



September 1, 2026

Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Xavier Becerra
Candidate for Governor
330 N Brand Blvd Ste 700
Glendale, CA 91203

Steve Hilton
Candidate for Governor
9460 Tegner Rd
Hilmar, CA 95324

RE: Crucial Importance of Funding for Public Transit in Humboldt County

Governor Newsom, Secretary Becerra, and Mr. Hilton:

Public transit is crucially important to communities throughout the state of California. Although transit systems in major urban areas tend to get more attention, transit also plays a central role in protecting and improving the economy, environment, and quality of life in Humboldt County and other rural parts of the state.

At least 36,000 people in Humboldt County don't have a driver's license. Many people who do have a license also use transit. Last year, nearly 190,000 work shifts, 205,000 K-12 and college school days, and 50,000 medical appointments were accessed by transit in Humboldt County. People in Humboldt County would lose their jobs, be forced to drop out of school, and lose access to life-saving medical care without access to transit.

Transportation is the second highest household cost in our county after housing, and people who rode transit instead of owning a car last year saved an average of \$10,472. That's money they could spend on other necessities like groceries and medical bills. In fact, transit riders spent more than \$7.1 million shopping at local businesses in Humboldt County last year.

Humboldt County's transit system is also one of the most effective tools we have for reducing our environmental impact and protecting public health. When compared to everybody driving alone, a diesel bus full of people produces less than one-tenth the carbon emissions, half the particulate pollution, and one fifth of the toxic tire particles. With the transition to zero emission buses, there is increasingly no tailpipe pollution from buses at all. According to the Humboldt County Regional Climate Action Plan, increasing transit ridership is essential for Humboldt County meeting its greenhouse gas reduction goals in line with state targets.

It's clear that transit plays a crucial role in Humboldt County's economy and communities. It's equally clear that a much greater investment in public transit is needed in order for the county to meet its climate, environmental, and economic goals.

The Humboldt Transit Authority, like other transit agencies throughout California, relies on state funding—including both formula and competitive grant dollars—to provide this critically important service. We call on you and other state leaders to preserve and expand existing transit capital and operations funding programs. Above all, we call on the state to ensure reliable transit operations funding at levels required for Humboldt County—and the state of California—to meet climate goals, support economic development, improve quality of life, and protect public health and the environment.

Sincerely,

Colin Fiske, Executive Director
Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities

Matt Simmons, Climate Attorney
Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)

Eddie Morgan, Executive Director
Tri-County Independent Living

Meredith Maier, Executive Director
Arcata Chamber of Commerce

Michael Davies-Hughes, Humboldt County Superintendent of Schools
Humboldt County Office of Education

Dan Chandler, Steering Committee Member
350 Humboldt

Maggie Kraft, Executive Director
Area 1 Agency on Aging

Tory Starr, CEO
Open Door Community Health Centers

Alysia Bixler, Projects Coordinator
Redwood Community Action Agency

Laurel McKay, Operations Manager
Northcoast Environmental Center

John Frahm, President
United Food & Commercial Workers Union Local 5

Max Garcia, Humboldt Transit Authority Driver
AFSCME Local 1684

Nezzie Wade, Board President
Affordable Homeless Housing Alternatives

Peggy Martinez, Business Owner
Creative Inclusion

Robin Baker, Co-Executive Director
McKinleyville Family Resource Center

Melodie Meyer, Co-Director
Redwood Coalition for Climate and Environmental Responsibility

Mary Ann Hansen, Executive Director
First 5 Humboldt

Nancy Olson, CEO
Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce

Rob Holmlund, Executive Director
Humboldt County Association of Governments

Amanda Kruschke, Executive Director
Eureka Main Street

cc: Senator Mike McGuire, Assemblymember Chris Rogers, Assemblymember Damon Connolly

Sent via email