



East Bay Housing Organizations

September 17, 2015

Dear MTC Commissioners and ABAG Board Members:

Re: Discussions on proposed MTC and ABAG Merger

As an organization and as a member of the 6 Wins for Social Equity Network, East Bay Housing Organizations has been a long-term participant in Bay Area regional planning and policy-making. We believe what our work on the Equity, Environment and Jobs scenario in Plan Bay Area 1.0 has proven: that when regional decision making leads with the most equitable policies, programs and investments the whole Bay Area benefits. We also know the powerful role that regional agencies such as MTC and ABAG play in determining how communities are shaped by your respective decisions on land use, housing and transportation policies, programs and investments and job creation and access.

As an affordable housing advocacy organization, we are particularly concerned with the issues raised by the proposed consolidation of planning functions under MTC, and how housing planning, including preparation of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) would be handled.

It is for these reasons that we write to your respective boards and leadership with the following recommendations:

- 1) Extend funding for ABAG's Planning department through FY 2015-2016
- 2) Initiate a transparent, thoughtful and deliberate process with the public and relevant agency leadership for identifying opportunities for improved collaboration or full agency merger, starting with the regional governance needs the Bay Area has and what the proper institutions are to meet those needs
- 3) Shifting land use to MTC without a full agency merger is not a viable option and should not be explored. The goal should be truly integrated land use, transportation and housing planning and creating the regional governance necessary to meet this goal. This should include:
 - a new mission statement and clearly identified bodies of work that encompass comprehensive planning for the region, including housing, displacement, economic opportunity and equity, in addition to transportation;
 - clarity about how existing responsibilities, functions and programs of both agencies would continue;

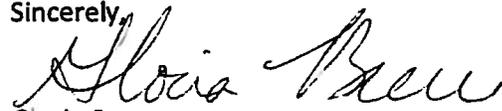
- a new staffing structure; and
- a new governance structure that provides fair representation and voting power for all residents of the region, regardless of what county or city they live in.

Finally, given the importance of strong and equitable regional governance to the Bay Area's future, any discussion about the future of a merged regional agency should be the subject of a robust and inclusive public discussion.

We look forward to working with your respective agencies to create the kind of regional governance that will create a better Bay Area for all of its residents.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Gloria Bruce,
Executive Director

cc: Steve Hemminger
Ezra Rapport
Miriam Chion
Ken Kirkey