



Regional Transit

**Sacramento Regional
Transit District**
A Public Transit Agency
and Equal Opportunity Employer

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3/20/2020

The Honorable Ami Bera
1727 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Sacramento Regional Transit and COVID 19

Dear Congressman Bera:

As both chambers of Congress continue consideration of a third relief package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT), the largest public transit provider in the Capitol region, urges you to include financial assistance for severely impacted transit services that are considered an essential lifeline for many in the community.

SacRT's priority remains the safety and well-being of our customers and employees, but like many of our transit partners, the district faces an alarming financial uncertainty moving forward. Bus and light rail ridership, like many other normal day-to-day activities across the country, has significantly decreased by over 60%, as both local and state officials have ordered businesses closed and directed shelter-in-place orders to flatten the curve of COVID-19.

SacRT continues to operate service as a lifeline mobility safety net, but our essential services depend on fare revenues and state and local funding predominantly from sales tax proceeds. SacRT's primary funding is made up four sources, farebox recovery, federal, state and local funding. Farebox recovery, state and local funding make up about 70% of SacRT's revenue sources and are estimated to be significantly impacted due to COVID-19 resulting in ridership loss and a tremendous dip in future sales tax revenue. Overall, SacRT is forecasting a negative impact to the bottom line of \$83,000,000 or more through September of 2020, with approximately \$45,000,000 being incurred in the next three months. This potential loss represents almost of half of the total operating budget for the district. Staff will continue to assess the impacts of COVID-19, and provide updates as new information becomes available.

Right now, transit is being told to wait for a 4th package; however, the needs of our system are far too great to sustain during the waiting period. APTA estimates an immediate \$16 billion need and SacRT is supporting the industry position. We also urge you to also consider both a short-term and long-term commitment in ensuring that public transportation continues to be accessed by many of our vulnerable and underserved communities. Administrative relief to ensure that decreased ridership does not negatively impact transit providers and other regulatory challenges must also be considered.

The need of SacRT is urgent, not just for those who depend on our services, but the thousands of families that our agency supports and employs. We respectfully ask Congress to include direct federal funding assistance to transit agencies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respectfully,

Henry Li
General Manager/CEO