



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES



April 19, 2022

The Honorable Luz M. Rivas
Chair, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2237 (Friedman): Transportation planning: regional transportation improvement plan: sustainable communities strategies: climate goals.
Notice of OPPOSITION *(As Amended April 18, 2022)*

Dear Assembly Member Rivas,

On behalf of the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California (UCC), and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), who collectively represent cities and counties throughout the state, we respectfully **oppose AB 2237 (Friedman)**, which takes an overly prescriptive approach that strips away regional and local flexibility to meet the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets expected under SB 375 (Steinberg, 2008).

We are concerned the AB 2237 is based on the conclusions of the California Transportation Assessment Report (AB 285, 2019) due to limitations of the data reviewed to create the report, including the exclusion of local project-level data provided pursuant to SB 1 (Beall, 2017). The report relies heavily on Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) data sets, which exclude many local complete streets and maintenance expenditures, which are broadly consistent with state transportation climate goals, as well as significant transit funding. As a result, the report incorrectly concludes that a disproportionate amount of transportation funds have been, and continue to be spent on capacity increasing highway and road projects. The AB 285 Report lacks important granular data such as transit operating and maintenance costs, and local fix-it-first expenditures, which are not included in the FTIPs.

Project-Level Consistency Determinations and Rankings

AB 2237 would upend the existing framework for regional transportation planning in the state's metropolitan areas in favor of a new ranking process, which would prohibit any project that induces vehicle miles travelled. Local

governments are working collaboratively and dedicated to developing sustainable community strategies (SCS) to align both regional transportation projects with the state's climate goals. Despite a multi-billion-dollar shortfall, SB 1 has enabled cities and counties to make life-saving safety improvements; expand pedestrian, bicycle and transit access and opportunities. However, AB 2237 could threaten critical resources that maintain our state's adopted fix-it-first practice, at best, creating significant uncertainty and at worst imperiling projects to repair our local streets and roads in an environment with rapidly increasing costs and an already aging infrastructure.

Determining Consistency with State Goals

We have significant questions and concerns with how consistency with the various state plans and documents listed in Section 2 would be determined. Although we believe regional and local transportation expenditures are aligned with the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) goals, especially its "foundation [on] the 'fix-it-first' approach established in SB 1," we object to codifying a requirement that local and regional transportation expenditures be consistent with a plan that has no specific statutory authorization, and which has been characterized by the Administration as a "living document." The California Transportation Plan (CTP) is similarly aligned with many regional and local transportation projects, but the plan's aspirational nature and lack of a formal fiscal constraint makes consistency determinations difficult. Finally, while we support regionally-directed transportation planning to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals, we are concerned with AB 2237's pivot to project-level consistency determinations and are concerned that it could preclude a GHG-neutral fix-it-first or safety project, or the rare capacity-increasing project that is included in a broader regional plan that reduces emissions, but is necessary for other important transportation goals. A project should be considered consistent with state climate goals by virtue of being included in an SB 375 compliant SCSs that must be reviewed and approved by CARB.

Roles and Responsibilities of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

We do not object to forming a taskforce to review the roles and responsibilities of metropolitan planning organizations, but any such review must include a statutory requirement for consultation with regional and local governments and the organizations representing these entities. Moreover, we are concerned with the potential implications of a requirement to define "sustainable community," and question whether a universal definition could exist for the urban, suburban, and rural communities we represent.

For these reasons, Cal Cities and CSAC **oppose AB 2237 (Friedman)**. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Damon Conklin at dconklin@calcities.org or Chris Lee at clee@counties.org. Kiana Valentine (UCC) at kiana@politicogroup.com, or Sidd Nag (RCRC) at snag@rcrcnet.org.

Sincerely,



Damon Conklin
Cal Cities



Christopher Lee
CSAC



Kiana Valentine
UCC



Siddharth Nag
RCRC

cc: The Honorable Chris Holden, Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jay Dickenson, Chief Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus