



The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

September 8, 2022

RE: AB 2438 (Friedman) Transportation Planning: alignment with state plans and greenhouse gas emissions reduction standards – REQUEST FOR VETO

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council (Policy Council), representing the eight metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in the San Joaquin Valley, as well as the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and ACE/San Joaquins passenger rail service, we are writing to request a veto on AB 2438, which would mandate a “one size fits all” approach to tackling mutual goals of addressing critical air quality and mobility issues. This bill constrains all state funds for purposes of complying with the Governor’s Executive order to implement the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) and California Transportation Plan. The bill codifies CAPTI as adopted in July 2021, providing no opportunity to modify to compel mutually desired outcomes statewide, which will only exacerbate issues for our region by limiting our competitiveness to acquire state funds.

The Policy Council has aggressively advocated for pronounced active transportation, rail (high-speed, Ace/San Joaquins, and Valley Link service), and transit investments (farebox recovery relief) to support the Highway 99 corridor, Interstate 5, and east-west connector routes. These efforts predate the issuance of the Governor’s Executive Orders N-19-19 upon which CAPTI predicated upon. Denying access to billions of dollars in state funds however will undermine our ability to be a funding partner on the state highway system and compromises our response to safety, climate change and goods movement.

The San Joaquin Valley faces one of the most significant air quality challenges in the country due to its unique topography, climate, geography, and the presence of two major transportation corridors (Interstate 5 and State Route 99), and critical east west connectors (State Routes 41, 46, 120, and 132 as examples) creating a significant public health challenge for Valley residents. Our region represents one of the most productive agricultural regions in the nation, if not the world. Over 25 percent of the nation’s food supply, and \$35 billion in economic activity, is generated annually. This requires farmworkers and laborers to use highways. We have nearly 27 million registered drivers in this state, all of whom use our highways for travel to work and visiting national parks. The state’s population has quadrupled since the highway system was built in the 1950s, which has exacerbated the challenge to

 (559) 266-6222

 (559) 314-6015

 555 E. Weber Avenue
Stockton, CA 95202

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address mobile sources, particularly with 50% of national imports coming through the Ports of Long Beach/Los Angeles and Oakland that utilize the Valley's arterials to get goods to market. Discussions to site up to four inland ports in the Valley underscore the need to complete highway corridors. The Valley also has 7 out of the 10 most disadvantaged communities in the state, with a low population density in many communities that rely on the automobile to conduct daily activities.

A more productive approach to improve air quality would be to calibrate vehicle miles traveled targets for the region, accelerate and prioritize funding approved by the legislature for zero-emission vehicle charging infrastructure and incentives for passenger vehicles and commercial trucks, build out passenger rail systems such as ACE/ San Joaquins and Valley Link to compel mode-shift, complete multi-modal highway projects or deliver truck-only lanes to prevent trucks and cars from idling, and accelerate delivery of broadband access to limit vehicle miles traveled, particularly by super commuters.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask that you veto AB 2438. We are highly motivated to collaborate closely with you and the author to improve air quality and mobility in our region. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our legislative advocate, Gus Khouri, at (916) 605-8975 or gus@khouriconsult.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Poythress". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Robert Poythress
Chair of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council
Madera County Supervisor

cc: Christy Bouma, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Governor Newsom
Ronda Paschal, Deputy Secretary, Governor Newsom
The Honorable Laura Friedman, Assembly Member, 43rd District