June 13, 2013

The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier, Chair
Senate Transportation Committee
California State Senate
Ca. Capitol Building, Rm 5035
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB 1290

Dear Chairman DeSaulnier,

We, the above organizations representing environmental, housing and transportation advocates throughout the State of California, urge your support for AB 1290. This bill is designed to update the California Transportation Commission’s (CTC) mission and capacity to better fulfill California’s commitment to clean air and climate goals in ways that benefit all Californians.

Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the State, in large part because of inadequate and inefficient land use and transportation infrastructure. Designing, building, and implementing projects and programs that truly integrate land use, housing, and transportation requires diverse expertise; AB 1290 adds needed expertise to the state’s critical transportation planning and investment decision-making.

AB 1290 adds the Transportation Agency Secretary and the directors of Housing and Community Development and the Air Resources Board as ex officio, non-voting members, providing the CTC with expertise needed to better address the goals of AB 32, SB 375 and SB 1039.

Additionally, AB 1290 requires 1) metropolitan planning organizations to report on their progress in implementing Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) and share this information with the Legislature; 2) the Strategic Growth Council to update the CTC on progress coordinating land use and transportation planning; and 3) the Regional Transportation Improvement Programs submitted for funding to show their connections to SCS’s. These specific measures ensure a strong connection between the state’s goals of greenhouse gas reductions and actual implementation of SB 375.

An “impossible coalition” of stakeholders including local and state governments, developers, and scientists helped pass California’s innovative and laudable Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, SB 375. This bill furthers the state’s commitment to sustainable transportation planning by infusing the California Transportation Commission with the productive and collaborative energy that was built around SB 375.

AB 1290 provides the kind of modernization needed to bring the CTC into alignment with California’s goals for a cleaner, safer and healthier future. We are happy to support AB 1290, and we thank you for your dedication to a safer California.