



February 17, 2016

**Dear MTC Commissioners,**

The two regional agencies, MTC and ABAG, which are taking their first steps towards a full merger, are to be commended on their efforts to streamline regional planning in the Bay Area. The fully merged Metropolitan Planning Organization will ensure that the union negotiated benefits promised to almost 200 past and present ABAG employees are protected and that the unionized ABAG jobs are protected. We ask that the intent of the MTC resolution 4210 be honored and that all parties make every effort to assess a full merger without allowing partial merger options to override the analysis.

If the process is transparent, inclusive, and constructive, these two agencies can accomplish a lofty goal of a unified regional planning agency. The North Bay Labor Council, AFL-CIO would like to offer its support for this effort and would like the following principles to be adopted in order to guide the merger process as it moves forward.

The goal of the merged agency structure should ensure a sustainable regional government able to rise to the challenges of the Bay Area in the 21st century.

The merged agency should support and be supported by the nine counties and one hundred cities of the region. The agency leadership should provide coherent planning frameworks and engagement processes, preserving the valuable functions, services, and programs that both agencies currently provide to the Bay Area. The planning processes for the merger plan should include stakeholders, including labor, in a formalized stakeholder working group.

The merger process should result in a sustainable and stable organization and financial structure that provides long term support and funding for the programs currently implemented by both agencies and the staffing for those programs.

- No jobs will be lost by merging MTC and ABAG staff.
- Staff benefits and salaries in the new agency shall meet or exceed current levels of the individual agencies.
- Seniority transfer to the new agency should be determined through a fair and structured process that involves active participation and input from employee unions.

The North Bay Labor Council, AFL-CIO acknowledges that the merger process is in its earliest stages and insists that the rights and benefits of the employees of both organizations be a top priority as both agencies move forward. The shared institutional knowledge of ABAG and MTC staff members is valued in the merger. The new agency will only be as exceptional as the people that compose it, and these people are paramount in ensuring the newly born regional planning agency can take its first steps with confidence.

**Sincerely,**

**Jack A. Buckhorn,  
President/Interim Executive Director**

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