

State Building and Construction Trades Council

ROBBIE HUNTER
PRESIDENT

of California

J. TOM BACA
SECRETARY-TREASURER

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Chartered by
BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES
DEPARTMENT
AFL - CIO

February 10, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C., 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

The time sensitive message I need to convey is that the effort to electrify Caltrain is a critical component of modernizing California's rail system and a critical component for mobility in the greater Bay Area.

As you may know, the State Building and Construction Trades Council, has been working to help secure local, regional, state and federal funds for the past several years to electrify the Caltrain Commuter Rail system, which runs 79 miles from Gilroy to San Francisco. The official name of this effort is the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project (PCEP). The Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) has just been sent to Congress for your consideration. This FFGA is the final piece of a funding puzzle, where all other local and state dollars (over \$1 Billion) have been secured.

Caltrain is the backbone of the transportation system in the greater Bay Area, serving our congested Highway 101 corridor. Caltrain currently provides nearly 65,000 trips each day. This success is partially driven by the growing traffic congestion produced by the robust economic output in the Bay Area. Economic growth always outpaces infrastructure development, and as a result the demand on Caltrain vastly exceeds its current supply. The current infrastructure is bursting at the seams. During peak commute times, it is nearly impossible to find a seat and aisles are filled with standing passengers. In order to keep pace, Californians and our millions of tourists need the Caltrain system electrified, and the capacity upgrades on which our Californians depend upon.

The plans to electrify Caltrain will nearly double the system's current weekday ridership by increasing its daily trip count to approximately 110,000 people. This investment is so critical to our State's future, that our local electorate decided to initiate a local ballot funding measure in November 2016 to deliver over \$1 Billion in Caltrain infrastructure. That measure received 71.74% of the vote.

For these reasons we respectfully ask you to not delay the FFGA, it is critical to the increased mobility and economic health of California. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



ROBBIE HUNTER
President

RH:bb
opeiu#29/afl-cio

cc: The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Governor, State of California

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