



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE BAY AREA
An Inter-League Organization of the San Francisco Bay Area



April 20, 2017

Hon. Julie Pierce, President
and Members of the Executive Board
Association of Bay Area Governments
Bay Area MetroCenter
375 Beale Street San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Contract for Services: Detailed Budget and Work Plan

Dear President Pierce:

The League of Women Voters Bay Area is committed to the power and impact of regional planning on land use, transportation, environmental quality, and the economic health of the region and local communities. We believe the process of staff consolidation before you is the first step to a successful merger that has a clear, explicit and binding mandate and responsibility and includes the tools and capacity to ensure successful housing, transportation, social equity, and economic development.

To preserve and support in this process the critical work of ABAG as Council of Governments regarding land use, housing and environment, we believe that it is crucial that an adopted Contract for Services provide clear, binding language that establishes an organizational planning process and chart, and a Budget and Work Plan with timeline and reporting mechanisms, **prior to the transfer of ABAG Staff to MTC.**

A budget and work plan are fundamental elements of any contract, and are particularly important in the MTC/ABAG staff consolidation because many longstanding ABAG services will be overseen by MTC management for the first time. This makes this contract clarity and transparency critical to a successful transition. Even if this current contract of services before you is a form template waiting to be changed when more information is available, it would be advisable to make sure that "language/provisions for change" are clear and binding.

There are many questions that emerge regarding other sources of revenue, responsibilities for the unfunded pension liability, the limitations of MTC budget to support ABAG's major planning research tasks at their historic levels, as well as the funding of other staff expenses and operating overhead. A complete detailed Budget and Work Plan would address these issues and more. It would also help you in your decision-making about these issues and concerns that local engagement could be compromised and shortchanged.

In the spirit of trust and transparency, these issues need to be discussed and resolved as you feel appropriate before a contract is signed and staff consolidated. This action is important to the future structure of regional governance.

Respectfully yours,

Kathleen Cha
Director-Regional Governance
League of Women Voters Bay Area