MCTC
Madera County Transportation Commission

2001 Howard Road, Suite 201
Madera, California 93637

559.675.0721 • maderactc.org

June 4, 2024

The Honorable Dave Cortese
Senate Transportation Committee, Chair
State Capitol, Room 405
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 6 (Friedman) – Transportation planning: regional transportation plans: reduction of greenhouse gas emissions - Oppose

Dear Chair Cortese:

On behalf of the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC), I write to express our **opposition to AB 6 (Friedman)**, which would enact more stringent criteria for accessing critical state funding by requiring the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop regional targets indefinitely. These targets go beyond the revenue available from the Cap-and-Trade program, which is set to expire in 2030. The bill will invalidate certified environmental impact reports developed through the California Environmental Quality Act process if ARB determines that a project should not be included in a sustainable communities strategy (SCS).

MCTC supports California's climate goals and is deeply committed to improvements to passenger and freight rail systems, greenhouse gas (GHG) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction where feasible, and improving public transportation, walking, biking, and other modes of transportation. Each MPO is already required to include a sustainable communities strategy (SCS) in its regional transportation plan, providing ample coordination with the ARB, and cannot apply for SB 1 funds without an approved SCS. The CEQA process also provides a robust public participation process that would be undermined by this bill.

AB 6 fails to recognize the fiduciary obligation that "self-help" counties have to voters in improving the state highway system and assisting with state and regional mobility priorities. Our region has a voter-approved retail transaction and uses tax, Measure T, which makes a commitment to the voters and our public to deliver the transportation investments identified in the voter-approved expenditure plan. A key part of keeping our promises is to secure state matching funds (making investments on state assets) since each county does not generate enough local sales tax revenues to make up for the disproportionate cost of delivering projects. Our needs and revenue generation, especially with a county population under 200,000, are disproportionate to the level of investment that is needed to achieve state and regional targets for improved air quality. Therefore, a strong partnership with the state is mandatory.

Disadvantaged communities within the Madera region, including farm workers, laborers, and tourists that drive our local economy, rely on the automobile as other modes of transportation are not readily accessible. Our region contains several rural areas accessible only via local roadways, does not have easy access to public transit, particularly in the eastern part of the county, and lacks significant safety for bicycles and pedestrians, as many local roads do not contain sidewalks or designated bicycle lanes.

For these reasons, we must **oppose AB 6** when it is heard in your Senate Committee on Transportation. We look forward to partnering with you and the appropriate state agencies to develop pragmatic solutions while maintaining the legislative intent of SB 1. We ask that state investments be responsive to each region's unique needs and characteristics: urban, rural, valley, and coastal, and help MPOs maintain their role in delivering taxpayer-funded projects.

If you have any questions, please contact our legislative advocate, Gus Khouri, at (916) 605-8975 or gus@khouriconsult.com.

Sincerely,

Patricia Taylor
Executive Director

cc: Members of the Senate Transportation Committee
The Honorable Laura Friedman, Assemblymember, 44th District
The Honorable Marie Alvarado-Gil, Senator, 4th District
The Honorable Anna Caballero, Senator, 14th District
The Honorable Jim Patterson, Assemblymember, 8th District
The Honorable Esmeralda Soria, Senator, 27th District
Melissa White, Principal Consultant, Senate Transportation Committee