



October 30, 2023

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Board Administration
One Gateway Plaza
MS: 99-3-1
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Metro Board of Directors,

We are writing to enthusiastically support implementation of congestion pricing in general and in Los Angeles County in particular.

The League recognizes [mobility as a basic human need](#) while supporting measures to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), carbon emissions, auto-dependence, pollution and congestion¹². “Planning for transportation should promote strategies to influence travel behavior, such as fees, taxes, and tolls, combined with mitigation measures for low income persons.”

The devil is always in the details, and we understand the importance of identifying disparate impacts and weighing trade-offs. But the League would also like the region to consider the inequity of the status quo and delaying action.

Furthermore, the [California Legislative Analyst’s Office reports](#) that³, while the [California Air Resources Board 2022 Scoping Plan](#)⁴ (to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions) has selected a target to reduce VMT by 25% by 2030, CARB has no clear plan of how to achieve it.

¹ <https://lwvc.org/our-work/positions/position-climate-change>

² <https://lwvc.org/position/transportation>

³ <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4656>

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<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/ab-32-climate-change-scoping-plan/2022-scoping-plan-documents>



A [CARB Policy Brief about Induced Travel and Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) wrote that carpool-only approaches don't work. "Adding transit capacity does not help to reduce congestion, as any freed up capacity is consumed by additional driving⁵." But [another CARB Policy Brief about Road User Pricing](#)⁶ shows that there is strong evidence to support that congestion pricing will reduce vehicle use, emissions and congestion.

Adopting congestion pricing and using the money raised from it to improve transit and car-free mobility is a win-win. It provides something that is not currently available at any price, congestion-free travel and predictable travel times; while also reducing air pollution in environmental justice communities. This will be a boon for contractors and commercial drivers and improve their productivity and earnings.

In crafting a congestion pricing policy, it's important to keep in mind that it will only be effective if it applies to a broad population. If too many people are given exemptions, then mode shift during peak times will be minimal. Lower income people are already more likely to carpool, to use transit, and to commute to jobs at off-peak times. FasTrak is already capable of charging variable amounts by time of use and number of passengers in a vehicle. The negative impact of congestion pricing on lower income travelers is already blunted by their personal behavior (sharing commuting costs by carpooling), and can be further mitigated with policies that reward people for carpooling.

⁵ [Duranton, G. and M.A. Turner. \(2011\). The Fundamental Law of Road Congestion: Evidence from US Cities. American Economic Review, 101, 2616-2652.](#)

⁶

https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Impacts_of_Road_User_Pricing_on_Passenger_Vehicle_Use_and_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Policy_Brief.pdf



We realize that policy implementation requires careful study, and urge you to start the planning study without delay. Furthermore, we hope you set a clear and short deadline for study by using existing research from UCLA⁷, CARB and the US Department of Transportation⁸. Finally, we urge you to avoid the predatory delay of multiple rounds of public engagement before our [greenhouse gas emissions budget runs out](#)⁹.

Sincerely,

Margo Reeg,

President
Los Angeles County League of Women Voters
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⁷ [Manville, M., Pierce, G., & Graveline, B. \(2022\). Guardrails on Priced Lanes: Protecting Equity While Promoting Efficiency. UCLA: Institute of Transportation Studies. Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2rj35891](#)

⁸ <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/congestionpricing/index.htm>

⁹ [Lamboll, R.D., Nicholls, Z.R.J., Smith, C.J. et al. Assessing the size and uncertainty of remaining carbon budgets. Nat. Clim. Chang. \(2023\). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-023-01848-5](#)