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October 22, 2026

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar
Senator, 20th District
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 6630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Celeste Rodriguez
Assemblymember, 43rd District
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 4320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: State Operating Support for Metrolink to Prevent Service Cuts, and Consistency with the California State Rail Plan

Dear Senator Menjivar and Assemblymember Rodriguez:

The Sylmar Neighborhood Council writes to ask for your leadership in securing State support for Metrolink. Sylmar's Metrolink station is the only rail service in our community, connecting us to Burbank, Glendale, Downtown Los Angeles, and beyond. It also became the planned replacement for the East San Fernando Valley light rail extension to Sylmar after Metro's December 2025 decision.

The Situation

Metrolink projects an operating deficit of roughly \$35 million for FY 2026–27. Its CEO has told the Legislature that, without new funding, the agency would have to reduce average systemwide service by 30 percent or more compared with FY 2025–26. Metrolink's Board will hold a public hearing on November 13 on "Scenario 8," which would cut weekday trains by 29 percent and weekend trains by 40 percent from the current schedule. On the Antelope Valley Line that serves Sylmar, weekday trains would fall from 30 to 22 (a 27 percent reduction) and weekend trains from 24 to 8 (a 67 percent reduction). Weekday service has already been cut by about 20 percent since March, and fares rose about 15 percent on October 5. CalSTA's draft SB 1098 report recognizes that Metrolink and its LOSSAN partners face recurring operating deficits.

These Cuts Run Against the State's Own Plan

Caltrans' California State Rail Plan sets out the State's vision for an integrated, zero-emission statewide rail and transit network, built on coordinated schedules, seamless connections, and increased frequencies. Metrolink's SCORE program, which the State has supported with an \$876 million Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) grant, was designed in alignment with that plan; its goal is 30-minute service between Union Station and the Santa Clarita Valley through Sylmar. A two-thirds cut to weekend service on that line moves in the opposite direction from the State's plan and weakens the return on the State's own capital investment. We ask that State agencies explain how service reductions of this scale are consistent with the Rail Plan, and that the Rail Plan's vision of increased frequency guide State funding decisions.

The Market Is Pointing the Other Way

California gas prices averaged above \$6 a gallon this spring, and Metrolink itself reported ridership gains as prices spiked. Caltrain's FY 2026 report credits increased gas prices, along with more frequent electrified service, for a 38 percent ridership increase. Californians are looking for alternatives to driving, and this is the moment to grow service, not cut it.

Precedent for State Action

The Legislature and the Governor have stepped in before. The 2025 budget agreement included a \$750 million interest-free loan to Bay Area transit systems, and the 2026–27 spending plan again provides funds for specified Bay Area agencies to avoid cuts. We do not begrudge that support. We ask that Southern California's regional rail system receive comparable consideration.

What We Respectfully Request

1. **Elevate this request.** Please carry it to the Governor, the Senate President pro Tempore, the Assembly Speaker, and the Secretary of Transportation, with letters of support from your offices.
2. **Provide immediate bridge support.** Identify and deploy State funds, whether a grant, a loan, State Rail Assistance, or other available sources, sized to close Metrolink's FY 2026–27 gap and avoid the proposed reductions, which could take effect as early as January 4, 2027.
3. **Establish a durable operating framework.** Press for sustained operating support for regional and commuter rail in the Governor's January 2027 budget proposal. Because a new Governor takes office in January 2027, we ask that this request be carried into the transition.
4. **Protect capital commitments.** Preserve TIRCP, LCTOP, and SB 125 commitments in future budgets, including the funds that support SCORE projects on the Antelope Valley Line such as the Brighton to Roxford Double Track Project and the Balboa Double Track Extension.
5. **Work together.** Coordinate with the Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura County delegations, and with legislators who have already urged State action, on a regional approach.

We would welcome a meeting with your offices, and we would be glad to host one in Sylmar.

Respectfully,



Kurt Cabrera Miller
President, Sylmar Neighborhood Council

Approved by the Sylmar Neighborhood Council at its regular meeting on October 22, 2026.

cc: The Honorable Catherine Blakespear, Senator, 38th District
Darren Kettle, Chief Executive Officer, Metrolink