



March 19, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker,

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) provides essential transportation services connecting communities in the North Bay with San Francisco by bridge, bus, and ferry while stewarding an international icon and local treasure. We are writing to you because the COVID-19 outbreak and Bay Area shelter-in-place public health orders, while critical for our communities to stop the spread of the virus, have had a dramatic effect on transit ridership and Bridge traffic and put future operations at risk. The District strongly urges that Congress provide public transit agencies and toll authorities with the needed financial support to ensure continuation of safe and reliable transit service and critical infrastructure maintenance.

The District owns and operates the Golden Gate Bridge, along with a fleet of buses and ferries that provides an alternative to driving in the Golden Gate Corridor. Prior to COVID-19, weekdays from 5:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m., 23 percent of all trips from Marin and Sonoma Counties into San Francisco were on our buses and ferries. This reduces congestion and greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to the overall quality of life in San Francisco and the region.

Since the shelter-in-place orders went into effect in San Francisco and Marin counties on Tuesday, March 17th, bus ridership has declined about 85%, ferry ridership declined about 90%, and Bridge traffic during the morning commute fell by 70%. This results in a **drop in our combined revenues from Bridge tolls and transit fares of over \$3 million per week** during the shelter-in-place orders. We expect these dramatic declines in transit ridership and Bridge crossings to continue for at least the duration of the orders, with the potential impacts to last much longer.

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District is unique among our regional sister agencies in that we rely on Bridge toll dollars as the single-largest subsidy for our transit operations. Importantly, toll revenues are used to protect and maintain the iconic Golden Gate Bridge, which is also considered a lifeline structure.

In response to the shelter-in-place orders, we have reduced the frequency of bus and ferry service. Our goal with the adjustments is to right-size our transit service to maintain social distancing while recognizing that running empty buses and ferries would not be prudent. We have also implemented additional daily cleaning measures to keep the public and our employees safe, which only adds to our operational expenses.

For these reasons, we fully support the request of the American Public Transportation Association that \$16.0 billion in direct emergency funding be provided to public transit agencies to offset some of their extraordinary direct costs and revenue losses because of the impacts of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020. We believe, further, that funding be made available to agencies that operate tolled highway facilities to help assist them during these critical times. Maintenance of bridges like the Golden Gate Bridge cannot be reduced because of the coronavirus. Doing so will just create additional crises around the country when these bridges deteriorate from reduced maintenance.

As a local transportation agency, we are committed to providing essential transit service and maintaining operations at the Bridge during this pandemic. The District requests assistance in securing federal funds to continue providing essential service on our buses and ferries and across our bridge.

The District strongly urges you to act to protect public transit agencies and critical infrastructure from future revenue losses and service cuts due to the COVID-19 crisis. Thank you for all that you have done for the Bridge.

Sincerely,



Denis J. Mulligan
General Manager