



January 7, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

I am writing to you regarding vaccine priority for both fixed-route and paratransit operators. I am the Chair of Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District's (AC Transit's) Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The AAC is a 14-member group appointed by AC Transit's elected Board of Directors to review, comment and advise the Board of Directors and District staff regarding the implementation and enhancement of planning programs and services for seniors and people with disabilities,

AC Transit, like all Bay Area transit systems, continues to struggle in the face of dramatically reduced ridership and revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This challenge was already the most significant crisis in the history of public transportation, and now it has persisted far longer than any of us would have predicted.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, AC Transit's fixed-route and paratransit operators have been on the front lines, doing their jobs as essential workers. Fixed route operators provide other front-line workers with a way to safely travel to and from their essential jobs and the paratransit workers provide individuals, unable to use the bus, transportation to life-sustaining medical, dialysis, chemotherapy and groceries.

Now that the availability of a vaccine is on the horizon, we strongly urge you to work to ensure that fixed route transit, paratransit, and school transportation workers are prioritized along with other essential workers to receive the vaccine following the critical need to vaccinate the State's healthcare workers.

Despite a decline in average weekday ridership, on both fixed-route and paratransit, people continue to rely on public transportation to get them where they need to go. Our fixed-route riders are the healthcare workers, grocery clerks, caregivers, emergency services personnel and others doing the critical work that has kept California functioning during the pandemic. Our paratransit riders are the most vulnerable and frail that have no other means of transportation available to them. Both group of riders need access to reliable public transportation and are therefore dependent on the health of the transit workers that serve them every day.

AC Transit has worked hard to ensure the public health of riders and fixed-route and paratransit operators during this crisis. The District has coordinated with Bay Area operators to develop the *Riding Together: Bay Area Healthy Transit Plan*, which includes a baseline set of measures aimed at minimizing virus transmission on our systems. Among those measures is the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) for all workers and a requirement that all riders wear face coverings and social distance while riding transit.

Prioritizing transit workers for vaccination would ensure that California is aided by a fully healthy transit workforce.

Thank you for everything that you and your team have done and are doing to address this crisis, and thank you for considering the need to make sure both fixed-route and paratransit operators are recognized for the daily sacrifices they continue to make on behalf of all of us.

Sincerely,



Pam Fadem, Chair

AC Transit's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

CC: Mike Hursh, General Manager, AC Transit
Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering, AC Transit
Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning, AC Transit
Linda Nemeroff, District Secretary, AC Transit
Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager, AC Transit
Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications, AC Transit
Honorable Toni G. Atkins, California Senate President pro Tempore
Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the California Assembly
Honorable Nancy Skinner, California State Senator (District 9)
Honorable Bob Wieckowski, California State Senator (District 10)
Honorable Buffy Wicks, California State Assemblymember (District 15)
Honorable Rob Bonta, California State Assemblymember (District 18)
Honorable Alex Lee, California State Assemblymember (District 25)
Honorable Bill Quirk, California State Assemblymember (District 20)
Honorable Laura Friedman, Chair – Assembly Transportation Committee
Honorable Lena A. Gonzalez, Chair – Senate Transportation Committee