other areas of the Bay Area with more political pull (and \$\$). The tolls on the Carquinez Bridge and Benicia-Martinez Bridge are constantly being raised to provide services to people elsewhere in the Bay Area. The Express lanes around the Bay Area seem like a waste of construction costs with benefits for a tiny number of people.

A toll on Route 37 would be yet another regressive, poorly-targeted tax on the people who can least afford to pay it in Solano County. Before adding any new toll roads, get rid of the tolls across the Carquinez Strait (or, if you must keep them, devote their tolls to pay for Route 37).

Also, I have seen toll lanes on some renderings of I-80 and I-680 in the future out of Vallejo and Benicia to Fairfield. Are those on the agenda soon? It seems odd to entirely surround this area in particular with toll roads.

Sincerely,
Chris Chiego

From: [Valerie Peterson](#)
To: California.Transportation.Commission@CATC
Subject: potential for toll on Hwy 37
Date: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 2:36:05 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL. Links/attachments may not be safe.

Dear Commission:

Are you sure that the 50 cents/gallon additional taxes for highways won't pay for these improvements? At least in part?

If you do enact a toll, it would be wonderful if there were an actual stop date!!!!
My late dad told me this was an unfulfilled promise about the Golden Gate Bridge toll.
When it was paid for, the tolls were supposed to stop.

Thank you,
Valerie Peterson
Novato, CA

From: [Debbie Reece](#)
To: [California Transportation Commission@CATC](mailto:California.Transportation.Commission@CATC)
Subject: State Route 37 Toll Road Application Feedback
Date: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 7:36:17 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL. Links/attachments may not be safe.

To California Transportation Commission Chair Eager, Vice Chair Guardino, and Commissioners Bradshaw, Cruz, Falcon, Grisby, Lugo, **Lyou**, Martinez, Norton, and Tavaglione:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the plan to change State Route 37 into a toll road from Mare Island to State Route 121. I am opposed to the current proposal. I understand the need to fund the desperately needed improvements but find this proposal to be the very opposite of showing a commitment to equity.

Those of us who live in Solano County already have to pay 1 or 2 bridge tolls (or pay for long public transportation trips with limited hours of availability) to get to most Bay Area jobs. Now BAIFA is trying to add that burden to us in yet another direction and only to us. Why isn't the Sonoma-Marin end west of SR 121 included in the tolls? All the tourist traffic to Napa from the Bay Area on the west end of SR 37 to SR 121 is also not captured in this current proposal. What is more surprising is that it seems very obvious and easy to change this proposal to be equitable and possibly capture even more revenue more quickly.

Why not, instead of treating it like a bridge that requires every car to pay or carpool, offer express lanes that are tolled, as is done throughout the Bay Area and state, and put them in place through the whole length from Highway 101 to Mare Island? The express lane tolls could be put in place from Highway 101 to SR 121 almost immediately rather than waiting for lanes to be added. Many professionals who commute and tourists may be very happy to be able to pay to bypass the traffic, and revenue to pay for the improvements could start flowing immediately. The burden would be spread more equitably without needing to create another "program" for low-income households, which can cause more paperwork and compliance headaches for applicants along with causing privacy and data security concerns. Those who want to avoid the toll would still have the option of staying in the general lane.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please make the implementation truly more equitable and just.

Best regards,

Deborah Reece

Vallejo, California