



Thursday, May 12, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Brown  
Governor of the State of California  
State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: 916-558-3160

**RE: Support for AB 2222 (Holden) and the continuous appropriation of \$50 million for discounted student transit passes**

Dear Governor Jerry Brown,

Associated Students, Incorporated of Cal State LA is writing to support the continuous appropriation of \$50 million/year out of the budget as outlined in AB 2222 (Holden) to facilitate discounted student transit pass programs at public colleges and universities and for students in grades K-12 statewide. We see this as a way to increase student transit ridership and help reduce GHG emissions and VMT. These programs will save students money by reducing the need for car ownership, and achieve many additional benefits as well: It will, for example, reduce petroleum use and the need for so many impervious surfaces, which would in turn reduce urban runoff and stormwater issues—and help make California even more sustainable and green.

Student transit pass programs could also be a way not only to “grow” transit riders but also to create a transit-oriented culture among young people: If riding transit is easy and affordable for students to take to school and to work they are more likely to begin making decisions about where to live and work based on the proximity of transit, which will in turn help promote the land use and development patterns that will support even greater transit use.

There are few states that need programs like this more than California, where transit systems are younger than the legacy systems on the East Coast, and where most of our cities—with the exception of San Francisco and Oakland—have grown up around the car and have not developed a compact walkable/bikeable/transit-friendly urban form. In LA County this is of particular interest because two-thirds of taxpayers have agreed to tax themselves in order to dramatically expand the transit system as an alternative to driving and to provide relief from LA’s legendary traffic jams.

We believe transit is a key component of a multi-modal transportation system: transit makes the highway system work more efficiently, which helps the economy work more effectively, which benefits all Californians. And by helping students get to school and stay in school, we are nurturing a more well-educated workforce, which will help keep California competitive.

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Lastly, a study of 35 student transit pass programs across the U.S. by UCLA researchers in 2001 (including the renown Donald Shoup of “The High Cost of Free Parking” fame) found that these programs saved students on average \$2,000 a year (which equates to \$2,677 in 2016 dollars according to the American Institute for Economic Research). The study also found that these programs increased student ridership by 70%-200%. In a letter of support for AB 2222 Professor Shoup pointed out that UCLA’s BruinGO student transit pass program cost \$810,000 in its first year and increased student bus ridership 56%; UCLA built a parking structure for 1,500 cars three years later for \$47 million—making the BruinGo program look like a bargain.

It is important for these funds to be continuously appropriated because student transit pass programs must be ongoing if they are to build the maximum level of ridership—funding that starts and stops could disrupt the effective and predictable implementation of these programs.

For all of these reasons (and there are others!) we believe that AB 2222 is an excellent and appropriate use of state funding and would help achieve many of the goals set by state leadership.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Ejmin Hakobian  
President  
Associated Students, Incorporated

Date

Cc: Senate President Pro Tem Kevin De Leon, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, Senate Budget Committee Chair Mark Leno, Assembly Budget Committee Chair Phil Ting

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