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To: CAPTI@CalSta
Subject: Feedback on Draft CAPTI
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Secretary Kim, institutional stakeholders, advocates:

Many thanks for this groundbreaking, thoughtful, and necessary effort to address our climate crisis. It's a courageous step forward.

As a sustainable transportation advocate in northern Humboldt County, where we are surrounded on 3 sides by narrow, dangerous state highways and on the 4th by the beautiful Pacific Ocean, my focus is on systemic change. Every day here we deal with the unfortunate consequences of legacy car-centric policies. Eureka (the county seat) has one of the highest mortality rates in the state for people on foot and on bike. Our active transportation projects such as trails go begging for funding from grant programs including the ATP. Our aging roads and bridges are crumbling as heavy trucks and RVs roll through our communities. Meanwhile, residents continue to purchase fossil-fuel vehicles they can barely afford because nothing is forcing them to change. Major shifts are needed, and there is some urgency.

While the CAPTI is a matrix of assorted strategies and actions, not all are of equal impact. The most transformative change in my view is (S2.4) **full, ongoing funding for the Active Transportation Program**. Reducing VMT across the state depends on mode shift; i.e. active transportation. If we accelerate straight toward mode-shift, there will be no need for costly detours like (S6.1) VMT mitigation. It seems incongruous that ATP funding is the most ambiguously worded action in the entire CAPTI document. Take the funding from SB!, from non-discretionary funds, from the state general fund, from the mountain of dollars I've paid in CA taxes in my life, wherever. Funding the ATP is the fastest path to meaningful change and projects are queued up just waiting for funds. When a serious problem can be solved by throwing money at it, that's very good news. Do that.

Regarding the term 'active transportation', it's important to avoid conflating or merging the various non-motorized use cases. Bikes and peds, for example, often have different needs. There's often some overlap but certain types of ped infrastructure - bulb-outs, frequent crosswalks, and longer signal intervals, can actually degrade the experience for people on bike.

The term 'multimodal' is fraught as well. Lately I've seen several projects that claim to be multimodal because they incorporate bike/ped features, but if we asked people who bike and walk in the area about changes they'd like to see, the project isn't what they would come up with. Sometimes 'multimodal' can be a thinly-veiled rationale for making a roadway better and faster for cars. The Eureka Broadway Multimodal Corridor plan is one example. The Eureka North-South Multimodal Corridor design has a different issue, trading off bike safety in favor of increased ped safety. Whether or not the confusion is intentional, it's worth coming up with a thoughtful definition of "multimodal" to make sure everyone is on the same page.

As part of (S4.5) Develop and Implement Caltrans Climate Action Plan, I recommend that Caltrans share its VMT measurement toolkit with regional and local government entities. Our local MPO needs a reliable way to establish a VMT baseline and track progress via metrics.

Methods that are being employed in urban areas (i.e. big data and cellphone tracking) don't work well here, and we can't engineer our own methods. Caltrans is the logical provider of such tools.

Finally, in terms of tracking CAPTI progress, I recommend assigning each action an estimated GHG reduction benefit (i.e. a number). Using metrics will enable us to quickly track progress toward our collective goals and make adjustments when we get off track. Since this is a Climate Action Plan, it seems like a natural way to proceed.

I look forward to reading the final version of this document, and working together on many systemic changes to come.

Regards,
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