



Warren Slocum
Supervisor, Fourth District

December 18, 2023

Mr. Andrew Fremier, Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, California 94105-2066

Dear Mr. Fremier,

Caltrain is the spine of the Peninsula's transportation system, with a positive brand and the highest customer satisfaction among major transit systems in the Bay Area. It is already one of the most efficient railroads in the country and will be fully electrified between San Jose and San Francisco next year, bringing world-class service through faster, quieter, and cleaner trains to communities on the Peninsula and in the South Bay. Caltrain is a competent agency, accountable to taxpayers, and in return, residents have chosen to raise their taxes to invest in it.

Given Caltrain's record of success, my concern regarding the proposals to merge Caltrain with other transit agencies are with the significant upfront costs that provide no clear benefits for the San Mateo County constituents who ride Caltrain. If the goal of consolidation is seamless travel across multiple modes of transit, many of these benefits can be realized through greater cooperation between existing agencies. Caltrain currently has intermodal rail connections with VTA Light Rail at three stations; Amtrak at one station; Capitol Corridor and ACE commuter rail at two stations; MUNI Light Rail at 4th and King Street Station; and BART at Millbrae Station, with additional connections planned at Santa Clara and Diridon Stations. Caltrain and BART already use the same fare card and coordinate schedules to reduce wait times for riders transferring at Millbrae. These efforts can and should continue under Caltrain's current structure.

I am unconvinced that consolidating Caltrain with another agency will bring benefits that cannot be achieved under its current structure. Due to their different track gauges, Caltrain and BART physically cannot run their trains on the other's tracks, meaning the two systems will always remain physically separate even if placed under a single operator. The need for distinct trainsets for each system also limits potential efficiencies and cost saving in procurement and operator training. While potential cost savings are nebulous, there are clear upfront costs in harmonizing the agencies' divergent governance structures, labor agreements, and sources of tax revenue under a consolidated agency. These efforts would require significant time and attention from both agencies' senior staff and political leadership at a time when Caltrain must remain laser-focused on delivering electrified service beginning next year.

In any discussion of Caltrain, the needs of its riders must come first. As a San Mateo County Supervisor, I am opposed to consolidation because it fails to meet this standard, providing no tangible improvements to the rider experience and no benefits to communities on the Caltrain corridor. It is a solution in search of a problem for an agency with a bright future and a clear path forward for improving the mobility needs of the communities it serves.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Slocum", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Warren Slocum
Vice President, Board of Supervisors
San Mateo County