



RailPAC
Rail Passenger Association
of California and Nevada

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Carl Guardino, President and CEO
Silicon Valley Leadership Group
2001 Gateway Place, Suite 101E
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Alicia John-Baptiste, President and
CEO
SPUR
654 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-4015

Jim Wunderman, President and CEO
Bay Area Council
353 Sacramento Street, 10th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94111

RE: Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program Inclusion in FASTER Bay Area

Dear Carl, Jim, and Alicia,

I am writing on behalf of Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada (RailPAC) members living and working in the San Joaquin Valley, East Bay and San Jose areas. RailPAC is an all-volunteer statewide organization that advocates for the improvement of commuter and intercity passenger rail service. RailPAC is a strong advocate for an expanded public transportation network between San Joaquin Valley and the East Bay/San Jose markets. In support of this goal, RailPAC strongly supports the inclusion of \$1.9 billion for the Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvements Program as part of FASTER Bay Area. It is our understanding the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Bay Area Council, and SPUR are working in partnership to have FASTER Bay Area on the November 2020 ballot for Bay Area voters. RailPAC believes that the Altamont Corridor Vision project would aid in achieving the goals of the FASTER Bay Area initiative and recommends its inclusion in the 2020 tax measure.

The Altamont Corridor that connects the San Joaquin Valley to the Bay Area is one of the most heavily traveled, most congested, and fastest growing corridors in the Northern California megaregion. The Bay Area Council estimates that congestion will increase an additional 75% between 2016 and 2040. To achieve state and regional environmental and economic development goals, a robust multi-faceted passenger rail alternative is needed in the Altamont Corridor to increase mobility by providing a sustainable transportation option offering a dramatic increase in passenger carrying capacity, all while providing greater connectivity, and a better quality of life and access to jobs, educational opportunities and health care facilities.

The Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program is the result of a partnership between San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Altamont Corridor Express [ACE]), Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Valley Link), and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (San Joaquins). The Bay Area improvements of this Phase 1 Program include \$1.1 billion for the implementation of 8.6-miles of new alignment through the Altamont Pass (between Greenville Road and the San Joaquin County Line) to be used by both ACE and Valley Link services. This new alignment through the Altamont Pass would include a 3.5 mile tunnel and enable speeds up to 125 mph that would decrease train travel times through the Altamont Pass by 11 – 15 minutes. Bay Area Phase 1 improvements also include \$600 million to fund equipment and the additional infrastructure needed to complete the Valley Link service between

Dublin/Pleasanton BART and Livermore. In the near-term, the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority anticipates running 25 Valley Link daily round-trips between Dublin/Pleasanton BART and North Lathrop Transfer Station in San Joaquin County. In addition, Phase 1 also includes \$200 million for new ACE equipment and Bay Area station/alignment improvements for two additional ACE round-trips between the San Joaquin Valley and San Jose.

The Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program will provide safe, frequent, and reliable regional rail service by modernizing passenger rail in the Altamont Corridor. The vastly improved infrastructure through the Altamont Pass would be separated from freight, double tracked, grade separated, and enable fast (up to 125 mph maximum speeds), and frequent service. The Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program is the first step towards the completion of the Altamont Corridor Vision which is consistent with the 2018 State Rail Plan, 2007 MTC Regional Rail Plan, MTC Resolution 3829 from 2007, and the CHSRA's Altamont Corridor Rail Project.

The Altamont Corridor Phase 1 Improvement Program would:

- Substantially increase regional rail ridership in the Altamont (I-580/I-680) Corridor.
- Reduce the amount of greenhouse gases and air pollution emissions by diverting trips that would have previously been taken by an automobile.
- Reduce congestion on some of the Bay Area's most congested freeways (I-580/I-680 Corridor).
- Promote transit-oriented development throughout the Altamont Corridor.

The transformative Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program would have a very positive effect on the Northern California Megaregion's underserved priority and rural communities by providing a convenient and inexpensive alternative to the rising costs of automobile. Connecting these San Joaquin Valley communities to the Bay Area's large economic centers would increase safe and affordable transportation options between these communities. The Vision would also foster more compact and sustainable growth, providing access to affordable housing and a chance to rebalance the job centers equitably.

The Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada is pleased to provide this letter of strong support of the Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program to be included as part of FASTER Bay Area to help move the Bay Area and the Northern California Megaregion forward.

Sincerely,

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