

California Environmental Justice Groups Oppose Proposition 1B – the Air Pollution, Sprawl and Highway Robbery Bond

For Immediate Release

For more information:

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Urban Habitat Program in Oakland, the Labor/Community Strategy Center and Bus Riders Union in Los Angeles, Environmental Health Coalition in San Diego and the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties announced their opposition to the Transportation bond, Proposition 1B. While each group opposes the bond for different reasons, these diverse groups from across California have come together to voice opposition to Proposition 1B.

Five Good to Reasons to Oppose Proposition 1B:

#1: Proposition 1B will drain money from critical social services! This \$20 Billion Bond is the biggest in California's history. General Obligation Bonds are loans from wealthy lenders to the State. They are paid back with interest from the general fund. Every year when the bill comes due, the legislature pays the interest and principal with funds that are needed for schools, hospitals, and social services. It's a credit card for the rich, but the public pays the finance charges.

#2: Proposition 1B is a dream for the highway, auto and trucking lobby, a nightmare for our lungs. At least \$14 billion of this bond/tax will go towards highway and road construction. More cars and trucks. More asthma, emphysema and cancer. More global warming. We need to focus on Smart Growth Programs and Transportation-Oriented Developments- not highway and port expansion. The trucking industry should pay to repair the roads that their 18 wheelers tear up.

#3: Proposition 1B funnels public money to private corporations. The main beneficiaries of this bond are the corporations who rely on trucks, trains, ships and other cargo-handling equipment to move and sell their goods. More railroads, more trucks, more ships, more warehouses all with public funds. The result: toxic and diesel pollution, entire neighborhoods destroyed by warehouse expansion and polluting trucks. More profits for the private companies, while our children continue to breathe in the toxic air these industries create. The expansion of the Goods Industry should be paid for through Revenue Bonds or user fees, such as a fee on each container coming through the ports, which was recently vetoed by the Governor. The polluting industries should pay- not the public.

#4: Proposition 1B provides nothing for the bus system, nothing for the transit dependent except racial discrimination. Only 20% of this bond goes towards public transportation but NONE of it can be used for operations (such as lowering bus fares, reversing service cuts or adding services). Throughout California, inner cities face depleted bus systems as transit agencies favor expensive rail projects favoring suburban commuters and land developers. This

movement of “transportation funds” towards highway and commuter rail will generate shortfalls in the future and the underfunded urban transportation systems will in turn be forced to find revenue in the form of fare increases and service cuts. In every urban center, it will have a profound and racially discriminatory impact on Black, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and transit dependent bus riders. To be clear, even if this monstrous bond did provide some funds for bus riders, we would still vote against it. We don’t want a few crumbs while the highway lobby runs wild.

#5: Proposition 1B increases pollution and contaminates our air and our lungs. This bond pretends to offer “air quality improvements” but instead, 95% of the money would be used to increase truck traffic, expand freeways and port operations. Only \$1.2 billion out of \$20 billion will be used to help mitigate impacts on air quality from new projects. **NO MONEY** will be given to clean up the air that has already been contaminated. No money will be given to improve the health of those who have already suffered. Offering \$1.2 billion dollars to clean up \$13.45 billion of polluting expansions is simply a token gesture.

The polluters must pay, not the public.

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