From: Paul Theiss
To: Drew Nichols
Subject: Public Comment for 6-6-24 Highway 37 Meeting
Date: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 12:06:21 PM

EXTERNAL

My name is Paul Theiss. I'm from Vallejo, a constituent of Supervisor Hannigan, Mayor McConnell, Assemblymember Wilson, Senator Dodd, and Congressman Garamendi, and I speak for 8,000 members of the Sierra Club's Redwood Chapter.
We commend Caltrans and allied agencies for their plans to restore thousands of acres of wetlands. We support efforts to expand mass transit with HOV lanes for carpools, vanpools and buses.

However, we think the plan needs improvement in two respects: first, the HOV lanes should not be restricted to the segment between Vallejo and 121, but rather extend from Mare Island to Novato; and second, improve tolling equity.

1. Restricting the HOV lanes to Segment B will create additional crunch points for people in shared vehicles. People who join car- or vanpools should be protected from the westbound morning bottleneck which will move toward Novato due to the creation of an HOV lane for traffic between Mare Island and Sears Point.
2. Tolling the general-purpose lanes ONLY between Vallejo and Sears Point is inequitable, continuing a pattern of discrimination which has excluded many lower income people from living closer to work in Marin and Sonoma counties. As the plan stands, travellers to the wine county from the wealthier western counties will get their road raised without cost, while Solano and Napa workers commuters will pay extra for the privilege. Even in lower cost Vallejo, 18% of households already pay more than 50% of their income for shelter. They're stretched to the breaking point. Tolling with lower income discounts across the whole project can fund vanpools and buses. Tolling structures already charge for travel along Bay Area freeways: why not here? Our elected officials could help make legislative adjustments, if needed, to ensure tolling equity and adequate mass transit for all income levels.

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