



June 24, 2024

Honorable Carl Guardino
Chair, California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street MS 52
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Concerns Regarding the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program Cycle 4 Guidelines Public Process

Dear Chair Guardino,

The undersigned organizations are reaching out to you today to express our concerns about the public process conducted by the California Transportation Commission (CTC or Commission) staff during the update of the Cycle 4 Trade Corridor Enhancement Program Guidelines and request that the Commission take the following steps to ensure robust community input in the guidelines process:

1. Extend the comment period for an additional 30 days to allow for comments to be received and incorporated following the release of the Draft TCEP Guidelines.
2. Introduce for Cycle 5 clearer and more inclusive guidelines updating process that conducts workshops that are accessible to a broader range of stakeholders, provides clear deadlines for when comments are due, offers responses to comments from staff, and incorporates procedural equity best practices and commitments similar to those identified in the [Caltrans' Race and Equity Action Plan](#).

We hope these steps will address issues we experienced engaging in the guidelines process and expand public participation.

Two years ago, when the CTC was updating its Cycle 3 TCEP Guidelines, we were impressed with how responsive and open the CTC staff was to our suggestions during the public outreach process. They held a number of public workshops, solicited comments on the draft guidelines,

and worked with us to incorporate our feedback as much as possible. We praised the CTC for setting a shining example of robust public outreach and fully expected the process to be the same this year.

Our experience this year fell short of expectations. While the CTC did conduct public workshops, they were held during a busy time of the year which limited our participation. Thus, our organizations planned to engage once the draft guidelines were released so we could review and respond to the proposed updates in question.

However, during the final public workshop, the staff indicated further comments on the draft guidelines would not be incorporated into what was presented to the Commissioners. If this had been made clear earlier in the process, including on the CTC website, we would have made sure to engage earlier. Additionally, while our organizations put together a public comment letter that we submitted before the May 30th deadline, we were told by the CTC staff that our recommendations would not be considered because we did not engage early in the process. It is not clear why the CTC decided to solicit public feedback if it never intended to incorporate that feedback, wasting both our organizations' and the agency staff's time.

Our organizations engage in state transportation policy on a daily basis; if this public process was unclear to us, it would be even more opaque for community-based organizations and members of the public who wish to voice their thoughts. The CTC staff made little effort to communicate the sudden change in the public process, which undoubtedly led to some voices not being heard as they failed to meet the new deadlines. Most public processes solicit feedback after a draft document has been released, so it is easy to see how one could make such a mistake.

The CTC prides itself on being an agency that makes space to listen to every voice. This is evident during the monthly CTC hearings where a public comment process can last for many hours for each agenda item. We encourage the Commission to review the Cycle 4 TCEP Guidelines process to ensure that it is fully aligned with the culture cultivated by the Commissioners and the CTC Racial Equity Statement which states that the CTC vows to "ensure equity, public health, and robust public engagement via our planning and programming guidelines."

We urge you to continue to uplift the importance of transparency and robust engagement. In particular, we ask that you extend the public process for the TCEP Guidelines to allow for comments to be submitted and considered after the draft guidelines are released, to ensure that everyone who planned to engage in this process has the opportunity to do so. We also ask for all future changes to the public process to be announced in advance and posted clearly on the CTC website so that the public is aware of these changes. We appreciate CTC's sincere commitment to uplifting all voices and we hope this commitment will continue to take priority in all agency decisions and actions.

Sincerely,

Sofia Rafikova
Policy Advocate
Coalition for Clean Air

Jared Sanchez
Policy Director
California Bicycle Coalition

Matthew Baker
Policy Director
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Moiz Mir
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