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December 11, 2020

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
San Francisco City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place,
San Francisco, CA 9410

Re: Prioritizing SFMTA in the City Budget

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to you on behalf of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce regarding The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA) devastating budget deficit and worker layoffs. Public transportation is an essential facet of any progressive city and will be critical to San Francisco's economic recovery. Unfortunately, the current state of public transit in our City is dire and the budget deficits and resulting layoffs and cutbacks will impact workers and the local economy as a whole. **It is crucial that the Board of Supervisors prioritizes ensuring SFMTA has the resources necessary to maintain adequate operations and weather the COVID-19 crisis.**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, SFMTA fare revenues are down 95% and service hours have been reduced by 30%. SFMTA now has to consider laying off up to 22% of their workforce as they face a budget deficit of at least \$68 million this fiscal year - and a potential \$168 million budget deficit next fiscal year. This massive deficit will cripple the existing Muni system and impede San Francisco's overall economic recovery.

We cannot overlook the fact that SFMTA workers and Muni services are a large part of what physically gets our essential workers to their jobs. Many essential small businesses depend on a workforce that is reliant on public transportation to commute each day. It is critical that we continue to support our majority minority-owned small businesses and the jobs they support. While many workers have the ability to work remotely in the current situation, a majority of our City's essential and frontline workers are still required to be physically present at their workplaces. We must ensure that our essential workers have reliable, safe and affordable modes of transportation in order to support the critical work and services they provide.

Public transportation itself is an essential service of any progressive city, and as such is crucial to San Francisco's goals. This essential need must be reflected in our city budget, and its integrity prioritized before expansion or introduction of other city programs. While federal aid may be on its way, it is not clear when or to what extent and perhaps not in time to rescue our public transportation system. As we cannot count on outside resources, we urge you to make the tough decisions needed to allocate funds in the 2021 budget for the continued operations of SFMTA.

Our city's small businesses, residents, families and institutions have had to make tough decisions each day during this pandemic, and resulting recession, in order to protect what is most important. They all rely on our public transportation system to some extent, and our city needs to take the leadership to protect this vital piece of infrastructure. **As we close out 2020 and enter another year of the pandemic, we need our city leadership to put residents' most essential needs first by responsibly allocating the tax revenues available. Our membership urges you to prioritize SFMTA in the 2021 budget to support residents, workers, small businesses and our eventual economic recovery.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Rodney Fong
CEO and President
The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce

CC: Clerk of the Board; Full Board of Supervisors; Mayor London Breed; Office of the Mayor;
Director Joaquín Torres, OEWD; SFMTA Board and Staff