



September 3, 2020

VIA Email to the Office of the Governor and Author

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 288 (Wiener) – CEQA Exemptions: Transportation-related projects –
REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The League of Women Voters of California writes to request your signature on SB 288 (Weiner). The legislation will accelerate common-sense and sustainable transportation projects. Specifically, SB 288 makes it easier to build the following: pedestrian safety projects, bicycle lanes and facilities, new bus, bus rapid transit, and light rail that operate in existing public rights of way and that do not add new auto capacity.

Transportation is the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in California at over 40% of emissions. The pandemic and its social distancing requirements has dealt a devastating blow to public transportation, and it is critical that we move quickly to improve bus and light rail service, while making it safer to walk and cycle to avoid dramatic increases in congestion and emissions. SB 288 creates more certainty for these critical and time-sensitive projects, reducing costs and delay at a time when California needs them most. It would also create jobs, while still providing for a robust public commenting process above what is currently required by CEQA. This expansion of CEQA exemptions is effective in achieving these goals while not undercutting CEQA and the commitment to environmental safety and justice.

SB 288 adds important provisions to expand public participation early in a project and when it is most meaningful. For large projects, these include:

1. Requiring lead agencies to host at least three public meetings to weigh in on the project prior to receiving an exemption, along with ongoing meetings during construction;
2. Requiring a racial equity analysis to identify where significant or disproportionate impacts exist, and identify strategies, designs, or actions to mitigate those impacts;

3. Requiring a project “business case”, an international best practice that provides communities with a way to engage with defining the project goals and community needs to shape the project from the very beginning, not just during the engineering and design phases.

The League of Women Voters of California actively supports efforts to fight climate change, as well as robust engagement with the community to address community feedback and equity concerns.

The League of Women Voters of California urges your signature on SB 288 to make sustainable transportation a central part of California's full recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Carol Moon Goldberg
President