



February 14, 2008

Members of the California State Legislature,

We, the undersigned organizations, oppose the \$409 million in immediate funding cuts to statewide public transit services approved by the Senate Budget Committee late last night, which would take further funding from a transit system already suffering from recent budget reductions.

The FY08 budget adopted by this legislature last August cut more than \$1.26 billion from local public transit agencies, significantly reducing the resources necessary to alleviate traffic congestion, cut pollution, and give all Californians access to school, work, and other opportunities. We supported the California Transit Association when it contested the deep cuts in court, and are disappointed that the legislature is now taking steps to circumvent the court's decision that \$409 million of last year's cuts were unlawful.

School kids, the disabled, and the elderly are the populations who suffer most from deep cuts to public transit services. For example, 40% of Oakland's middle school and high school students – some 60,000 kids – use public transit to get to school each day.

The state's chronic under-funding of public transit affects not just those that are transit dependent, but rather all California residents, because it discourages transit ridership and keeps more cars on the road. California communities, including Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and San Diego, already suffer from some of the worst traffic congestion in the nation. **With our population expected to increase to 50 million people by 2030, we need more transit, not less, to keep our cities moving.** Additionally, as 41% of the state's global warming pollution comes from transportation, this legislature and other policymakers will find it difficult, if not impossible, to meet the commitments in AB 32 without significant new investments in public transit.

We sincerely hope that next year's budget will take a more productive approach in the form of a long-term, stable, adequate source of funding for public transit around the state. In the meantime, we urge this body to reconsider the \$409 million cuts to transit proposed this week.

Sincerely,

Emily Rusch, Advocate, CALPIRG

Carli Paine, Transportation Program Director, Transportation and Land Use Coalition

Sharon Sprowls, Interim Executive Director, Odyssey

Tim Frank, Advocate, Sierra Club California