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June 7, 2022

The Honorable Marc Berman
California State Assembly
Capitol Office, 1021 O Street, Suite 6130
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2181 (Berman) – OPPOSE

Dear Assemblymember Berman,

On behalf of the City of Cupertino I am writing to express our opposition to AB 2181, which re-establishes the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) Board of Directors.

AB 2181 proposes to replace the VTA Board with a hybrid structure of community representatives and local elected representatives. This bill does not address VTA's governance issues, nor does it solve the issue of regional thinking as the bill only changes how the board members are selected. The bill removes current representation of VTA, reduces the role of local elected officials with policy making experience and oversight, and proposes to replace the County Supervisors with citizens possessing specified expertise. These changes remove representation of the regional transportation agency and may lead to fewer board representatives with expertise and experience in local land use issues – a policy that is increasingly impactful to transit and transportation planning. Additionally, the bill does not establish criteria for success.

Prescribing the number of elected and non-elected members reduces the chance that any particular small city within the four city groups will be represented on the Board at a specific time. It may also reduce the influence of small cities' elected officials on the VTA board. Furthermore, the bill eliminates provisions in some city groups' agreements that specify rotation schedules between cities, in favor of elections held across cities. The bill eliminates the cities' ability to select representation based on a city's unique issues and values and replaces the process with ranked choice voting. Consequently, this bill increases the role of VTA in selecting small city representatives instead of the current process of allowing cities and Counties to choose how they select their representatives.

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AB 2181 also eliminates the Alternate positions. The Alternates are a key component of how small city groups work and provide another way for a broader number of officials to participate in VTA proceedings. The impact of these changes will have long-lasting effects and undermine the principle of regional representation, which is balanced with the population, the VTA is based upon. For these reasons, the City of Cupertino opposes AB 2181.

Sincerely,



Darcy Paul
Mayor
City of Cupertino

cc: Senator Dave Cortese
Senator Josh Becker
Assemblymember Evan Low