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Date: 10/01/2013 02:47 PM
Subject: Protect Public Health, Sustainable Development: Support Transportation Alternatives for the 710-South and 710-North

Dear Long Beach Decision Makers and City Staff,

Day One is a community-based organization with a 25-year history of providing effective, culturally sensitive public health education, policy development and environmental prevention strategies. As an agency committed to improving the health and well-being of residents of the communities we serve, Day One is deeply concerned by the detrimental health implications of the proposed expansion of the South and North 710-freeway.

In particular, Day One is concerned by the proposed expansion of the north and south 710 in the following areas:

- **Air Quality/Health** - Over a decade of scientific research has linked air pollution from freeways and busy roadways to poor health outcomes, including asthma, impaired lung development, cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, premature birth weight, and autism. Expanding any freeway project in southern California, an urban region with some of the worst air quality in the United States, will only hinder efforts to address these serious public health problems. This is particularly the case for freeways with heavy truck traffic such as the 710.
- **Public Safety** - With gross weights over 10,000 pounds and lengths of up to 75 feet, trucks pose a serious danger to smaller road users. In 2008 it was estimated that 1 in 9 traffic fatalities resulted from a collision involving a large truck (NHTSA, 2008). Of these fatalities, 74% were the occupants of another vehicle, 10% were non-occupants, and 16% occupants of the truck itself. In short, reducing superfluous truck trips (e.g., non local trips for port cargo) by transporting cargo via rail would significantly benefit the safety of other road users, as well as alleviate wear and tear on the roadway itself.
- **Opportunity Cost of a \$5-15 billion dollar transportation project** - At a time when there is increasing public support and demand for transportation alternatives, the limited taxpayer dollars available for transportation infrastructure should be spent judiciously. Even in a best case scenario the tunnel option would require a massive investment of scarce transit dollars, dollars that could otherwise be used to expedite the development of projects that enjoy broad public support, including the Metro Gold Line Extensions to Ontario and Whittier, the "Subway to the Sea", and the "[JEM](#)" line linking the Westside and San Fernando Valley. Funding saved from a "Big Dig" tunnel project could also be used to further expand and augment the region's growing transit network via the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit lines connecting to Metro Rail. In short, the high price tag of a tunnel and freeway widening would inherently slow efforts to transform Southern California into a region composed of pedestrian-friendly communities linked by a convenient, multi-modal transit system.

Recommendations

Rather than spend billions on a 4.5 mile toll tunnel and freeway expansion that will benefit few and burden many, Day One urges decision makers to acknowledge the many inherent community health and safety impacts and invest in 21st century solutions, such as:

- Investment in ship-to-rail technologies at the ports (e.g., [GRID Project](#))
- Electrification and expansion of the freight rail system in LA County
- Expansion of the Metro's existing transit network:
 - Metro Gold Line Extensions to Ontario Airport and Whittier
 - Light Rail connecting Metro Gold Line in Pasadena to Red Line in the San Fernando Valley
 - Light Rail loop connecting the growing Metro rail "spoke" system.
 - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines in the San Gabriel Valley

Supporting Healthier, More Active Communities

Transportation planning decisions directly shape the form and function of our built environment, and thereby the health of our communities. For the past sixty years elected officials invested in projects that resulted in sedentary lifestyles and poor health outcomes. Fortunately we as a region have begun to (re)invest in multi-modal solutions that help integrate physical activity into the lives of County residents. Yet the question remains whether we will accelerate the transition to a more pedestrian, transit and bike-friendly Los Angeles County, or take a step backwards by funding an enormously expensive highway project that will more greatly benefit those able to afford its tolls. Day One urges local decision makers to focus limited resources on expanding public transit options, repairing existing infrastructure, and encouraging alternative, more sustainable forms of transportation. The time has come to make healthier choices and lifestyles easier for Southern Californians.

Sincerely,

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Day One builds vibrant, healthy cities by advancing public health, empowering youth, and igniting change.