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Transportation Advocates: Governor Newsom’s May Budget Revision protects vital transit funding, undercuts sustainable solutions for connected communities and safer streets

SACRAMENTO – Today, Governor Newsom unveiled his proposed [May Budget Revision](#). As organizations that advocate for building a more sustainable, equitable transportation system in California, we understand that this is an especially difficult fiscal year, necessitating many painful cuts to important programs across all areas of the budget. With this in mind, we are grateful for the Governor’s continued support for last year’s SB125 transit funding package. Maintaining the \$5.1 billion in critical funding for California transit agencies that was previously approved is critical to maintaining essential transit service and keeping major transit capital projects on track.

However, the administration's proposed \$600 million in cuts to the Active Transportation Program and \$75 million in cuts to the Highways to Boulevards program threaten to undermine our progress towards an equitable transportation system aligned with California's climate goals.

These cuts are both harmful and unnecessary. With every part of the state budget taking major cuts, it makes no sense to gut our most cost-effective, climate-aligned transportation programs while continuing to fund wasteful freeway expansions that simply pollute the air and make traffic worse.

The State Highway Account (SHA), augmented by historically abundant and flexible federal formula funds, can and should serve as a source of funding to backfill these cuts to the Active Transportation Program and Highways to Boulevards. Dedicated transportation funding from both state revenues and the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law means that the SHA is in good fiscal health relative to the rest of the state budget picture. Last year's budget maintained Active Transportation funding commitments by leveraging SHA funding, but none of this year's budget proposals have explored a similar avenue to making the program whole.

The Active Transportation Program is the state's marquee street safety program, one of the only transportation infrastructure programs that is fully aligned with our state's climate goals, and the only program with a statutory requirement to prioritize projects that benefit disadvantaged communities. It is consistently oversubscribed with proposals for projects that enable Californians to walk and roll safely – projects needed urgently to address [a recent surge in traffic deaths across the state](#).

In a similar vein, Highways to Boulevards is one of the only state programs dedicated to redressing the historic harms of transportation planning in California, including the destruction and segregation of Black and brown communities to pave the way for urban freeways. By converting underutilized highways for better use, this program will help restore community connectivity, reduce traffic, and clean our air.

With Caltrans' year-over-year budget proposed to increase by nearly \$1 billion, there is no reason to divest from these critical programs; nor should they have to compete for scarce Cap-and-Trade funding. We look forward to working closely with the Governor and the Legislature to secure a balanced budget that puts our transportation dollars to their best use securing a more sustainable, equitable future.

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