

MOVE LA

A PROJECT OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS



August 21, 2015

The Honorable Herb Wesson, Los Angeles City Council President
 Los Angeles City Hall
 200 North Spring Street, Room 430
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: ACA 4 (Frazier) Lowering the Voter Threshold for Transportation Sales Tax Measures - SUPPORT

Dear Council President Wesson,

On behalf of the below signed organizations, we wish to inform you of our **SUPPORT for ACA 4**, a proposed California State Constitutional Amendment which would reduce the voter threshold for approval of local tax measures for transportation from 66.67% (2/3rds) to 55%.

We want to thank the author State Assembly Member Frazier for including in the bill language that would make the measure effective immediately upon adoption by the voters of California and thus would apply to all concurrent qualifying local transportation measures.

In our experience, the inclusion of this language really galvanizes and energizes support for this very important idea. It also creates the prospect of coordinated local campaigns in support of the Constitutional Amendment when it goes before California voters.

We believe making the voter approval threshold 55% for transportation funding is a vital reform. For years many communities have been facing great difficulty in meeting their transportation needs. We know that an effective transportation system is essential to a healthy economy and a healthy environment. Throughout the Southern California area, local jurisdictions have been increasingly relying upon local voter approved sales tax measures to fund transportation infrastructure projects.

For example, in Orange County, Measure M has been vital to expanding transportation funding to improve Metrolink and connecting bus services and – it passed with a bare majority in 1991. San Bernardino County's Measure I was approved by a bare majority in 1989, as was Measure A in Riverside County that passed in 1988. All of these measures have been essential to improving the mobility of its residents.

These counties have since approved extensions of those sales tax measures: only the extensions (which are much more easily accepted by voters than initial sales taxes) were able to garner two-thirds vote. If the law had required two-thirds vote when these measures were first adopted Southern California County's transportation systems today would likely be in serious disrepair or have little operating funds for transit.

In Los Angeles County, voters have passed three local sales tax measures. In 1980 Prop A and in 1990 Prop C passed with bare majorities. Only Measure R in 2008 has passed with 67.8%. If the two-thirds threshold had been applicable to both Prop A and Prop C they would not have passed and vital transportation sales tax funding would not have been available. If that had happened, Los Angeles County would have had virtually no funding for its bus transit system or any of its current rail transit system. Important transportation infrastructure projects such as the first leg of the Red Line subway and the Blue Line light rail system, the busiest single light rail line in the nation, would not have existed.

Under those circumstances, our communities would have had no real alternative to gridlock. That scenario will be our communities' future if we do not make this change now. These jurisdictions will be able to leverage their local funds along with federal funding and through Cap and Trade in order to make improvements to their communities and public transportation and further enhance the greenhouse gas (GHG) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction goals spelled out in key legislation such as AB 32 (Pavley) and SB 350 (De Leon).

Passage of ACA 4 will allow other jurisdictions to be a part of the solution in preserving and enhancing our state's transportation infrastructure, which improves mobility and air quality and is fundamental to a competitive economy.

For these reasons, we are in support ACA 4 and look forward to working with you to move the bill forward and create the possibility of concurrent passage of local transportation funding measures across this state.

Respectfully,
Denny Zane
Move LA- Executive Director

Gary Toebben
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce,
President & C.E.O.

Mary Leslie
L.A. Business Council, President

Coby King
Valley Industry and Commerce Association
(VICA), Chairman

Sarah Shaw
JMB Realty, Vice President of Development
and Operations

Evan Kaizer
Sieroty Company, Inc., President and CEO

Ron Miller
L.A./Orange County Building & Construction
Trades Council, Executive Secretary

Rusty Hicks
L.A. County Federation of Labor, Executive
Secretary

Piedmont Brown
Ironworkers Local 433, President

Kevin Norton
IBEW Local 11, Executive Director

Sergio Rascon
Laborers Local 300, Vice President

Meghan Sahli-Wells
Mayor of Culver City

Jonathan Parfrey
Climate Resolve, Executive Director

Fernando Cazares
Natural Resources Defense Council

Dr. Joe Lyou
Coalition for Clean Air, Executive Director

Joshua Stark
Transform, State Policy Director

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James J. Provenzano
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Hilary Norton
FAST, Executive Director

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