

Letter H



May 18, 2009

Seana Cause
Program & Project Analyst
Sonoma County Transportation Authority
490 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 206
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Re: Proposed 2009 CTP Draft EIR

Gentlepersons,

After reviewing the proposed 2009 CTP and the draft EIR I do not see any mention of school transportation as a part of the plan. Although local and regional transportation planning does not generally include school transportation I respectfully request that some consideration be given in the future.

School transportation is by far the largest mass transportation system in the state. In Sonoma County, school districts that offer school transportation service do so with comprehensive programs that cover their entire geography. Currently there are over 300 school buses operating in Sonoma County serving approximately 9,000 students daily. That translates to approximately 3,240,000 passenger boardings every school year.

School transportation is funded through the education budget, but funding was frozen twenty-six years ago. We have rarely been given a COLA over the years and the balance of the funding comes directly from classroom budgets. Many school districts have reduced service over the years in response to this poorly funded program. These decisions force parents to drive students in their cars, increasing vehicle miles traveled, fuel consumption, tailpipe emissions and congestion around schools in the mornings and afternoons. Further, the State has raided the Public Transit Account to backfill school transportation funding creating more conflict and division.

School is the perfect place to educate young citizens on the benefits of mass transportation and other green transportation options. Instead, however, we as a State and County seem to be adopting policies that discourage bus use and encourage single occupant vehicles.

I urge you in your future planning to consider school transportation as an important and viable element of local transportation planning.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Rea

C: WCTA Board of Directors

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Letter H

Michael G. Rea, West County Transportation

Response H-1:

While the proposed CTP does not include specific improvements for school transportation, it does include pedestrian and bicycle improvements as well as traffic safety and safe routes for school projects that would benefit school transportation needs. In addition, the CTP includes an accelerated school bus replacement strategy/action in its strategic projects list to be coordinated with school districts, state and federal government (see CTP page 99).