



SOUTH BAY CITIES
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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January 24, 2014

The Honorable Diane DuBois and Members of the Board of Directors
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
1 Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, California

Re: ExpressLanes Permanent Monthly Fee Waiver / Uses of Surplus Revenues

Dear Chair DuBois and Members of the Board of Directors:

This is the third letter that the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) has sent you over the past year to state that we strongly support waiving the monthly maintenance fee for the ExpressLanes for all participants who work or reside in Los Angeles County. It is now time to take action to make this permanent.

As we have previously explained, through our work in assisting Metro to publicize the need for transponders, we have encountered reluctance by those whose use of the ExpressLanes may be only occasional. We continue to hear that until the fee is permanently waived, even the threat of the monthly fee is creating a barrier. As a result, the full potential of the ExpressLanes providing more freeway relief for all riders is not being realized.

With all of the regional attractions in downtown Los Angeles, it is unfair that those with season tickets to one of the performing arts venues or to Dodger games which necessitate trips downtown only occasionally should have this added expense and inconvenience.

Additionally, we want to reiterate that the I-110 and I-10 freeway ExpressLane users are the only drivers in Los Angeles County that are paying for the right to use a carpool lane. While we understand that single occupant vehicles should be able to pay to use the lane and we understand the need to pay to establish an account and purchase a transponder, we do not believe a maintenance fee on top of the usage fee, is equitable. There is sufficient surplus revenue being generated to allow permanent elimination of the monthly penalty for infrequent use.

The South Bay Council of Governments also has significant concern over use of ExpressLane surplus revenues in light of: a) proposed state legislation that would funnel all the toll lane revenues to Caltrans for its underfunded statewide SHOPP program; and b) proposals to use the fees and tolls to replace lost community redevelopment revenues. To keep faith with the ExpressLane users that are providing the toll and fee revenues, we strongly urge the Metro Board of Directors to earmark any surplus ExpressLane revenues to encourage growth in ExpressLane use, to extend the ExpressLane network contiguous to the current lanes, and to improve the transportation infrastructure in neighboring communities that provide access to the ExpressLanes.

In summary, we urge the Metro Board to permanently waive the monthly maintenance fee for L.A. County residents and workers in the interest of equity and mobility, and to spend surplus revenues to strengthen the ExpressLane program as described.

Sincerely,

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Dan Medina
SBCCOG Chair
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Gardena

cc: Art Leahy, CEO