



August 7, 2020

The Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: California Transportation Commission Appointments

Dear Governor Newsom:

Thank you for the two new appointments you made this year to the California Transportation Commission (CTC). We appreciate you taking these initial bold steps ensuring that our state's transportation decisionmakers better reflect our climate, equity, and sustainability goals and mandates. However, there is still much more work to be done – especially for our most vulnerable and marginalized low-income communities of color as they remain almost exclusively outside the purview of the CTC. Moreover, it is clear that the CTC remains a state agency under your authority that directly conflicts with your stated priorities of overhauling the transportation sector, while ensuring environmental justice. Your CTC appointment authority is a concrete way to meet your commitments of decreasing carbon **and** inequality.

This letter comes from a place of grave concern – that without a community-engaged and innovative CTC, California will fail at meeting its vital climate, social equity, and public health goals. Despite your two recent appointments, the CTC needs more leaders who can speak from and for communities that are experiencing the dire consequences of direct and indirect vehicle-caused pollution and its negative social costs. The CTC needs leaders who understand the tremendous benefits of multi-modal transportation, and the needs of core transit-dependent populations.

The CTC's limited leadership on not only climate and air quality issues, but also environmental and transportation justice, is a critical signal that commissioner diversity and expertise is lacking. Representation on the existing commission is failing our state. California needs commissioners with the following values and experience in order to meet the state's climate, equity, and health goals:

- Strong commitment to transportation justice¹ and improving our transportation system for low-income and communities of color, including access, mobility, and transportation-based pollution burden;
- Strong understanding of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission impacts, and related vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction strategies, and the connection to planning and implementation of the transportation network to meet state targets;
- Deep understanding of the needs of core transit-dependent populations, and the benefits of multi-modal transportation including walking and biking;
- Knowledge of the impacts of limited transportation options and long commute times, especially as they relate to socio-economic factors and social mobility.

We strongly urge you to take this opportunity to help the state meet our state goals by adding more commissioners that represent these viewpoints. **To this end, we are recommending five individuals (please see attached as Appendix A, 2020 CTC Commissioner Candidates).**

¹ Transportation justice entails an affordable, accessible, sustainable, clean, efficient, and safe transportation system that provides the greatest mobility and safety benefits and other co-benefits to our most vulnerable residents, while protecting them from harm. It requires that a fair share of transportation funding be set aside to meet the needs that underserved and overburdened communities identify as priorities, and that transportation investments generally avoid harming those communities.

All five individuals have applied online using the Appointments Application; we urge you to learn more about each of them and we offer any supplementary support you might need to get to know them and what they would bring to the CTC. We endorse these individuals for their wide-ranging transportation expertise — specifically those areas mentioned above that focus on environmental and transportation justice, public health, and sustainable modes² of transportation.

Despite the strong appointments you have made in the state transportation sector, in addition to Executive Order N-19-19, the transportation sector continues to be a major blind spot and requires significant transformation. ³ California has ambitious climate and equity goals but has yet to attempt a more necessary transformation in the way the state plans, invests, and implements our transportation system.⁴ We have seen almost no action to remedy long-standing injustices maintained and perpetuated by our state’s transportation planning, budgetary, and policy decision-making.

It is well documented that the majority of our state’s GHG emissions and air pollution are from mobile sources (i.e. the transportation sector) that disproportionately harm low-income populations and people of color. Now is the time to think more broadly about transforming transportation policy decision-making. **We desperately need commissioners who understand the climate and air quality impacts of our transportation investments and who are willing to reassess how transportation decisions are made and funded.**

If we want to achieve our state’s ambitious climate and equity goals, we need coordinated, holistic state action. **Your appointment authority on the CTC can continue to provide significant leadership on climate change, air quality, and social, economic, and environmental justice.** Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. We look forward to contributing our experience and expertise to this very important process.

Sincerely,

Jared Sanchez, Senior Policy Advocate
California Bicycle Coalition

Jonathan Matz, California Senior Policy Manager
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Nailah Pope-Harden, Policy Advocate

Julia Randolph, Policy and Outreach Associate

² Current CTC commissioners’ understanding of and support for sustainable modes of transportation is limited to single-occupancy electric vehicles, but we know from CARB’s *2017 Scoping Plan Update* and recent *2018 Progress Report of California’s Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act* that electric vehicles are insufficient to meet environmental goals. Therefore, we define sustainable modes of transportation as necessarily including non-single-occupancy vehicle modes, such as walking, biking, carpooling and public transit -- all modes which are severely underrepresented on the CTC.

³ We are encouraged by recent changes in direction. However, these changes are solely insufficient in terms of actually transforming the way transportation funding is allocated which is significantly under the control of the CTC.

⁴ This has been most notably discussed in detail by the state’s Air Resources Board (ARB) in its publication of the *2018 Progress Report of California’s Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act*, mandated by SB 150 (Allen). See here: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/Final2018Report_SB150_112618_02_Report.pdf

ClimatePlan

Christy Zamani, Executive Director
Day One

Wes Reutimann, Organizer
Pasadena Environmental Advocates

Bryn Lindblad, Deputy Director
Climate Resolve

David Diaz, Executive Director
ActiveSGV

Matthew Baker, Policy Director
Planning & Conservation League

Cecilia V. Estolano, CEO
Estolano Advisors

Ruben Aronin, Senior Vice President
Better World Group

Michael Schneider
Founder, Streets For All

Coalition for Clean Air

Carolynn Johnson, West Coast Program Manager
Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

Jennifer Savage, California Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Kevin Hamilton, Founder
Center California Asthma Collaborative

Julia Jordan, Policy Coordinator
Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability

Melissa Romero, Legislative Affairs Manager
California League of Conservation Voters

Rico Mastrodonato, Government Relations Director
Trust for Public Lands

Laura Raymond, Director
Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles

Cc: Ronda Paschal, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor
Stuart Thompson, Chief Deputy Appointments Secretary, Office of Governor
Veronica Ortiz-Torres, Deputy Appointments Secretary, Office of Governor
David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
Toks Omishakin, Director, California Department of Transportation
Kate Gordon, Director, Office of Planning and Research
Susan Bransen, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission

Appendix A. 2020 CTC Commissioner Candidates⁵

Orange County

Michele Martinez

Michele served for twelve years as Councilmember in the City of Santa Ana, CA (2006-2018). During this time, she became the first council member to serve as President of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), the first council member to serve as President of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the youngest woman to serve as the Mayor Pro Tem for the City of Santa Ana.

Michele Martinez is considered one of the nation's political change agent leaders of her time and is recognized for her reputation as an effective regional public policy leader, her understanding and knowledge of government and its political dimension in California, fostering innovation and data-driven policy decision-making, and her ability to connect the dots to build thriving communities that put people first, and lastly, her regional cutting-edge approach on advancing policies and solutions to the unique and complex challenges in navigating the regulatory and political environment in housing, water, air, transportation, economic development, land-use/ zoning, and technology.

Using her 15 years of public policy experience and her influence as a regional and national leader Michele has drawn on her experience as a former elected official and her extensive network of relationships to support her life's purpose to put people first and create healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities and to collaborate with municipalities, private and non-profit sector to identify and scale viable 21st century solutions.

Since leaving public office Michele has been volunteering her time by serving as a pro-bono policy advisor for federal court judge David O. Carter on the issue of homelessness for North and Central Orange County, and within a year of her involvement Orange County has constructed 8 shelters and 2 more are in the pipeline and should be completed by the end of 2020. With Michele's leadership and her regional relationships and networks she was also able to scale across regions to help other cities with homelessness. The City of Bellflower and the City of Whittier are the first two cities outside of Orange County to enter and settle into the Orange County homeless lawsuit to provide emergency shelters. Furthermore, Michele was recently appointed by U.S.District Judge David O. Carter to serve as a Special Master on the

⁵ Candidates are listed by geographic region they represent and then in alphabetical order by last name.

issues of homelessness, and the specific lawsuit by the Alliance for Human Rights against the City and County of Los Angeles regarding homelessness.

Michael Méndez, PhD, MCP

Assistant Professor, School of Social Ecology, Department of Urban Planning and Public Policy

University of California, Irvine

Dr. Michael Mendez is an assistant professor of environmental policy and planning at the University of California, Irvine. He previously was the inaugural James and Mary Pinchot Faculty Fellow in Sustainability Studies at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Michael has more than a decade of senior-level experience in the public and private sectors, where he consulted and actively engaged in the policymaking process. This included working for the California State Legislature as a senior consultant, lobbyist, gubernatorial appointee, and as vice chair of the Sacramento City Planning Commission.

During his time at UC Irvine and Yale, he has contributed to state and national research policy initiatives, including serving as an advisor to a California Air Resources Board member, and as a participant of the U.S. Global Change Research Program's workgroup on "Climate Vulnerability and Social Science Perspectives." Most recently, Michael was appointed by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to the Board on Environmental Change and Society (BECS). He also serves as a panel reviewer for the National Academies of Sciences' Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP).

Michael holds three degrees in environmental planning and policy, including a PhD from UC Berkeley's Department of City and Regional Planning, and a graduate degree from MIT. His research on the intersection of climate change and communities of color has been featured in national publications including Urban Land (published by the Urban Land Institute); the Natural Resources Defense Fund Annual Report; the American Planning Association's Planning Magazine; Green 2.0: Leadership at Work; USA Today; and Fox Latino News. His new book "Climate Change from the Streets," published through Yale University Press (2020), is an urgent and timely story of the contentious politics of incorporating environmental justice into global climate change policy.

Dr. Mojgan (Mo) Sami, PhD

Assistant Professor of Health Equity, California State University Fullerton

Application ID #80219

Mojgan (Mo) Sami, PhD, is currently an Assistant Professor of Health Equity at California State University Fullerton. She studies the nexus between urban planning, public health, social equity and climate change. Her current research on structural determinants of health includes projects in active transportation (walking, biking, skateboarding, assistive devices and micro-mobility), access to safe places for physical activity, and environmental justice. She is often working with

community organizations and youth as an academic ally for mobility justice and health equity. She serves as the Vice President of the Board of Directors of California Walks, an organization dedicated to creating mobility spaces for people of all ages and abilities. Prior to her academic career, Dr. Sami worked in global health and development, including positions at the World Health Organization and the World Bank. She is an advisory member of the Health and Environment committee in the Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) at the World Health Organization, and serves on an international working group for Planetary Health with the International Union for Public Health and Education.

Los Angeles Area

Marlon G. Boarnet

Professor and Chair, University of Southern California

CTC Appointment Application ID: 78374

Marlon Boarnet is Professor of Public Policy and Chair of the Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis in the Sol Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California. The department's degree programs include one of the nation's oldest and largest Master of Urban Planning degrees, a new online Executive Master of Urban Planning degree, the undergraduate B.S. in Urban Studies and Planning, and the department participates in the school's Ph.D. degrees in Urban Planning and Development and in Public Policy and Management. Boarnet is also president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, the scholarly association of university planning departments and faculty members in the United States. Prior to becoming department chair in 2016, he served as Vice Dean for Academic Affairs in USC's Price School from 2014 through 2015. Boarnet served as Director of Graduate Programs in Urban Planning and Development at USC Price from 2012 through 2015, and was chair of the Department of Policy, Planning, and Design at UC-Irvine from 2003 through 2006.

Boarnet's research focuses on land use and transportation, links between land use and travel behavior and associated implications for public health and greenhouse gas emissions, urban growth patterns, and the economic impacts of transportation infrastructure. He is a fellow of the Weimer School of the Homer Hoyt Institute for Real Estate, and he is a fellow of the Regional Science Association International. Boarnet has advised California state agencies on greenhouse gas emission reduction in the transport sector, the World Bank on transportation access as a poverty reduction tool, and numerous public and private entities. He has been principal investigator on over three million dollars of funded research, supported by agencies that include the U.S. and California Departments of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the California Policy Research Center, the California Air Resources Board, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Boarnet's academic web page is: <https://priceschool.usc.edu/people/marlon-boarnet/>.

Destiny Thomas
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Thrivance Group
CTC Appointment Application ID: 78326

Dr. Destiny Thomas is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Thrivance Group. An Anthropologist Planner from Oakland, CA, Dr. Thomas, has 6 years of experience working in a Project Manager capacity within government agencies. These roles include Caltrans (Environmental Planner) and the City of Los Angeles (Transportation Planner).

In addition to this, Dr. Thomas has 8 years of experience leading key advancements in racial equity initiatives across the state by way of community organizing, policy writing, and non-profit management in communities that have been most impacted by racial inequities.

Areas of interest include: racial equity, implementing the "dignity-infused community engagement" methodology, anti-displacement studies, healing environmental and infrastructural trauma, and bolstering agency and voice in marginalized communities within municipal planning processes. In 2020, Dr. Thomas launched a culturally rooted, trauma-informed enterprise geared toward building capacity for these values within municipal agencies, direct service providers, and advocacy organizations.

Dr. Thomas earned a BA in Political Science from Fisk University in 2006, an MPA with an emphasis in Public Health and Non Profit Management from Tennessee State University in 2008, and a PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the California Institute of Integral Studies in 2016. She is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated