

Lead Witness Testimony by SPUR in Support of SB63 (Wiener, Arreguín). Provided to the California Legislature Assembly Transportation Committee on September 8, 2025.

Good afternoon Chair Wilson, Committee Members, Senators Wiener and Arreguín,

My name is Sebastian Petty and I'm pleased to be here on behalf of SPUR, the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, to provide testimony in support of SB 63.

SPUR has supported SB 63 since its inception because we are clear-eyed that the Bay Area's transit system is in deep fiscal crisis and we understand that this is our last chance to get the sustained regional funding that is the only viable path to keep our buses and trains running. MUNI, BART, AC Transit and Caltrain - transit agencies that collectively carry more than 80% of the Bay Area's million plus daily transit riders - are at risk of severe service cuts over the coming year unless the region is able to secure a new revenue stream.

The crisis transit is facing is national- and ominously, the Bay Area can now see this potential future we are trying to avoid starting to play out in other states and regions. In Pennsylvania, the state has failed to address transit's funding needs and consequently Philadelphia's transit system (SEPTA) has moved forward with large scale cuts - the first major metro area to head over the fiscal cliff. The result has been chaos. Riders have been stranded, employers are frustrated. The City is backfilling funding for some school oriented bus routes out of its own coffers, lawsuits have been initiated over other cuts, and professional sports teams have turned to betting sites to temporarily cover the costs of game day transit. Longer term Bloomberg estimates that the economic impact of sustained transit cuts in the Philadelphia region will include 76,000 lost jobs, \$6 billion in lost wage growth, and nearly \$20 billion in impacts to home values. This is in regards to a transit system and metropolitan region that are both smaller than the Bay Area. There is no obvious solution in sight. Cities like Chicago, Dallas, Washington DC, Portland and, of course, the San Francisco Bay Area will soon face similar catastrophes without intervention.

As SB 63 has advanced through the legislature, the theme of "accountability" has understandably emerged as a critical focus. Transit's financial needs are significant at a time when local governments and taxpayers are already feeling the strain - and SB 63 contemplates new flows of funding between counties and operators, albeit on a temporary emergency basis. SPUR is

confident that sb63 already provides *significant* accountability provisions - including strong requirements around financial efficiency and clear guidance as to how funding must be used and we further understand that additional specific accountability provisions have now been proposed to further protect individual counties. Instead of focusing further into these details, we would urge all of you to momentarily step back and consider a broader view of accountability. The Bay Area's transit systems are incredibly valuable - they are assets we have inherited from prior generations, they require tending and maintenance and care, and they are relied on directly and indirectly by millions of people every day. Government - at all levels - is accountable to work together to keep these systems running. This is the kind of accountability that matters most for riders, for businesses and for the public. 2, 5 or 14 years from now, this is the kind of accountability that will be remembered.

We urge the Bay Area to move forward with a SB63 as a balanced, fair 5-county funding measure. Together we can ensure our transit systems remain strong for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Sebastian Petty
Senior Transportation Policy Advisor, SPUR