

Monterey-Salinas Transit District (Carl Sedoryk)

Monterey-Salinas Transit District (MST) is the sole public transit operator in Monterey County and provides transit service into Santa Cruz, Santa Clara and San Luis Obispo counties.

MST opposes the proposed amendment due to their impact on the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and the programs it supports. MST depends on these programs to provide safe, clean, and affordable public transit to the low-income residents within the disadvantaged communities we serve.

Public transit is one of the most effective tools for curbing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reducing an individual's carbon footprint by two tons annually, and greatly reducing Nitrogen Oxide emissions by reducing vehicle miles travelled in private vehicles, and adoption of renewable diesel and renewable energy for our rapidly growing fleet of battery electric buses.

From GGRF, MST has received \$35M of TIRCP funding providing local matching for federal investments to support construction of new facilities to support zero emission bus operations and maintenance. MST has a current grant application for a additional \$10M for the construction of a new fleet operations and maintenance facility in an economically disadvantaged area of our largest community of Salinas. From LCTOP, MST receives \$1.0M each year to support free transportation programs to provide local match for our zero-emission battery electric buses.

Currently, Monterey County unemployment stand at 10.6% more than double the state rate and Cap and Invest funds are supporting the jobs over 80 masons, carpenters, and heavy equipment operators. Ridership on MST buses are at a 110% of pre-COVID levels in our largest and most disadvantaged communities. Since the start of the Iran War and rapid rise in fuel prices, ridership on our services has increased 13% over the previous year as more and more of our low-income residents are priced out of operating their own private vehicles to get to work, medical appointments, and grocery stores.

All of these GGRF supported activities have resulted in meeting state air quality goals, creating and sustaining local jobs, and improving affordability for the most economically vulnerable populations.

MST opposes the proposed amendments due to the negative impacts the loss of GGRF funds will have on the most vulnerable members and negative impacts on GHG reductions and affordability. I urge your Board to postpone their adoption and release another 15-day amendment package that protects the GGRF programs and the constituents it serves.