



January 22nd, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 Governor, State of California
 State Capitol, Suite 1173
 Sacramento, CA 95814
 Email: veronica.ortiz-torres@gov.ca.gov

Re: CTC Commissioner Tamika Butler’s Resignation and Next Steps

Dear Governor Newsom:

Our coalition of organizations representing walking, bicycling, public transit, public health, social equity, climate, and environmental justice concerns are disappointed and disheartened to learn that Commissioner Tamika Butler has stepped down from her appointment to the California Transportation Commission (CTC). This marks an abrupt end to the potential Commissioner Butler’s presence hoped to bring to the CTC -- which as an institution has historically lacked adequate diversity, representation, and expertise to address the state’s significant inequities in

transportation. It cannot be understated that this is a tremendous loss for communities across California. Ultimately, when perspectives like Commissioner Butler's are neglected, this can set the state back in its ability to meet climate, air quality, and equity goals and mandates.

The CTC is a state entity that approves and allocates over \$20 billion per year in transportation projects statewide. Despite its significant role and impact on transportation policy and funding, the CTC has long suffered limited leadership not only on climate and air quality issues, but also environmental and transportation justice. As a result, our most vulnerable and marginalized low-income communities of color across the state have remained almost exclusively outside the purview of the CTC and our climate challenges have been exacerbated by this long-standing composition. In a change from previous administrations that ignored many critical signals that commissioner diversity and expertise were lacking, you stepped up and appointed a leading voice on climate and equity issues. The announcement of Commissioner Butler's appointment was met with great enthusiasm and demonstrated a necessary shift away from the status quo.

Commissioner Butler's unexpected departure creates a void on the Commission that she filled as an individual with experience working with disadvantaged communities and low-income communities of color as well as direct professional experience in advancing a multimodal transportation system. This appointment was directly in line with the intent of AB 179 (Cervantes, 2017) that directs the Governor of California to appoint Commissioners to the CTC that have "expertise in transportation issues, taking into consideration factors including, but not limited to, socioeconomic background and professional experience, which may include experience working in, or representing, disadvantaged communities." Moreover, given the lack of information and transparency regarding her departure, we are hoping to determine the circumstances that led to this important loss for the state so that we may retain diverse perspectives around equity and justice. The current configuration of the Commission demonstrates that there are structural limitations that prevent the participation of commissioners that are not self-employed or have limitations from their employers to serve on the Commission. We urge you and your team to be transparent and outline methods to address the outdated structure that led to Commissioner Butler's resignation. We offer a few guiding questions that may clarify this important public decision-making process:

1. What are ways we can appoint and retain qualified individuals to the CTC that are employed in the transportation sector with specific subject matter expertise that can help guide transportation policy with best practices?
2. How can the administration address any outdated policies that prevent transportation professionals from serving on the Commission?
3. How is your appointment's office collaborating with the legal department to ensure candidates are properly vetted **and that current commissioners are also held to the same standards of transparency?**
4. What is the current structure for compensation and participation in meetings, and what policies need to be in place to ensure that qualified commissioners are not financially prohibited from participating without additional burdens on time and funds?

Our coalition of partners has a vested interest to see strong leadership at the CTC. We are deeply concerned that without addressing the resignation of Commissioner Butler, we will continue to appoint commissioners that cannot advance state goals. To reiterate from a recent letter from our coalition dated December 20th, 2019, 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.

You now have the opportunity to appointment three new CTC commissioners that can potentially provide significant leadership on climate change, air quality, and social, economic, and environmental justice. With immediate attention to this matter, you can set the course to have California lead on addressing environmental and equity issues through the transportation sector, an area of concern for many of our state lawmakers and residents across California.

We look forward to opening a dialogue with you and your team on this important issue.

Respectfully,

Linda Khamoushian, Policy Director
California Bicycle Coalition

Esther Rivera, Deputy Director
California Walks

Jonathan Matz, California Senior Policy Manager
Safe Routes Partnership

Chanell Fletcher, Executive Director
ClimatePlan

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.

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Josh Stark, State Policy Director
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Cc: Veronica Ortiz-Torres, Deputy Appointments Secretary, Office of Governor
David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
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