



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

July 31, 2020

Senator Scott Wiener
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: **Support for SB 288 (Wiener) – New California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exemptions for Bus Rapid Transit and Regional Rail Services Projects** – In Assembly Natural Resources Committee

Dear Senator Wiener:

The American Planning Association, California Chapter (APA California) is pleased to support your bill, SB 288. SB 288 would further exempt from the requirements of CEQA certain projects for the institution or increase of bus rapid transit and regional rail services on public rail or highway rights of way, whether or not it is presently used for public transit and projects for the institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on high-occupancy vehicle lanes or existing roadway shoulders.

APA California supports efforts to streamline transportation projects and believes that ongoing investments in public transportation are critical to creating more sustainable communities. While some of the projects contemplated in SB 288 may qualify for existing statutory or categorical exemptions, we do believe your bill would add another tool to help facilitate sustainable infrastructure projects that would be unlikely to result in significant environmental effects or are high priority projects to help meet California's overall climate goals. We appreciate the recent amendments made to the bill on July 27, some of which include amendments suggested by APA California. Specifically, we appreciate the amendments to ensure that qualifying projects would be entirely within urbanized areas and the changes related to the affordable housing displacement language. While APA California did suggest that all projects, regardless of their investment, should be consistent with a General Plan/Regional Transportation Plan and have an EIR, we believe that the changes generally to the bill are helpful and appreciate your efforts on this issue. If you have any questions, please contact Lauren De Valencia, lauren@stefangeorge.com, APA California's lobbyist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Eric Phillips'.

Eric Phillips
Vice President Policy and Legislation
APA California

cc: Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Assembly Republican Caucus
The Governor
The Office of Planning and Research