

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

We are writing to reiterate our strong support for immediate approval of the pending grant agreement for the Bay Area's commuter rail service, Caltrain. The Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project has been on hold, awaiting your approval, since February. Now that Congress has reaffirmed, on a bipartisan basis, its commitment to the project by specifically providing \$100 million, we ask that you allow the project to proceed without further delay.

Caltrain's Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project is a \$1.98 billion investment to replace an aging fleet of diesel locomotives with high-performance electric trains on its commuter service between San Jose and San Francisco. Construction will put 9,600 people to work across sixteen states. When finished, the new trains will reduce travel times between San Jose and San Francisco by 15 percent, cut emissions by 97 percent, and save more than 600,000 vehicle-miles each day on heavily congested freeways.

This project has been in development for almost two decades and has strong support from the business and political leadership of the region, including the Mayors of San Francisco and San Jose, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, and the Bay Area Council. Together, the state and local governments have committed more than \$1 billion of their own funding to support this project.

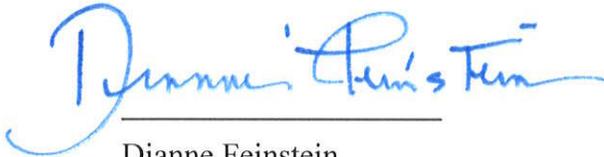
The Federal Transit Administration worked diligently to review Caltrain's project and prepare a multi-year full funding grant agreement for \$647 million, roughly one-third of the total project cost. However, the Administration last February abruptly declined to finalize the necessary grant agreement. In March, the Office of Management and Budget proposed a budget blueprint that would stop funding for Caltrain and any other new transit capital investment grants in FY 2017 and FY 2018. This approach has now been firmly rejected by Congress.

As you know, President Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 into law on Friday. This act provides \$2.4 billion for the Capital Investment Grants program, \$236 million more than last year, and \$700 million more than proposed by the Administration in March. In spite of the proposal in the President's budget blueprint, Congress has specifically directed that the transit program continue to be administered and expanded, providing funding for 17 new transit projects throughout the country.

Within this funding, Congress has directed \$100 million for the Caltrain electrification project. This specific funding lays to rest any question about whether Congress supports this much needed, shovel-ready infrastructure project. Caltrain waits only for the Department of Transportation's final approval.

Approving the \$647 million federal grant agreement for Caltrain's project is a necessary and important demonstration of the Administration's commitment to infrastructure investment. In light of the recently enacted law and Congress's clear direction, we ask you to allow this project to proceed without further delay.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator