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October 3, 2018

Amarjeet S. Benipal, District 3 Director  
California Department of Transportation, District 3  
703 B St, Marysville, CA 95901  
Sent via email to: amarjeet.benipal@dot.ca.gov

RE: Sacramento Region Highway Capacity Projects

Dear Director Benipal:

The Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) is concerned that planned freeway expansions in the Sacramento region will induce major increases in vehicle volumes, contravening the spirit and intent of state legislation such as SB 375. We are most concerned about the CapCity (SR 51) expansion (including possible widening of the American River bridge), and also concerned about the planned I-5 HOV lanes between Sacramento and Elk Grove, and the proposed widening of I-80 between Sacramento and Davis.

We appreciate the CapCity project team's continued engagement with ECOS and its willingness to discuss the project's progression. However, ECOS would like to expand this conversation into a broader discussion about regional transportation challenges and priorities. We are willing to work with Caltrans staff to coordinate discussions with other regional agencies and stakeholders with the aim of considering potential alternatives to address these challenges.

Following are some reasons why this conversation is timely: CARB's greenhouse gas scoping plan shows that we must reduce VMT by 15% to meet 2050 goals for GHG emissions. Guidelines for SB 743 specify that the principal criterion in evaluating transportation projects is now VMT reduction, as opposed to congestion relief. Based on these Guidelines, Caltrans will need to consider induced travel demand from future expansion projects, such as caused by land use impacts. The Sacramento Transportation Authority is planning a tax measure for the 2020 ballot. SACOG is developing its draft preferred scenario the 2020 MTP/SCS. Finally, the fate of SB 1 hinges on the outcome of Proposition 6 in November.

The proposed CapCity expansion is emblematic of multiple other prospective projects in the region, and raises questions about historic approaches to longstanding problems as well as approaches to future challenges the region faces. We acknowledge that the challenges involved are significant, and that a rethinking of potential solutions also has great hurdles. We believe that the convergence of challenges and opportunities we face warrants an exploration of additional tools to increase travel-mode options, support infill housing and economic needs, and reduce

VMT with increased transit operations and emerging strategies such as congestion pricing and shared mobility.

We would all benefit from a broadly based conversation regarding alternative solutions for regional mobility before major public funds are committed to significant increases in highway capacity. We hope that you will consider cooperating in such a discussion with ECOS, and we are sharing this letter with other organizations and government bodies that we hope to include in this conversation as well. We look forward to discussing possible meeting times and locations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph Propper". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ralph Propper  
ECOS President

cc: Dotrik Wilson, Caltrans District 3 <dotrik.wilson@dot.ca.gov>  
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