

November 26, 2018

Chair Mary Nichols and Members of the Board
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street, P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812-2815

Re: Trolley Buses and the Innovative Clean Transit Standard

Dear Chair Nichols and Members of the Board:

Thank you for the continued progress towards achieving a zero-emission bus future in California. We continue to support the proposed Innovative Clean Transit standard despite modifications to the rule over the course of its development which could delay the rollout of zero-emission buses across the state. The proposed standard reflects the input of countless stakeholders during three years of public workshops. We urge the Board's adoption of this standard as soon as possible.

We are writing in response to "Modifications to the Proposed Regulation Order," released on November 9 that would award the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency ("Muni") zero-emission bus credits for their electric trolley buses. We believe the proposed allotment of credits fairly recognizes the clean air and climate benefits of these buses without compromising the intent of the standard to achieve a complete transition to zero-emission buses by 2040.

As of 2017, Muni's fleet consists of 262 zero-emission trolley buses (roughly 30 percent of the agency's total bus fleet) that are powered by electricity from overhead wires. This is the largest trolley bus fleet in the country and has been in operation since 1941. Because Muni's electricity comes exclusively from hydroelectric power, these buses represent a carbon-free mode of transportation.

While most transit agencies have moved away from trolley buses, Muni has continued to maintain and upgrade its fleet. In 2017, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors authorized Muni's acquisition of 185 40-foot trolley buses to replace aging vehicles. We believe it is fair for Muni to be recognized in the Innovative Clean Transit standard for its recommitment to these zero-emission vehicles.

The proposed modifications to the Innovative Clean Transit standard would award Muni a one-tenth zero-emission bus credit per electric trolley bus put into service between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019. These credits would expire on December 31, 2024.

The proposed modifications would result in an estimated 18 zero-emission bus credits for Muni, which is similar to the number of credits earned by other leading transit agencies that have been early adopters of battery and fuel cell electric buses. As with other credits, these would not be transferrable to other transit agencies and would not count towards the requirements for the waiver of initial bus purchase requirements in 2023 and 2024.

Trolley buses are distinct from both light and heavy rail modes of transportation. Even though rail cars are also powered by electricity, they should not be awarded zero-emission bus credits in the Innovative Clean Transit standard. Muni also operates light rail trains yet has not requested credits for their operation.

Earlier this year, Muni committed to an all zero-emission bus fleet by 2035, five years ahead of CARB's goal for a statewide transition. UCS, Earthjustice, and Brightline were amongst several organizations

whose engagement with Muni led to this commitment and we applaud the agency for its statewide and national leadership in setting this target.

Muni has committed to purchasing only zero-emission buses beginning in 2025. With typical bus lifespans of 12 years and longer, Muni has also committed to converting hybrid diesel-electric buses already in its fleet to full battery electric vehicles to reconcile the 2025 purchase commitment and 12-year vehicle lifespan with the 2035 fleet transition goal. As organizations that will hold Muni accountable for its 2035 commitment through accelerated purchase of battery or fuel cell electric buses if the conversion of hybrid electric buses proves impractical, we support CARB's proposal that zero-emission credits for trolley buses expire at the end of 2024.

We think CARB's proposed level of credits fully recognizes Muni's exceptional leadership in providing zero-emission bus transportation without unfairly awarding more credits than agencies operating battery and fuel cell electric vehicles. The expiration of credits also helps ensure Muni remains on track to achieve its commitment to an all zero-emission fleet by 2035.

We applaud Muni for its simultaneous pursuit of trolley buses and an initial roll out of nine battery electric buses in the next year. And we look forward to working with Muni to adopt even more zero-emission buses in the coming years.

Sincerely,

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