

# California Legislature

## DON PERATA

RET. PRESIDENT PRO TEM

STATE SENATE

June 8, 2009

Chairman Scott Haggerty  
MTC  
1101 Eighth Street  
Oakland, Ca 94607

Dear Scott:

As the author of SB 916 – which placed regional Measure 2 on the ballot-, I must oppose the Oakland Airport Connector project. In short, the proposal is too much money for too little transit and economic value.

While the connector was included in the menu of RM2 transportation projects, that election was in 2004. *The world has since changed dramatically.* And so has the project. In 2003 when the project was proposed, only \$30M was needed to complete funding for the \$230M connector. In fact, we told the voters (in the ballot pamphlet) that this was “the final portion of funds needed for direct BART service” to the airport. Project costs now exceed \$300M and the RM2 dollars needed have quadrupled. Even more damning, the ridership predicted in 2003 has fallen substantially from 13,540 to fewer than 4500 by 2020. This fails any cost-benefit analysis *on its face.*

It seems prudent in light of these hard facts (as well as the national and state uncertain economy and the fiscal and debt troubles at the port of Oakland) to discontinue further action on the connector. While some will argue delays will only add cost, I argue construction of the BART airport extension is *unwarranted at all* in today’s market.

Elected representatives everywhere act as consistent with today’s realities; we cannot conduct public affairs as if the weak economy is simply a market correction. There is less tax dollars available and more competition than our generation has ever known. This requires strong fiscal discipline and hard choices. Whether the money comes from taxes, tolls or fees, it’s the *same pair of pants, only different pockets!*

I am unconvinced an Oakland Airport Connector is the highest and best use of available transit money – even assuming potential millions from the federal government stimulus program. Washington bureaucrats don’t know any better; we should. Conditions have changed. Express busses through synchronized traffic lights, BART around the bay and (my personal favorite) all-bay commuter ferry service are superior uses of limited capital transit funds. The public and posterity are watching us carefully. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Don Perata