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California State Senate

SENATOR
JOHN LAIRD

SEVENTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #1
(EDUCATION)
CHAIR

JOINT COMMITTEE ON RULES
VICE CHAIR

JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE
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JUDICIARY

LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
& RETIREMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER

RULES

JOINT LEGISLATIVE
COMMITTEE ON RULES

Tab 20

June 18, 2025

Chair Grisby
California Transportation Commission
1120 N. Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for the Adoption of Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program, SB1-Cycle 4 Agenda Tabs 20 and 22

Dear Chair Grisby & CTC Commissioners:

As the State Senator representing California's 17th Senate District, I write to express my strong support for the adoption of the Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program (WSC-MCP) Cycle 4 Project and urge you to adopt the staff recommendation for funding of \$128,700,000.

This multimodal project includes the construction of two sets of auxiliary lanes on Highway 1, allowing zero emission buses to bypass congestion and will also develop 1.25 miles of path along the iconic 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail. Additionally, this project will construct critical improvements to Soquel Drive such as ADA ramps, curb extensions, and high visibility treatments. Furthermore, this project will create two new "rapid" routes for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's (METRO) regional route network between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. METRO regional routes provide vital coverage because they serve the transportation disadvantaged community of Watsonville and connect its residents to educational, healthcare, and job centers in Aptos, Capitola, and Santa Cruz.

This project closely aligns with local, regional, state, and federal climate action and resiliency goals and will improve safety, increase mobility, reduce congestion, and enhance the quality of life for residents, students, and visitors. Thank you for your consideration of adopting this important project.

Sincerely,

John Laird
State Senator, 17th Senate District



Daniel Lurie, Mayor

Janet Tarlov, Chair
Stephanie Cajina, Vice Chair
Mike Chen, Director
Alfonso Felder, Director

Steve Heminger, Director
Dominica Henderson, Director
Fiona Hinze, Director

Julie Kirschbaum, Director of Transportation

June 18, 2025

The Honorable Darnell Grisby
Chair, California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, Mail Station 52
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **Solutions for Congested Corridors Program: Train Control Upgrade Project – Support for CTC Staff Recommendation (Ref. # 4.5)**

Dear Chair Grisby:

I am writing in support of the CTC staff recommendation of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA) Train Control Upgrade Project (TCUP) under the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program.

The Bay Area is projected to grow by 1.8 million residents, create more than 1 million jobs and add over 20 million Muni riders by 2050. Over that same period, San Francisco expects to add approximately 400,000 new residents and 280,00 new jobs. Muni Metro is now the fourth busiest light rail system in the country and is a vital hub for regional commuters connecting to/from other transit systems. Muni Metro serves at least 150,000 customers daily, of which at least 20,700 are Bay Area-wide commuters connecting to/from other systems, but its effectiveness is constrained by non-centralized and outdated train control technology.

The TCUP project will reduce vehicle miles traveled by over one billion miles over the lifespan of the new system (25+ years). It will increase Metro capacity by up to 20 percent, while equivalent car trips would require significant transbay infrastructure upgrades. The project will pave the way for installation in the subway and the remaining on-street segments serving the city's outer neighborhoods where planned housing growth will increase demand on Metro connections to/from regional transit.

We urge the Commission's support of this important project and thank you for your support of Muni.

Sincerely,

Julie Kirschbaum
Director of Transportation



City Manager's Office

"Working with our community to create positive impact through service with heart."

June 18, 2025

Chair Grisby
California Transportation Commission
1120 N. Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for the Adoption of Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program, SB1-Cycle 4 Agenda Tabs 20 and 22

Dear Chair Grisby & CTC Commissioners,

The City of Watsonville is pleased to share our strong support for the adoption of the Watsonville - Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program (WSC-MCP) Cycle 4 Project and we urge you to adopt the staff recommendation for funding this important project.

Watsonville supports the grant as it will benefit community members by improving travel options between Watsonville, Santa Cruz and within the city. The work on Highway 1 will improve the commute for south county residents traveling to and from Santa Cruz. The enhanced bus service and facilities will provide Watsonville residents with more frequent and accessible routes in and around the city.

The transformative Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program provides congestion relief and reduces transit travel times; reduces single occupancy vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increases bus ridership, biking and walking; advances transportation equity; improves roadway safety for all users; and better connects Santa Cruz County to communities on the Central Coast and in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The innovative bus on shoulder facility will improve transit on-time performance and reliability by allowing zero-emission buses to bypass congestion and operate on the outside shoulder and on auxiliary lanes on Highway 1. This will also facilitate the expansion of express bus service and the creation of two new "rapid" routes for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's (METRO) regional route network between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. METRO regional routes provide vital coverage because they serve the transportation disadvantaged community of Watsonville and connect its residents to educational, healthcare, and job centers in Aptos, Capitola, and Santa Cruz and serve the low-income unincorporated communities of Live Oak and Seacliff. The highway component of this project is the final phase of a three-phase operational improvement program with 2-miles of improvements completed and another 3 miles under construction.

The project will build a 1.25-mile segment of the iconic 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail, including four pedestrian/bicycle overcrossings to reconnect communities divided by major barriers including Highway 1, Soquel Drive, and major waterways. Finally, the project also includes critical improvements to the major arterial Soquel Drive that parallels Highway 1 serving Cabrillo Community College, neighborhood schools, commercial centers, grocery stores, both the county's hospitals, other medical facilities, and other key destinations. The cycle 4 project includes enhancements to METRO bus service by installing new in-lane boarding platforms, shelters, real-time bus arrival displays, and ticket validators. METRO's rapid but routes will receive transit signal priority devices at signalized intersections, as well as active transportation upgrades on Soquel Drive that will close sidewalk gaps, construct ADA ramps and curb extensions, and install separated bicycle facilities and high visibility treatments. The Rapid routes connect all the Opportunity Areas between Watsonville and Santa Cruz, and their two termini are sites of new 100% affordable housing projects.

This project closely aligns with local, regional, state, and federal climate action and resiliency goals and will improve safety, increase mobility, reduce congestion, and enhance the quality of life for residents, students, and visitors. We are pleased to support this work and thank you for your consideration of adopting this important project.

Sincerely,



Tamara Vides
Watsonville City Manager

Regeneración/Regeneration

PÁJARO VALLEY CLIMATE ACTION



June 18, 2025

Chair Grisby
California Transportation Commission
1120 N. Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for the Adoption of Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program, SB1-Cycle 4
Agenda Tabs 20 and 22

Dear Chair Grisby & CTC Commissioners:

Advisory Board

Jakki Castorena - Davila
Sustainability Manager, Environmental Innovations

Rebecca Garcia, Retired
PVUSD Principal, 2020 Mayor of Watsonville

Anne Hayes
Fundraising Consultant

Kirsten Liske,
Senior Director of Regional Climate Leadership, Ecology Action

Regeneración - Pajaro Valley Climate Action is pleased to share our strong support for the adoption of the **Watsonville - Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program (WSC-MCP) Cycle 4 Project** and we urge you to adopt the staff recommendation for funding this important project.

Regeneración was founded on the principle that climate change is a social justice issue with local impacts and must be engaged with on a local level in order to build resilient communities. Extreme injustices and inequities have enabled and fueled the extreme pace of global warming. As we move toward our shared vision for the future by working with community partners to lower emissions and take other action on climate, solutions must be not only sustainable, but equitable. Mobility is a human right, meaning we need to ensure equity and accessibility alongside sustainability.

We are excited to see this project implemented in order to lower greenhouse gases, improve safety, support active transportation, and invest in our community. We believe the project will result in improved well-being as it advances equity in the critical sector of transportation.

The transformative Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program provides congestion relief and reduces transit travel times; reduces single occupancy vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increases bus ridership, biking and walking; advances transportation equity; improves roadway safety for all users; and better connects Santa Cruz County to communities on the Central Coast and in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The innovative bus on shoulder facility will improve transit on-time performance and reliability by allowing zero-emission buses to bypass congestion and operate on the outside shoulder and on auxiliary lanes on Highway 1. This will also facilitate the expansion of express bus service and the creation of two new "rapid" routes for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's (METRO) regional route network between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. METRO regional routes provide vital coverage because they serve the transportation disadvantaged community of Watsonville and connect its residents to educational, healthcare, and job centers in Aptos, Capitola, and Santa Cruz and serve the low-income unincorporated communities of Live Oak and Seacliff. The highway component of this project is the final phase of a three-phase operational improvement program with 2-miles of improvements completed and another 3 miles under construction.

The project will build a 1.25-mile segment of the iconic 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail, including four pedestrian/bicycle overcrossings to reconnect communities divided by major barriers including Highway 1, So-

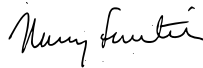
Regeneración/Regeneration

PÁJARO VALLEY CLIMATE ACTION

quel Drive, and major waterways. Finally, the project also includes critical improvements to the major arterial Soquel Drive that parallels Highway 1 serving Cabrillo Community College, neighborhood schools, commercial centers, grocery stores, both the county's hospitals, other medical facilities, and other key destinations. The cycle 4 project includes enhancements to METRO bus service by installing new in-lane boarding platforms, shelters, real-time bus arrival displays, and ticket validators. METRO's rapid but routes will receive transit signal priority devices at signalized intersections, as well as active transportation upgrades on Soquel Drive that will close sidewalk gaps, construct ADA ramps and curb extensions, and install separated bicycle facilities and high visibility treatments. The Rapid routes connect all the Opportunity Areas between Watsonville and Santa Cruz, and their two termini are sites of new 100% affordable housing projects.

This project closely aligns with local, regional, state, and federal climate action and resiliency goals and will improve safety, increase mobility, reduce congestion, and enhance the quality of life for residents, students, and visitors. We are pleased to support this work and thank you for your consideration of adopting this important project.

Sincerely,



Nancy Faulstich

Executive Director
Regeneración - Pajaro Valley Climate Action

*Santa Cruz Metropolitan
Transit District*



June 18, 2025

Chair Grisby
California Transportation Commission
1120 N. Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for the Adoption of Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program,
SB1-Cycle 4 Agenda Tabs 20 and 22

Dear Chair Grisby & CTC Commissioners,

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) strongly supports the adoption of the Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program (WSC-MCP) Cycle 4 Project and urges your approval of the staff's funding recommendation. This project is pivotal in advancing METRO's mission to provide equitable, reliable, and environmentally sustainable transit service throughout Santa Cruz County.

The WSC-MCP project includes a groundbreaking "bus on shoulder" facility along Highway 1 that will significantly enhance transit travel time, reliability and reduce delays by enabling METRO's zero-emission buses to bypass highway congestion and operate on the outside shoulder and on the auxiliary lanes. This critical infrastructure will support the creation of two new Rapid routes in METRO's regional network, linking Watsonville and Santa Cruz with faster, more efficient service and laying the foundation for future express service expansion.

METRO regional routes provide vital coverage because they serve the transportation disadvantaged community of Watsonville and connect its residents to educational, healthcare, and job centers in Aptos, Capitola, and Santa Cruz and serve the low-income unincorporated communities of Live Oak and Seacliff. The highway component of this project is the final phase of a three-phase operational improvement program with 2 miles of improvements completed and another 3 miles under construction.

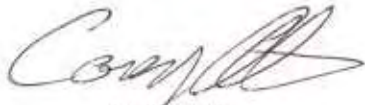
The project also includes critical improvements to the major arterial Soquel Drive that parallels Highway 1 serving Cabrillo Community College, neighborhood schools, commercial centers, grocery stores, both the county's hospitals, other medical facilities, and other key destinations.

The cycle 4 project includes enhancements to METRO bus service by installing new in-lane boarding platforms, shelters, real-time bus arrival displays, and ticket validators. METRO's rapid bus routes will receive transit signal priority devices at signalized intersections, as well as active transportation upgrades on Soquel Drive that will close sidewalk gaps, construct ADA ramps and curb extensions, and install separated bicycle facilities and high visibility treatments.

In alignment with regional and statewide goals for climate resilience and congestion reduction, this investment will help METRO expand zero-emission service, support car-free access to 100% affordable housing developments, and ensure a safer, healthier, and more connected transit system.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership in supporting sustainable mobility for communities across California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Corey Aldridge', is positioned above the printed name.

Corey Aldridge
Santa Cruz METRO, CEO

*Santa Cruz Metropolitan
Transit District*



June 18, 2025

Chair Grisby
California Transportation Commission
1120 N. Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for the Adoption of Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program,
SB1-Cycle 4 Agenda Tabs 20 and 22

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The WSC-MCP project includes a groundbreaking "bus on shoulder" facility along Highway 1 that will significantly enhance transit travel time, reliability and reduce delays by enabling METRO's zero-emission buses to bypass highway congestion and operate on the outside shoulder and on the auxiliary lanes. This critical infrastructure will support the creation of two new Rapid routes in METRO's regional network, linking Watsonville and Santa Cruz with faster, more efficient service and laying the foundation for future express service expansion.

METRO regional routes provide vital coverage because they serve the transportation disadvantaged community of Watsonville and connect its residents to educational, healthcare, and job centers in Aptos, Capitola, and Santa Cruz and serve the low-income unincorporated communities of Live Oak and Seacliff. The highway component of this project is the final phase of a three-phase operational improvement program with 2 miles of improvements completed and another 3 miles under construction.

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Chair Grisby
California Transportation Commission
Page 2

The cycle 4 project includes enhancements to METRO bus service by installing new in-lane boarding platforms, shelters, real-time bus arrival displays, and ticket validators. METRO's rapid bus routes will receive transit signal priority devices at signalized intersections, as well as active transportation upgrades on Soquel Drive that will close sidewalk gaps, construct ADA ramps and curb extensions, and install separated bicycle facilities and high visibility treatments.

In alignment with regional and statewide goals for climate resilience and congestion reduction, this investment will help METRO expand zero-emission service, support car-free access to 100% affordable housing developments, and ensure a safer, healthier, and more connected transit system.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership in supporting sustainable mobility for communities across California.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

02817CF008E946C...
Rebecca Downing
Santa Cruz METRO, Board Chair

SANTA YNEZ BAND OF CHUMASH INDIANS

P.O. BOX 517 · SANTA YNEZ · CA · 93460

Tel: 805.688.7997 · Fax: 805.686.9578

www.santaynezchumash.org

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MAXINE LITTLEJOHN, SECRETARY-TREASURER

RAUL ARMENTA, COMMITTEE MEMBER

GARY PACE, COMMITTEE MEMBER



June 20, 2025

Darnell Grisby, Chair,
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street MS 22
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for CTC Staff Recommendation for Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor

Dear Chair Grisby & Members of the California Transportation Commission:

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians ("Tribe" or "Chumash") strongly supports the California Transportation Commission (CTC) Staff recommendation to program \$134 million in Senate Bill 1 Cycle 4 funding to complete the Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor. The Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor is the number one regional priority for the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and joint partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

The Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor is a transformative interregional project that is alignment with state climate and equity goals and will provide needed congestion relief to the more than 100,000 Californians who travel the corridor between Santa Barbara and Ventura County. The Corridor is Caltrans District 5's most congested corridor and one of the most congested freeway segments in California. Additionally, it is the only corridor on the Central Coast that connects the Bay Area to Southern California. This is especially significant when Interstate 5 is closed due to inclement weather or disasters and U.S. 101 on the Central Coast becomes the only North-South connector for all of California.

SBCAG and Caltrans have developed a multimodal suite of transportation improvements to address growing congestion in the U.S. 101 corridor with innovative solutions developed through a community consensus process and ratified by County voters with 79% support for Measure A, Santa Barbara County's regional transportation sales tax measure.

Caltrans and SBCAG are partners in developing transportation improvements in the corridor and have invested over \$800 million in State and regional funding to deliver prior phases of the project. Caltrans and SBCAG will continue making needed investments in partnership with the CTC to complete the remaining improvements in this critical corridor.

Finally, we are very appreciative of the opportunities that SB1 provides in funding transformative transportation projects in our region. We especially value the work that CTC staff invested to allocate SB1 funds in a timely and productive manner.

We strongly support the CTC staff recommendations and urge the Commission to approve funding for the Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor at their June 26, 2025 meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact SBCAG Executive Director, Marjie Kirn, at (805) 600-4497 or by email at mkirn@sbcag.org.

Sincerely,



Sam Cohen,
Government Affairs and Legal Officer

cc: Mr. Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
Ms. Tanisha Taylor, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission
Mr. Mike Keever, Acting Director, California Department of Transportation
Mr. Scott Eades, District 5 Director, California Department of Transportation
Mr. Matthew Yosgott, Deputy Director, California Transportation Commission
Mr. Joe Erwin, Office Chief, Project Management, California Department of Transportation
Ms. Marjie Kirn, Executive Director, SBCAG
Mr. Sarkes Khachek, Director of Programming, SBCAG
Ms. Lauren Bianchi Klemann, Government Affairs and Public Information Manager



BOARD OF HARBOR COMMISSIONERS

Jess J. Ramirez President
Jason T. Hodge Vice President
Mary Anne Rooney Secretary
Jess J. Herrera Commissioner
Celina L. Zacarias Commissioner

PORT MANAGEMENT

Kristin Decas CEO & Port Director

Foreign Trade Zone #205



June 13, 2025

Darnell Grisby, Chair,
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street MS 22
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for CTC Staff Recommendation for Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor

Dear Chair Grisby & Members of the California Transportation Commission:

The Port of Hueneme/Oxnard Harbor District stands as the only deep-water seaport between Los Angeles and San Francisco. As a vital gateway for global commerce, the port efficiently handles imports from around the world while also supporting the local economy by facilitating exports that reach international markets. With its strategic location and specialized infrastructure, the Port of Hueneme serves as a hub for trade, connecting businesses, industries, and communities to the global marketplace. Whether it's automobiles, fresh produce, or consumer goods, the port remains an indispensable link in the supply chain, driving economic growth and fostering international partnerships. We strongly support the California Transportation Commission (CTC) Staff recommendation to program \$134 million in Senate Bill 1 Cycle 4 funding to complete the Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor. The Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor is the number one regional priority for the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and joint partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

The Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor is a transformative interregional project that is alignment with state climate and equity goals and will provide needed congestion relief to the more than 100,000 Californians who travel the corridor between Santa Barbara and Ventura County. The Corridor is Caltrans District 5's most congested corridor and one of the most congested freeway segments in California. Additionally, it is the only corridor on the Central Coast that connects the Bay Area to Southern California. This is especially significant when Interstate 5 is closed due to inclement weather or disasters and U.S. 101 on the Central Coast becomes the only North-South connector for all of California.

SBCAG and Caltrans have developed a multimodal suite of transportation improvements to address growing congestion in the U.S. 101 corridor with innovative solutions developed through a community consensus process and ratified by County voters with 79% support for Measure A, Santa Barbara County's regional transportation sales tax measure.



Caltrans and SBCAG are partners in developing transportation improvements in the corridor and have invested over \$800 million in State and regional funding to deliver prior phases of the project. Caltrans and SBCAG will continue making needed investments in partnership with the CTC to complete the remaining improvements in this critical corridor.

Finally, we are very appreciative of the opportunities that SB1 provides in funding transformative transportation projects in our region. We especially value the work that CTC staff invested to allocate SB1 funds in a timely and productive manner.

We strongly support the CTC staff recommendations and urge the Commission to approve funding for the Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor at their June 26, 2025 meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact SBCAG Executive Director, Marjie Kirn, at (805) 600-4497 or by email at mkirn@sbcag.org.

Sincerely,

Kristin Decas, CEO & Port Director
The Port of Hueneme

cc: Mr. Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
Ms. Tanisha Taylor, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission
Mr. Mike Keever, Acting Director, California Department of Transportation
Mr. Scott Eades, District 5 Director, California Department of Transportation
Mr. Matthew Yosgott, Deputy Director, California Transportation Commission
Mr. Joe Erwin, Office Chief, Project Management, California Department of Transportation
Ms. Marjie Kirn, Executive Director, SBCAG
Mr. Sarkes Khachek, Director of Programming, SBCAG
Ms. Lauren Bianchi Klemann, Government Affairs and Public Information Manager



Ideas + Action for a Thriving Central Coast

June 20, 2025

Darnell Grisby, Chair,
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street MS 22
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for CTC Staff Recommendation for Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor

Dear Chair Grisby & Members of the California Transportation Commission:

I am writing in support of the California Transportation Commission (CTC) Staff recommendation to program \$134 million in Senate Bill 1 Cycle 4 funding to complete the Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor. The Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor is the number one regional priority for the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and joint partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and part of a publicly supported effort to improve mobility in the corridor between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, improve quality of life, support interregional goods movement, foster environmental sustainability, increase safety and multimodal access, and create access to jobs.

The Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor is a transformative interregional project that is in alignment with state climate and equity goals and will provide needed congestion relief to the more than 100,000 Californians who travel the corridor between Santa Barbara and Ventura County. The U.S. 101 corridor is the only major highway connecting the central coast to both northern and southern California. Improvement of the corridor is not just a priority for the region, but also for the State, recognized in multiple regional and state plans and strategies.

Multiple regional and state plans and strategies recognize the importance of improving the corridor as one of California's top priorities. Infrastructure improvement projects such as this have been highlighted in the region's [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) as important investments in the region's economic resilience by enabling commerce flow and connecting rural and unincorporated areas to urban centers

We strongly support the CTC staff recommendations and urge the Commission to approve funding for the Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Multimodal Corridor at their June 26, 2025 meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa James".

Melissa James
President/CEO
REACH
melissa@reachcentralcoast.org





6/20/25

Chair Grisby
California Transportation Commission
1120 N. Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for the Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program, SB1-Cycle 4 Agenda Tabs 20 and 22

Dear Chair Grisby & CTC Commissioners,

Ecology Action strongly supports the adoption of the **Watsonville - Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program (WSC-MCP) Cycle 4 Project** and we urge you to adopt the staff recommendation for funding this important project.

Ecology Action, a California environmental non-profit headquartered in Santa Cruz, works to advance equitable community climate solutions in high greenhouse gas emitting sectors, including transportation. Our Modo Active Transportation team offers youth pedestrian and bike safety education at schools across the county, transportation planning, hosts community events like Walk and Roll to School Day and Bike Month, and run e-bike incentive programs to lower the financial barriers into biking. While bicycle and pedestrian safety and encouragement programs are an important part of the local effort to increase walking and biking, we know that the physical infrastructure community members must navigate needs to be safe, easy, and accessible to use for all modes of transportation. Today that picture is incomplete in Santa Cruz County.

The Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program is a transformative vision for a robust and high functioning transportation system. It would reduce transit travel times; reduce single occupancy vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increase bus ridership, biking and walking; advances transportation equity; improves roadway safety for all users; and better connects Santa Cruz County to communities on the Central Coast and in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The innovative bus on shoulder facility will improve transit on-time performance and reliability by allowing zero-emission buses to bypass congestion and operate on the outside shoulder and on auxiliary lanes on Highway 1. This will also facilitate the expansion of express bus service and the creation of two new "rapid" routes for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's (METRO) regional route network between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. METRO regional routes provide vital coverage because they would serve the transportation needs of the disadvantaged community of Watsonville and connect its residents to educational, healthcare, and job centers in Aptos, Capitola, and Santa Cruz and serve the low-income unincorporated communities of Live Oak and Seacliff.

The project will build a 1.25-mile segment of the iconic 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail, including four pedestrian/bicycle overcrossings to reconnect communities divided by major barriers including Highway 1, Soquel Drive, and major waterways. Finally, the project also includes critical improvements to the major arterial Soquel Drive that parallels Highway 1 serving Cabrillo Community College, neighborhood schools, commercial centers, grocery stores, hospitals, other medical facilities, and other key destinations. The cycle 4 project includes enhancements to METRO bus service by



installing new in-lane boarding platforms, shelters, real-time bus arrival displays, and ticket validators. The project also includes transit signal priority devices at intersections for METRO's rapid route, as well as active transportation upgrades on Soquel Drive that will close sidewalk gaps, construct ADA ramps and curb extensions, and install separated bicycle facilities and high visibility treatments. The Rapid routes connect all the opportunity areas between Watsonville and Santa Cruz, and their two in-development transit centers are also sites of new 100% affordable housing projects.

This project closely aligns with local, regional, state, and federal climate action and resiliency goals and will improve safety, increase mobility, and enhance the quality of life for residents, students, and visitors. This level of comprehensive and transformative investment is what Santa Cruz County needs, and we are pleased to support this work. Thank you for your consideration in adopting this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Miller".

Matt Miller
Director, Mobility Transformation
Ecology Action

