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October 20, 2015

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Marin County Civic Center  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
Suite 329  
San Rafael, CA 94903  
415 473 7331 T  
415 473 3645 F  
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[www.marincounty.org/bos](http://www.marincounty.org/bos)

Honorable Dave Cortese, Chair  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)  
101 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Oakland, CA 94607

**Re: 2015-16 Funding from MTC to ABAG for Planning Services and Organizational Relationships**

Chair Cortese and Fellow Commissioners,

The Marin County Board of Supervisors urge your Commission to immediately and fully fund the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) for the 2015-16 budget year without qualifications, consistent with the terms adopted by your Commission on June 25, 2014. This funding is critically important for ABAG to provide a range of planning services for its members and the region, including the statutory responsibilities assigned to ABAG under SB 375.

In addition, our Board requests that MTC undertake additional dialogue with ABAG in pursuit of improved regional planning. We ask that you partner with ABAG to engage an independent management consultant to evaluate the two agencies, working closely with the public and the respective policy boards, in order to develop a shared course for the Bay Area's future growth and mobility. This work should not be rushed, and it should begin with a publicly presented timeline and targeted milestones to insure that all interested parties understand how the evaluation will proceed. The open and transparent dialogue envisioned as part of the process of evaluating a possible restructure of the relationship should extend the invitation to all of the Bay Area's 101 cities and nine counties.

This work should address the numerous concerns raised when MTC proposed termination of ABAG funding for planning services to accommodate MTC's interest in singularly managing one planning staff that would support both agencies. Those include union concerns, loss of ABAG overhead revenues associated with the planning services they currently provide, and impacts on ABAG's pension obligations.

We would also note that Marin County and its cities and towns have been actively engaged with ABAG staff and its Executive Board on preparation of population and economic studies for the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Plan Bay Area 2040, among other issues. Hence, this explains our interest in assuring ABAG's direct role in these critical planning activities and a continued emphasis on active and meaningful participation of cities and towns going forward, regardless of the organizational structure of the regional planning body.

Outside of the immediate need to fully fund ABAG and work with them to explore near-term operational efficiencies, we encourage MTC to participate in a broad-based study group assigned to consider the value, governance, and administrative framework required to evaluate the relationship between ABAG and MTC, including the possibility of merger. Such an evaluation should strive to be completed within 2 years.

Sincerely,

Katie Rice, President  
Marin County Board of Supervisors