

TO: MP&L Committee

DATE: April 28, 2011

FROM: Rick Ramacier
General Manager

SUBJECT: Support SB582- Emmerson

Background

This is a sponsored bill by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the California Transit Association (CTA) that would authorize MTC in partnership with Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) to adopt a commute benefit ordinance that requires employers with 20 or more employees to offer certain commute benefits.

Examples would include:

- Giving employees the option to pay for their transit, vanpooling or bicycling expenses with pre-tax dollars, as allowed by federal law.
- Offering employees a transit or vanpool subsidy.
- Provide employees with a free shuttle or vanpool operated by or for the employer.
This legislation would create additional incentives to use and support public transit through largely private means.

Analysis

The County Connection already provides this benefit option to its employees through participation in the regional Commuter Check program and by providing an employee shuttle between the our bus yard and the North Concord/Martinez BART Station. Thus, County Connection would incur no additional cost relative to this legislation.

This legislation though would provide additional incentives for commuters to use transit within our service area as well as provide a catalyst for additional business to replicate some of the things Sunset Development (Bishop Ranch) does with us. Places like Shadelands or other large employers may find it more compelling to assist us in providing transit services to their employees should SB582 pass. Thus, it is likely that County Connection ridership and possibly private financial assistance would increase under SB582.

It does not appear that SB582 would change our existing and successful relationship with Bishop Ranch.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that County Connection support SB582 for the reasons noted above. Thus, we request that you forward a recommendation to support SB582 to the Board of Directors.