



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



September 16, 2015

Julie Pierce, President  
Association of Bay Area Governments  
101 Eighth Street  
Oakland CA 94607

RE: Executive Board agenda – Response to MTC Proposal

Dear President Pierce and Members of the Board,

LWVBA has been an advocate of a consolidated regional planning agency in the San Francisco Bay Area for more than 50 years.

We have followed various proposals including: legislatively creating such an agency in the 1970s; in more recent events, creation of the Joint Policy Committee (now the Bay Area Regional Collaborative); and the JPCs evaluation of a potential merger of staff. These did not result in any movement to combine or consolidate into one agency, so things have remained separate.

Over the past few years, the two agencies have undertaken joint or cooperative planning efforts. Plan Bay Area was one of these MTC-ABAG joint efforts. While we support such joint efforts, we are concerned that the recent move by MTC to announce it will withhold 6 months of contracted funds to ABAG to force a discussion of a consolidated planning staff is the wrong way to move ahead. (Of course, we do not know what is really going on; only what we can observe from public meeting records.)

We favor developing a plan for the consolidation of planning efforts that will be shared with the public prior to action and a process that will allow the public to understand the plan and share its comments with MTC and ABAG. Such a plan should describe how the mutual and separate planning needs of the different agencies will be achieved. We believe that the development of this plan will help to build understanding and trust within the regional community. Also, we note that some solutions would require state legislative action.

Therefore we suggest that, at the very least, MTC should honor the existing contract and provide ABAG full funding for its planning efforts, until a mutual solution is reached.

We look forward to working with the regional agencies in developing a plan and participating in a public process of discussion.

Sincerely,

*Linda Craig*

Linda Craig, President, LWVBA

