



June 15, 2020

TO: Members, California State Senate

RE: SB 1373 (Bates) – OPPOSE (May 19 version)

South Orange County Economic Coalition (SOCEC) is the leading voice of business in South County and is the driving force of advocating for a strong local economy. We focus on four key areas: advocacy, education, representation and progress for South Orange County issues, and projects. That said, we are committed to supporting important transportation infrastructure needed within our region to keep people, goods and services moving within the County.

Therefore, SOCEC is opposed to SB 1373 (Bates), because it places the recently adopted regional solution at risk.

The Transportation Corridor Agencies is a public joint powers authority that oversees the Orange County Toll Road system. The TCA Board, which is made up of 23 local elected officials representing 18 cities and three county supervisorial districts, have written a letter opposing SB 1373. On March 12, 2020, TCA unanimously approved the initial analysis that allowed the environmental study to be conducted exclusively on Alternative 22, which would connect Los Patrones Parkway to Avenida La Pata, a County-built road. SB 1373 could limit TCA's ability to fund this arterial improvement, which would provide regional traffic relief and an alternate route to the often-congested I-5 freeway. Even the City of San Clemente has stated its support for Alternative 22.

Any and all potential routes connecting Los Patrones Parkway to the I-5 freeway have been removed from consideration. Yet, SB 1373 would change the State Highway System and set a second precedent (along with the 710 Freeway gap in South Pasadena) that would strengthen the ability for small NIMBY groups to create local land use designations that would halt regionally beneficial transportation projects.

This legislation supersedes and interferes with the transportation decisions that have been made at the local level and will be funded at the local level. Further, SB 1373 has the potential of expanding existing litigation and creating new litigation, which would further strain local resources. While TCA and its member cities, in collaboration with OCTA and Caltrans, have made efforts to de-escalate tensions, SB 1373 threatens to escalate tensions through the courts.

There is no need for state legislation when local agencies have already reached a consensus and solution. SOCEC asks you to OPPOSE SB 1373.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara J. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara J. Thomas,
Interim Executive Director