February 10, 2012

President John McPartland and Members of the Board of Directors
BART Board of Directors
P.O. Box 12688
Oakland CA 94604-2688

Re: BART needs to be the lead agency for the environmental review of the Livermore project

Dear President McPartland and Members of the Board of Directors,

We are writing to thank you for taking important steps toward reaching the overall goal of making sure BART remains fast, reliable and affordable to connecting the Livermore Valley to the BART system. As the process moves forward, **we want to stress that BART should be the lead agency in the environmental review of the Livermore project.**

The revised motion passed at yesterday’s meeting addressed the main concerns expressed in our February 8 letter. The changes made to the motion demonstrate the Board’s commitment to maintaining the existing system while considering expansions. We look forward to participating in the upcoming investment analysis and to seeing results of the performance assessment of other infill and capacity projects. As mentioned in our public testimony, we congratulate BART that the “BART Metro” project was the top-performing project in MTC’s recent project performance assessment.

We also appreciate the changes on how to proceed with determining BART’s most cost-effective and efficient improvements to better serve the Livermore Valley. We look forward to participating in the environmental review process, including the opportunity to help define a robust express bus/BRT alternative based at the existing Dublin-Pleasanton station. By clarifying the Board’s intent with the revised motion, BART can now embark on the much-needed planning and analysis to support informed decisions about the district’s priorities.

As you develop the program management structure for the EIR, **BART needs to be the lead agency in the environmental review for the Livermore project.** There are three main reasons.

First, BART will build and operate the final project and will be ultimately responsible for its success. Second, BART has a responsibility to constituents throughout the BART district to ensure that the analysis is conducted in concordance with BART’s System Expansion policy, required Ridership Development Plans, and other relevant policies. Finally, BART is in a unique position to objectively address the purpose and need of connecting the Livermore Valley to the current BART system. This will require designing and assessing alternatives that relieve congestion, improve air quality, and support transit-oriented development. This requires the perspective of an agency that has worked through several other system expansions and understands how to balance the needs and desires of the particular location with the needs of the overall system and the region.

We look forward to working with you to keep the BART system fast, reliable, and affordable and to connect the Livermore Valley to BART.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hobson
Deputy Director