



4080 Lemon St. 3rd Fl. Riverside, CA 92501  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 12008 Riverside, CA 92502-2208  
951.787.7141 • [rctc.org](http://rctc.org)

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Lena A. Gonzalez  
Chair, Senate Committee on Transportation  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 405  
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: Opposition to AB 2237 (Freidman), as Amended on June 13, 2022**

Dear Chair Gonzalez:

On behalf of the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), I write in opposition to Assembly Bill (AB) 2237. RCTC recognizes the state's intention to secure an equitable and climate-resilient future, including for residents in Riverside County. For decades, RCTC has supported local investments in all modes of transportation to reduce traffic congestion and offer mobility choices—and has done so in a manner that preserves the region's natural habitat via the Riverside County Integrated Project. Actions like these can be accomplished because we have the flexibility to be responsive to our community's needs while also achieving regional transportation, air quality, habitat conservation, and carbon reduction goals.

RCTC takes exception to two significant issues in this bill, both of which fail to grasp the purview and intent of regional transportation plans (RTP) and sustainable communities strategies (SCS):

1. Constraints placed on future voter-approved transportation sales tax measures; and
2. Conditional prohibitions on use of state funds for projects that increase "single-occupancy vehicle capacity."

AB 2237 fails to recognize the depth of funding self-help counties, like Riverside County, have already invested in all modes of transportation despite the State's historical lack of funding resources until the implementation of Senate Bill 1. RCTC supports providing safe and efficient walking, biking, and transit access in an environmentally sustainable manner for our region. Riverside County residents approved in 1988 and again in 2002 Measure A, a half-cent sale tax that funds improvements for all transportation modes, including highways, commuter rail, public transit, rideshare programs, complete streets, and even habitat conservation. Projects funded with Measure A not only provide operational improvements to the state highway system and multi-modal transit alternatives, but also funds local transportation projects that provides substantial benefits to our communities. While it has taken decades to deliver some of these projects due to insufficient state and federal funding and cumbersome regulatory approval processes, their need in our communities has not changed, even as the State's policies have. We committed to our residents, based on their vote to support this Measure, to get the job done.

AB 2237 would usurp the will of voters that have already approved transportation sales tax measures and significantly limit the project types they may choose to fund with their own local sales tax dollars. These actions are unnecessary, overly bureaucratic, and could eliminate local officials' ability to respond to the needs of their communities. While regionally significant projects are already considered in the RTPs and SCSs, not all projects in transportation sales tax expenditure plans are considered regionally significant, nor are they all eligible for inclusion in RTPs and SCSs.

As a result, future transportation sales tax measures would be forced to omit project types that would not be included in RTPs and SCSs, such as active transportation projects, local streets and roads improvements, or even transit services and rideshare incentive programs. Furthermore, such projects in already-passed transportation sales tax measure expenditure plans such as Measure A that could also increase "single-occupancy vehicle capacity," would be severely limited by prohibitions on state funding. Local projects in rural communities such as Blythe that may rely on non-SB 1 (Beall, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) state funding like the Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA) to complete simple road rehabilitation or sidewalk construction could be hamstrung by insufficient funds.

RCTC also takes issue with state funds for projects that increase "single-occupancy vehicle capacity" being conditioned on the project providing, "sufficient enforceable mitigation to ensure that including the project in the sustainable communities strategy or, if applicable, alternative planning strategy will not increase emissions of greenhouse gases." This provision runs counter to the purpose of SCSs, which are designed to facilitate a system-level approach to the delivery of projects that meet the varying mobility needs of each community while achieving regional greenhouse gas reduction goals. The ambiguity of this provision may either be interpreted as codifying the bureaucratic overreach of the implementation of SB 743 (Steinberg, Chapter 386, Statutes of 2013) by the Office of Planning and Research and the California Department of Transportation, or as placing unreasonable mandates on Metropolitan Planning Organizations to incorporate project-specific mitigation provisions into RTPs and SCSs.

While the recently adopted amendments attempt to broaden the author's coalition, they instead create further uncertainty for local governments responding to the transportation needs of their communities. Local transportation agencies require both flexibility and substantially increased state investments to ensure a just transition to reliable multimodal transportation systems.

RCTC is a willing partner and will continue to work with the State to turn the page toward innovative and sustainable transportation solutions that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive. But access and equity look different from community to community and from region to region. We must work together to avoid the impacts of climate change. Still, the State must provide its own funding for regions like Riverside County — not just in coastal urban centers that are already built out — before tampering with voter-approved transportation sales tax measures. AB 2237 would deny under-resourced regions and their disadvantaged communities of a just transition to a climate-resilient future because many communities do not have the funding, infrastructure, or available space to eliminate roadway usage on command.

The Honorable Lena A. Gonzalez  
June 14, 2022  
Page 3

For these reasons, RCTC opposes AB 2237. If you have any questions regarding RCTC's position on this issue, please contact me or David Knudsen, External Affairs Director, at (951) 787-7141.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Mayer".

Anne Mayer  
Executive Director

CC: Members of the Riverside County State Legislative Delegation