Moving the Needle on Climate Change, Mobility and Affordability

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The Sustainable Communities for All Coalition represents a cross-section of interests who strongly support three programs that have benefited from Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund continuous appropriations: Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities, Low Carbon Transit Operations, and Transit and Intercity Rail Capital. Protecting the continuous appropriations for these programs at their current level is our collective goal and top priority.

All three programs have proven effective in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and delivering meaningful economic benefits to disadvantaged communities and resource-poor households. They have also created jobs to boost our economy and promoted public health, cleaner air, and environmental justice.

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program

Over three funding rounds, the AHSC program awarded $701 million in intersectional investments in affordable housing, transportation infrastructure and community greening. Seventy-seven projects throughout California received funding, and 93% of the funds directly benefit disadvantaged or low-income communities (as defined in AB 1550).

AHSC is an important example of how integrating investments in affordable housing and affordable transportation leverages the benefits of each for increased overall GHG and pollution reductions. Combined, the *77* projects will reduce more than 1.6 million metric tons of $C0_2$ over their lifetime, removing approximately 11,745 cars from the road every year and reducing car travel by approximately 134 million miles. Round 3 projects will remove 194,890 pounds of air pollutant emissions over their operating lives.

The direct community benefits of the program also include 6,443 high-quality homes affordable to low-income Californians, 86 miles of new or improved bike lanes, 671 new or improved crosswalks, and 41,000 more daily transit riders. Every project in the last funding round incorporated anti-displacement strategies for residents and locally-owned businesses, local workforce development and hiring strategies, and a community engagement process. These important components give a meaningful voice to local residents—as well as jobs—and ensure that residents can remain in their community to enjoy the benefits of the investments.

The multi-sector Sustainable Communities for All Coalition formed in 2011 to advocate the investment of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund revenues in building vibrant communities for all Californians. We championed creation of the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program to advance this goal and now focus on complimentary programs that benefit lower income households.

<u>Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program & Low Carbon Transit Operations Program</u>

The transportation sector is responsible for nearly half the state's GHG emissions, a percentage that is likely to grow as the state's clean power goals are met. *Personal vehicles are the single most significant source of GHG emissions* and, according to the California Air Resources Board report released last month, deployment of zero- and near-zero-emission cars and trucks alone will not achieve California's climate goals because we are driving more—we must also reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Transit is a key strategy to reduce VMT. Expanding and improving public transportation with the goal of increasing transit ridership will reduce the number of personal vehicles on the road. Transit will also help achieve near-term climate and health benefits by reducing short-lived climate pollutants (including black carbon and methane) as well as air toxics and criteria pollutants—with an emphasis on addressing these problems in disadvantaged communities.

These programs also support environmental justice goals by reducing the cost of transportation—the 2nd highest household expense in the U.S.—and providing transit access to jobs, groceries, health care, education, recreation, family and friends. (A 2015 Harvard University study found transit access to be the single biggest factor in determining whether people can escape from poverty and avoid homelessness.) Both programs also meet the AB 1532 requirement that CA Climate Investments create jobs—transit construction and operations provide good-paying jobs that can also become careers. ARB is developing a metric to factor job creation into project selection.

It is critical that both programs continue to receive continuous appropriations**—**10% of GGRF funding is now dedicated to TIRCP, and 5% to LCTOP. Steady, predictable funding is essential for large-scale transportation infrastructure projects that result in transformative change.

TIRCP funding is used for capital improvements that expand and modernize California's intercity rail, rail transit, bus, and ferry systems with the goal of integrating systems and increasing ridership. If project areas include disadvantaged communities, at least 25% of funding must be spent there.

To date this program has received $715 million from the GGRF, and also leverages significant additional funding from SB 1. While the DAC funding requirement is 25%, 26 of the 28 TIRCP programs funded in the 3rd (most recent) round serve DACs or low-income communities. Roughly half the projects fund the purchase of electric buses and half build, expand and/or improve rail service.

LCTOP funding supports new or expanded bus or rail service and intermodal transit facilities, and can be used to acquire equipment or provide fueling/charging infrastructure, and for maintenance and other costs. 50% of funding must be spent in disadvantaged communities.

To date, this program has received $302 million from the GGRF. In the 3rd round of funding, 152 projects received $97 million, with more than 130 primarily benefitting disadvantaged and low-income communities:

- 51 projects provide new or expanded transit service
- 31 offer free or reduced transit fares
- 22 are to purchase zero-emission vehicles
- 15 are for passenger amenities at transit stops and stations.

The benefits of many of these larger infrastructure projects have not been measured, as it may be years before they are complete. But new methodologies to measure benefits are being developed by CARB and will come online soon.

In conclusion, the changes in gubernatorial administration may result in new programs being proposed for Climate Investments and an openness in the legislature to rethinking the 60% continuous appropriations, both of which we could potentially support. However, any such changes must either *maintain or increase* funding to the three programs above. Together, they are California's best tools for freeing itself from auto dependency, an unprecedented scarcity of homes affordable to all Californians, and the climate disaster those twin crises create.

We are happy to provide additional information about any of these programs. Please contact Julie Snyder at (916) 501-5922 if you have any questions.