



**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT**

300 Lakeside Drive, P.O. Box 12688  
Oakland, CA 94604-2688  
(510) 464-6000

2020

December 11, 2020

Lateefah Simon  
PRESIDENT

Mark Foley  
VICE PRESIDENT

Robert Powers  
GENERAL MANAGER

**DIRECTORS**

Debora Allen  
1ST DISTRICT

Mark Foley  
2ND DISTRICT

Rebecca Saltzman  
3RD DISTRICT

Robert Raburn, Ph.D.  
4TH DISTRICT

John McPartland  
5TH DISTRICT

Elizabeth Ames  
6TH DISTRICT

Lateefah Simon  
7TH DISTRICT

Janice Li  
8TH DISTRICT

Bevan Duffy  
9TH DISTRICT

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Democratic Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART), we write to urge Congress and the Administration to take swift action in passing a COVID-19 emergency relief bill before the end of the lame-duck session. The new \$908 billion bipartisan framework that includes \$15 billion for public transit offers hope for short-term funding, but immediate action must be taken to save public transit systems such as BART from an imminent financial cliff.

Since mid-March, BART has taken a data driven, strategic approach to weather the unprecedented storm brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have prioritized the safety of our riders and employees and continue to operationalize a comprehensive 15-Step Welcome Back Plan. We are running long trains with enough space for social distancing, disinfecting all active train cars each day before service begins, and our cars circulate fresh air every 70 seconds.

Even with such measures in place, daily weekday ridership is still down 87% and we know our path to regaining ridership will be a slow climb. To ensure that BART is on the strongest fiscal footing possible, we are taking actions now to reduce costs annually, maximize efficiencies, and streamline our operations. This includes an ongoing hiring freeze, load shedding service dependent staff to capital projects, offering a voluntary retirement incentive to 40% of our workforce, and agreeing to a new three-year labor contract with our three largest unions to bolster our financial stability and predictability.

BART is now facing a \$210 million budget deficit in the current fiscal year and next. We are committed to doing our part to be fiscally responsible, but without additional federal support, BART will almost certainly be required to drastically curtail service and make deeper budget cuts. Such actions would damage BART's ability to scale-up service when the economy rebounds and have long-term impacts on the region's ability to meet mobility, social equity, and climate goals.

We strongly support the \$32 billion for public transit included in the updated HEROES Act and hope the current efforts around a \$908 billion proposal are only a stopgap for more action early next year. Federal support for public transportation in the next relief package is necessary to secure transit's future and avoid catastrophic decisions that will hurt our riders, our communities, and the nation.

Sincerely,

Lateefah Simon  
President

Robert Powers  
General Manager