



**Metro**

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**OPPOSE**  
**AB 620 (Hernandez)**  
**Metro ExpressLanes**

AB 620 (Hernandez) seeks to make significant changes to the administration and implementation of Metro's ExpressLanes Low Income Assistance Plan. AB 620 (Hernandez) would require Metro to grant hardship exemptions, from tolls, to an expanded definition of low-income commuters.

**Why Metro is Opposing AB 620**

- Metro ExpressLanes Program was established with two main priorities, improving mobility and investing in enhanced transit services within the I-10 and I-110 corridors.
- This bill seeks to re-define Metro's Low Income Assistance Plan participants and provisions.
- Metro believes that expanding the Low Income Assistance Plan program in this manner would have an immediate impact, adding congestion in the ExpressLanes, and reducing the amount of net-toll revenue that could be invested in transit services.
- The hardship exemptions outlined in the bill are counter to the priorities expressed by those communities and would jeopardize funding for public transit services.
- Metro's ExpressLanes program is the only program in the state and nation that has developed and implemented a Low-Income Assistance Plan to address equity concerns.

**How did Metro Develop the Low-Income Assistance Plan?**

- Conducted over 700 outreach meetings and briefings and focus groups since 2008 in communities impacted by the ExpressLanes program.
- Implemented a peer review process that included the University of Southern California, the University of California at Los Angeles, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Corridor Advisory Groups.

**What does Metro's Current Low-Income Assistance Plan Provide?**

- Provides waivers to reduce the cost of signing up for the FasTrak transponder and program for qualified applicants.
- Eliminates the monthly maintenance fee for qualified applicants.
- Provides toll credits for Metro ExpressLanes to regular transit users.

**Low Income Commuters Identified Enhanced Transit Service as a High Priority**

The ExpressLanes program is designed to direct toll revenues into primarily public transit in the corridors. To date over \$150 million has been invested in transit services and millions more will be invested in the future. Below are examples of what has been funded.

- New Transit Center at the El Monte Station, serving over low 20,000 patrons daily
- Safety improvements to the Harbor Transitway such as new lighting, improved signage and security, serving over 10,000 patrons daily
- Increased bus service and 59 new buses for Metro, Foothill Transit, Gardena and Torrance Transit

**What do the Experts Say?**

Metro's program was also reviewed by experts at the United States Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration. These findings were included in the report submitted to the Legislature pursuant to the legislation that authorized this program.

- “The equity analysis showed that Metro’s re-investment of net toll revenues promotes equity.”
- “Equity Plan users felt that the credit provided was important in making the decision to get a FasTrak account to use the ExpressLanes.”
- “Metro’s policy for reinvestment of the ExpressLanes net toll revenues for diverse and multimodal projects promotes a positive, equitable impact.”

**What has Metro done in the last year to increase participation in the Low-Income Assistance Plan?**

- Increased web presence and advertising to promote the benefits of the Low-Income Assistance Plan.
- Targeted outreach to social service agencies including all WIC offices, YMCA centers and many other community locations.
- Initiated Low-Income Assistance Plan customer satisfaction and ExpressLanes field surveys in from September - December 2015.
- Increased access to retail locations from 2 customer service centers to include over 160 locations where users can sign up for the FasTrak transponder, including retail outlets that accept cash for payment.
- Retail outlets include AAA, Albertsons and Costco, where customers can pay cash or credit/debit to obtain a transponder and 8 of these retail locations are contained within the Hernandez’s 48<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.
- Approximately 94% of all accounts opened used the retail stores or the website while the remaining 6% used the phone, customer service center, mail and our mobile van combined.

**Metro’s Low Income Assistance Plan To-Date**

- Currently, there are 8,877 participants registered for the Low Income Assistance Plan (out of a total of 454,490 ExpressLanes FasTrak account holders)
- Over the last year alone, program participation has increased by 35% as a direct result of outreach efforts in the I-110 and I-10 corridors.

**Additional Info on Metro’s ExpressLanes Program**

- Metro Silver Line, (providing service on both on the I-10 and I-110), has shown a 17% average annual ridership growth for the last four fiscal years.
- Of the total 454,490 accounts that have been opened, including 8,877 Low Income Assistance Plan accounts, 99.9% use credit/debit card to open their accounts and only 0.1% use cash/check. Also, in San Diego and Orange County, HOT Lane operators no longer accept cash to open or replenish an account.
- Finally, close to half of all trips on the ExpressLanes are toll-free trips, with users opting to carpool in-lieu of travelling in the lanes alone for a fee. For the I-110, 50% of the trips are toll-free and for the I-10, 47% of all trips are toll-free.
- A majority of FasTrak account holders have a median household income below \$75,000.

Please feel free to contact Michael Turner, Metro Government Relations, at (213) 922-2122 should you have any questions.