



Metro News BULLETIN



Kids for Transit—Challengers Director Lou Dantzler and Educational Director Marshanette Pleasant coordinate letter-writing campaign. Youth club is part of regional coalition supporting federal transit funding.

Regional Transit Movement Gains Momentum

Local appeals for federal transit funding make impact on Capitol Hill

Businesses are calling. Mothers are wiring. Senior citizens are writing. Kids are mailing. People of all ages, incomes and communities have joined the blossoming countywide movement to preserve federal funding for public transit programs. All their communications are being channeled directly to President Reagan, asking him to reverse his Administration's proposal to eliminate assistance for transit operations in the FY'86 federal budget.

The private-sector movement is being coordinated by several local organizations whose members and constituents are largely dependent on public transportation. These persons—senior citizens, the handicapped, students and bus commuters—would be hit hardest if the Administration's proposals are accepted by Congress this year.

"Reduced services and higher fares would result from our losing these federal operating subsidies," notes Lou Dantzler, Executive Director of the South Central-based Challengers Boys' and Girls' Club. Many of his 1,000 youth members rely on public transit for basic needs. "Such increases will cause undue hardship on these kids and their parents. That's why my members and their parents have put together a letter-writing campaign to appeal to the President. We already have the support of our representatives in Washington and Sacramento, but they said there's nothing like the impact of grassroot support on an issue. So that's what Washington's going to get!"

Dantzler's club is just one of many organizations involved in the pro-transit movement. Others include groups and public officials in Los Angeles and outlying areas such as South Gate, Long Beach, the San Fernando Valley, the San Gabriel Valley, East Los Angeles, the Foothills and South Bay. (See sample statements on back.) Not only are they championing the cause of public transit in general, but also that of Metro Rail, the initial segment of the county's rail transit system. Without federal assistance, state and local sources would not be able to finance the construction of this vital backbone segment. The private sector understands this and realizes that Metro Rail's fate will be decided by the President, inasmuch as Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation have approved the project for immediate construction. But Budget Director David Stockman has withdrawn his earlier commitment.

While it is too early to determine the movement's ultimate impact on the Administration's budget proposals, White House sources note that thousands of letters, telegrams and phone calls have inundated the President's Oval Office.

According to support groups like the Greater Los Angeles Transportation Coalition, this is just the beginning. Other plans will be implemented over the next several weeks to demonstrate to Capitol Hill the wide scope of support that public transportation and Metro Rail have in the Los Angeles region.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

A sampling of broad-based public support

From the desert to the sea" may be the best way to describe the scope of regional support being demonstrated for federally funded transportation programs. The statements on this page are excerpted from formal letters and resolutions that have been directed to President Reagan and other key members of his Administration.

From the Mid-Cities Area:

"We share your desire to begin reducing the federal budget deficit. However, I question your Budget Director David Stockman's proposal to do so by eliminating all federal funding for developing new rail transit projects—especially one so **worthy of your support as the Los Angeles Metro Rail** . . . Each day's delay adds to the capital cost of the project, and as you well know, Los Angeles cannot afford to miss this now-or-never opportunity to finally develop a transit network that will significantly resolve our traffic problems."

—*Cities of Bell, Cudahy, Commerce, Compton, Norwalk, Paramount, Lynwood and Huntington Park.*

From the Foothills Area:

"Southern California has been in need of a comprehensive fixed rail system for many years. The matter has been studied and planned over and over. It is now time to act . . . **We strongly urge immediate action** . . . so that this project can be started at the earliest possible date."

—*Glendale Chamber of Commerce.*

From the San Gabriel Valley:

"We support the development of a rail system in Los Angeles County . . . and realize that the Los Angeles Metro Rail is the backbone of the county rail system . . . **Federal funds are crucial to the project. We ask that you issue the Letter of Intent as soon as possible so we can move forward with the construction of the system.**"

—*City of Baldwin Park.*

"We strongly urge you to direct (Budget Director David) Stockman to **continue funding public transportation** and to allow Metro Rail to be constructed by releasing the Letter of Intent. There are 100,000 or more people riding the buses everyday in the San Gabriel Valley. Certainly you can understand their needs."

—*San Gabriel Valley Human Relations Committee.*

From the Local Student Body:

"Please approve the money for Metro Rail. And please don't cut transit subsidies. **Members of my family need public transportation** for education, for work and for shopping."

—*José Chin, Cathedral High School.*

From the Pomona Valley:

"We, the civic leaders, have long been in support of the building of the Metro Rail because **we are aware of opportunities and benefits to be derived** by the local communities both in the improvement of transit travel and, of course, the long-term economic benefits which will be generated due to this project."

—*City of Pomona.*

From the Wilshire Corridor:

"We join most other businesses and civic organizations and the citizenry of this area in **strongly supporting the Los Angeles Metro Rail Project**. On behalf of our membership of over 1,000 firms, we urge you to instruct Budget Director David Stockman to immediately sign the Letter of Intent so that the project can proceed on schedule."

—*Wilshire Chamber of Commerce.*

From the South Bay:

"We urge you and the Congress to retain the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, to **continue to provide both operating and capital project monies to public mass transportation systems, and continue to fund all new rail starts.**"

—*51st Assembly District Committee*

From the San Fernando Valley:

"We urge you to review Mr. Stockman's statements and to overrule his decisions. **The Metro Rail Project was approved by the Department of Transportation and funds exist to begin construction** . . . I urge you to endorse the federal government's continuing support of public transit."

—*Seniors Information and Referral Centers of the San Fernando Valley.*

From the Hollywood Area:

"Just when we're first in line for funding and ready to break ground (for Metro Rail), the Administration now is trying to put us on the shelf. **We've sat in traffic far too long and have paid enough gas taxes to build a system for every other major city in this country. Now it's our turn.**"

—*Hollywood Chamber of Commerce.*

From Downtown Los Angeles:

"Despite the obstacles we have faced, the **Metro Rail Project is still very much alive**. Both the business community and public officials wholeheartedly support this project, realizing that it is an essential component for the continued growth of our city."

—*Central City Association.*



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