

September 5, 2012

Governor Brown
State Capitol Building, 10th & L Sts
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: Letter of Support for AB 1779 – The Intercity Passenger Rail Act of 2012

Dear Governor Brown,

The **Merced County Association of Governments** is pleased to provide this letter of support for Assembly Bill (AB) 1779, which would enable the transfer of administrative responsibility of the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service from the Department of Transportation to a new joint powers authority.

We appreciate that AB 1779 follows the model of the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), and is permissive legislation which would enable regional governance/management of the existing San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service between Bakersfield-Fresno-Stockton-Sacramento-SF Bay Area.

In addition to more cost effective administration and operations, the CCJPA has shown that there are several other potential benefits to local authority administration of intercity passenger service including:

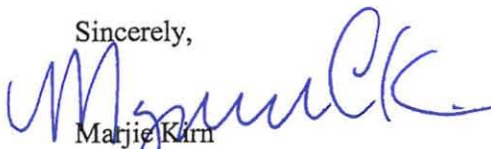
- The ability to have a stronger voice in advocating for service improvements and expansions
- Local decision-making that is more responsive and adaptive to passenger issues
- The ability to take better advantage of joint marketing and partnerships with local agencies
- More engagement by local communities to support the service

We support extending the time for creating the Authority and executing an interagency transfer agreement with the Department of Transportation. In order to transfer responsibility of the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service to the Authority, AB 1779 will require that the transfer must result in administrative or operating cost reductions.

With more efficient administration and stronger local/regional support, a regionally managed San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service will result in improved service, and increases in ridership and revenue. Increases in San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service and ridership will result in more jobs, improve air quality, and will help promote sustainable development.

Intercity passenger rail is environmentally friendly, and the state has a continuing interest in the provision of cost-effective and efficiently administered intercity passenger rail services. We are pleased to request that you sign AB 1779 to help move California forward.

Sincerely,



Marjie Kim
Interim Executive Director