



**DRY CREEK RANCHERIA  
BAND OF POMO INDIANS**

July 19, 2021

Therese McMillan, Executive Director  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
Association of Bay Area Governments  
375 Beale Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

**SUBJECT:** Draft *Plan Bay Area 2050* and Draft *Plan Bay Area 2050* Environmental Impact Report Comments

Dear Ms. McMillan:

The Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians is one of the six federally recognized Tribal Nations with lands or Tribal offices located within the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) nine-county Bay Area. We have appreciated being apprised of your *Plan Bay Area 2050* activities through the Tribal Consultation process and look forward to additional consultation during this summer 2021 prior to your final plan adoption. As context, our Tribe is integrally connected to the communities of Northern Sonoma County. Our Tribal lands are located in the hills east of Geyserville, where we operate a gaming facility. Like many Tribes in the area, our Tribal offices are located in Santa Rosa, within walking distance of the SMART Sonoma County Airport Station.

We have reviewed your various draft documents and make the following comments:

- Several of your documents reference *Expand and Modernize Regional Rail*, yet your transportation investment strategies do not include any new investments to the SMART rail system, for passenger or freight, north of Windsor. Map 4.2 in the Transportation report clearly shows no further rail investment into Alexander Valley. As we understand it, exclusion from your plan means SMART cannot compete for grant funds to extend north of Windsor and this needs to be corrected in the final Plan Bay Area 2050 document so that this needed investment in rail in Northern Sonoma County can occur.
- Your other plan goals reference supporting access to economic opportunity and housing while striving for protection of the environment. We believe completing SMART to Healdsburg and Cloverdale will support your goals being achieved in our part of the Bay Area. We are also interested in adding a station in Geyserville.
  - For our community to access economic opportunity, health care and higher education means traveling long distances to Santa Rosa. The Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo are participants in the Sonoma County Indian Health Project in Santa Rosa. Our Tribal offices are also located in Santa Rosa. We, and nearly all residents of Northern Sonoma County, must travel greater distances than most people in the Bay Area to access basic services. Visiting the doctor is

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often prohibited due to transportation time or cost. Completing SMART to Cloverdale will support some of the poorest in our communities to have equitable access to services.

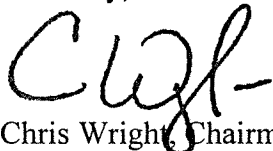
- Shifting freight from trucks to rail will help businesses grow in an environmentally friendly fashion while supporting local environmental health. Rehabilitating the SMART tracks to Cloverdale will result in accomplishing multiple Plan Bay Area 2050 goals.
- In Northern Sonoma County we have been pressed by housing shortages and stressed by 3 years of fires regularly destroying more housing stock. We support affordable housing in our area and believe that extending the regional rail network to our area will unlock the creation of more affordable housing stock in the Alexander Valley.
- The current options of sacrificing time to take available bus transit or driving means many in our community are choosing a path that is worse for our planet. We believe completing SMART to Cloverdale will result in a higher quality transit service that will encourage more environmentally friendly behavior.
- Many of your plan elements reference incentivizing the “shift of jobs to housing rich areas well served by transit” (p. 142). We feel everyone deserves access to economic opportunity and completing the SMART project through northern Sonoma County will help towards that goal.

**We request Plan Bay Area 2050 be revised to add “SMART to Cloverdale” back into the transportation documents and the financially constrained transportation project list.**

SMART has nearly completed construction of the extension to Windsor and is now the owner of the existing un-rehabilitated railroad tracks through the Alexander Valley to the Mendocino County line. It is important to support SMART’s efforts to bring in outside state and federal resources to complete this project so it can be used for passenger rail for longer trips, pedestrian and bicycle access for local trips, freight rail so we can grow our economy in an environmentally friendly way, and to provide greater broadband access for our communities.

During the Tribal Consultation process for your last plan, Plan Bay Area 2040, we collectively stated ‘SMART must reach Cloverdale’. Our input is the same now. We **strongly** support the SMART train to Cloverdale and request additional consultation prior to your final plan adoption.

Sincerely,



Chris Wright, Chairman

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