



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - October 22, 2007

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## **Community Groups Call for Change at Bay Area Transportation Meeting Equity in Funding, Better Bus Service Will Combat Climate Change**

Oakland, Ca. (October 26, 2007) - Government leaders and decision makers from around the Bay Area will meet on Friday, October 26th in Oakland to discuss the direction of transportation and land use and its impacts on climate change. Community groups will be there demanding that plans result in real improvements in transit and air quality in low-income communities and communities of color. These groups are most impacted by transportation planning and often overlooked in the climate change discussion.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Bay Area's governing body which oversees transportation projects in the nine-county area, will be holding their annual regional meeting in conjunction with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) General Assembly. The purpose of the meeting is to present and get feedback on the \$120 Billion 25-year long, Regional Transportation Plan.

"Public transit is the lifeline for workers, immigrants and youth," said Juliet Ellis, Executive Director of Urban Habitat. "These individuals are the real experts on the state of transportation in the Bay and should have a meaningful voice in the planning process."

"For too long transit-dependent people have been told that there are insufficient funds to cover their needs, yet the government spends four times as much money on each trip on Caltrain compared to each trip on AC Transit while AC Transit carries four times as many transit-dependent people as Caltrain," said boona cheema, Executive Director of Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (BOSS). "The RTP is the opportunity to make the transportation system more equitable and work for everyone."

"Low-income communities contribute the least to climate change- they take public transit, drive the least, and live in densely developed communities. Yet, they suffer more from the devastating safety and environmental impacts of the transportation system and climate change," said Carla Perez, Northern California Program Director with Communities for a Better Environment. "This needs to change. All Bay Area residents deserve clean air and safe streets."

As attendees enter the meeting, community groups will be passing out their alternative recommendations for improving the transportation system. These include making public transit more accessible to everyone, better service for communities of color and low-income communities, and limiting the effects of pollution and climate change on the people most impacted. A full set of recommendations is available, upon request.

### **Press Availability:**

Friday, October 26, 2007

8:15 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Oakland Marriott City Center, 1001 Broadway, Oakland

Speakers include:

- Annie Flores, Office of Assemblymember André Swanson
- Janny Castillo, Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (BOSS)
- Carla Perez, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)
- Frank Gallo, Ditching Dirty Diesel and former Chair of MTC's Minority Citizens Advisory Committee
- Wafaa Aborashed, Healthy San Leandro

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