

CONNECT BAY AREA

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Connect Bay Area Kicks Off Signature Gathering to Save Public Transit with Five-County Day of Action

Volunteer mobilization to move forward a regional funding measure for transit stretched across Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, CA — The Connect Bay Area campaign today officially launched its region-wide signature-gathering effort to support a voter-proposed regional transportation funding measure headed for the November 2026 ballot. The Connect Bay Area Campaign is working to bring a five county sales tax to the ballot to support public transit in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties.

Today's Day of Action featured rallies and signature-gathering events in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. In each county, petition teams met trained volunteer captains and organizers ready to begin collecting signatures in their communities.

The kickoff started with a regional rally at Embarcadero Plaza in San Francisco after which supporters carried boxes of petitions painted to represent the Bay Area's transit vehicles onto public transit for a caravan to volunteer efforts at the Alameda County Administration Building in Oakland, the Pleasant Hill BART Station, Courthouse Square in Redwood City, and San Jose's Diridon Station.

The Day of Action follows a major fundraising milestone for the campaign. The Connect Bay Area Transit Committee has already raised \$3 million to support qualification and passage of the measure.

The campaign must collect more than 186,000 signatures across five counties by June 6, 2026 to qualify the measure for the November ballot.

Participants at today's rallies across the Bay Area included State Legislators Senator Scott Wiener, Senator Jesse Arreguin, Assemblymember Matt Haney and Assemblymember Catherine Stefani as well as Mayors from across the region including San Francisco Mayor

Daniel Lurie, Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee, Berkeley Mayor Adena Ishii, Hercules Mayor Chris Kelly, and Redwood City Mayor Elmer Martinez Saballos.

County leadership was represented by San Mateo County Board of Supervisors President Noelia Corzo, Santa Clara County Supervisor Margaret Abe-Koga, Alameda County Supervisor Nikki Fortunato Bas, San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Rafael Mandelman and San Francisco Supervisors Myrna Melgar, Stephen Sherrill, Danny Sauter, Bilal Mahmood, and Matt Dorsey.

Joining as well were San Jose City Councilmembers Anthony Tordillos and Peter Ortiz, Redwood City Councilmembers Isabella Chu and Jeff Gee, Campbell City Councilmember Sergio Lopez, South San Francisco Councilmember James Coleman, AC Transit Director Jean Walsh, and former Mayor of Pleasant Hill Matt Rinn.

These elected officials were joined by Business and Labor leaders including SEIU 1021, ATU 1555, AFSCME, the Bay Area Council, SAMCEDA, and the East Bay Leadership Council. Advocacy organizations participating across the region included Seamless Bay Area, Transbay Coalition, Transform CA, the San Francisco Transit Riders, 350 Bay Area, Streets for All, Bike East Bay, SF Bike Coalition, East Bay for Everyone, Abundant SF, Walk SF, and more.

Connect Bay Area: What it is and Why it matters

Connect Bay Area is a five-county regional transportation funding measure designed to prevent catastrophic transit service cuts and provide reliable operating funding for major transit systems and local bus operators throughout the region. The measure also funds transit improvements, capital projects within counties, and targeted road improvements.

Without a sustainable funding solution, Bay Area transit agencies face devastating service reductions, including:

- **BART:** Elimination of two full lines, no service after 9 p.m. on weekdays, and no weekend service
- **Muni:** Elimination of entire routes, 50% cuts to major bus and metro lines, and severe reductions to historic streetcar and cable car service
- **Caltrain:** Hourly weekday service, no service after 9 p.m., and no weekend service
- **AC Transit:** Up to 37% overall service cuts

Recent polling conducted by EMC Research for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission shows 59% of Bay Area voters support a proposed regional sales tax for public transportation – exceeding the 50%+1 threshold required for passage.

About the Connect Bay Area Transit Committee

The Connect Bay Area Transit Committee is led by labor, business, and transit supporters, including Bay Area Council, SEIU 1021, ATU Local 1555, SPUR, SAMCEDA, and a broad advocacy council representing more than 20 organizations. The coalition includes transit riders,

housing advocates, safe streets advocates, senior and disability advocates, and environmental organizations working together to deliver a successful 2026 ballot measure.

The Connect Bay Area campaign will bring a five county sales tax to the ballot in November 2026 through a citizen signature gathering effort. The rate will be set at ½-cent, with the exception that San Francisco will be set at a 1 cent rate to provide additional support for MUNI. This measure will provide long-term operations funding for major Bay Area transit agencies and support regional projects to strengthen transit throughout the Bay Area.

For more information, visit ConnectBayArea.com

What They're Saying

Senator Scott Wiener: “Connect Bay Area is a critical measure to ensure millions of Bay Area residents can get to work, school, and their loved ones quickly and conveniently for many years to come. For far too long, systems like BART, Muni, and Caltrain have lacked the stable funding so essential for world-class transit. These systems are now at risk of catastrophic service cuts that would be devastating to our city and region’s recovery, in addition to exploding traffic congestion. By providing a sustainable source of long term funding, Connect Bay Area will ensure BART, Muni, and other systems will continue to provide faster and better service for many years to come, cutting transportation costs, climate emissions, and traffic for everyone in the Bay Area.”

Senator Jesse Arreguin: “Public transit is vital to the Bay Area’s recovery and daily life, getting people to work and kids to school. This measure prevents devastating service cuts and protects a system millions rely on—including me. The importance of passing this measure cannot be overstated, as strong, reliable transit helps drive the Bay Area’s role as a key economic engine for the state, cleaner air, and our efforts to fight climate change.”

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors President Noelia Corzo: “San Mateo County and our beautiful Bay Area deserve reliable, safe, and seamless public transit. We cannot let public transit fail and allow our progress to be in vain. Connect Bay Area’s mission on this vital public service is indispensable and needs our support.”

Santa Clara County Supervisor Margaret Abe-Koga: "Caltrain has been the big success story of the past year, but that success may be short-lived if we do not act. Transit -- good transit, seamless transit -- is built on a foundation that relies on the strength of all of its parts around the Bay Area. We risk losing that because its financial infrastructure was not built for this era and needs to be stabilized. Once we lose one, our connectivity and overall reliability declines past the point of no return. This is how we act."

San Francisco Supervisor Myrna Melgar: “An interconnected transit system is essential for our collective success as a region. Our communities can only thrive when we all have access to jobs, education, healthcare, and all the opportunities the Bay Area has to offer through strong

transportation systems. Connect Bay Area is our collective solution that showcases how we can support and connect with each other.”

Richard Fuentes, AFSCME Council 57 PAC Chair: “Labor is united to protect and expand public transit and we are all in on doing our part to get the signatures necessary to put this on the ballot. Public transit is essential for our members and their families and it's essential for the health and success of the Bay Area. AFSCME members are ready to work with our coalition partners to do whatever it takes to pass this measure and save public transit in the Bay Area.”

Rosanne Foust, President & CEO, San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA): “Gathering signatures to qualify a regional transportation measure for the November ballot is critical to saving Caltrain, BART, and other transit services in San Mateo County. Without reliable transit, we face worsening traffic gridlock, serious economic consequences, and the loss of mobility for youth, seniors, and residents who depend on these systems. Your signature matters. Sign the petition today to protect transit.”

John Grubb, interim President and CEO of the Bay Area Council: “For millions of commuters, for employers, for our economy, for the good of the region, we’re going to get this on the ballot and we’re going to win. Voters have made clear they will support a measure that not only provides critical funding for our transit systems but holds those transit systems accountable for delivering better service, becoming more fiscally responsible and improving the efficiency of their operations. Those principles are our North Star. It’s gratifying to see the tremendous early support from so many great business and other leaders who understand how important our transit and transportation system is to the mobility and prosperity of this region. Past generations of Bay Area residents have invested to build and grow these systems and now it’s the turn of our generation to keep it going.”

Matt Rinn, former Mayor of Pleasant Hill: “BART is the transportation backbone of the Bay Area and a vital link for economic vitality. Potentially reduced services or even elimination of services would create traffic nightmares that nobody wants.”

Abibat Rahman-Davies, Transform transportation policy manager: “Public transit is the backbone of the Bay Area’s transportation system. This regional transportation measure will ensure the future and reliability of transit, giving people more mobility choices and reducing emissions that poison our air and our climate. Transform is excited to work with our partners in Connect Bay Area to build support for this essential initiative.”

Adina Levin, Executive Director Seamless Bay Area: “We are thrilled that the signature-gathering is getting started for the transit ballot measure campaign with kickoff events in all 5 counties. This measure will prevent dire transit service cuts and will accelerate progress toward a rider-friendly, well-coordinated seamless transit system. We’ve been busy getting the word out to community organizations and volunteers all around the 5 counties who are eager to help get this measure passed.”

Mark Orcutt, East Bay Leadership Council: “Every time we make transit safer and more reliable, we strengthen the East Bay economy. This regional measure protects the mobility our residents and employers rely on every day.”

Rodney Fong, President and CEO of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce: “A strong regional transit system is fundamental to a strong Bay Area economy. We’re encouraged to see this measure get underway and advancing a solution that provides sustainable funding for the transit network our employers, workers, and communities rely on every day.”

Carter Lavin, Transbay Coalition Co-Founder: “Millions of people depend on the bus, train, and ferry to get us where we need to go affordably and easily. Whether you take transit every day, every once in a while, or haven't sat on a bus in years, this ballot measure will directly make your life easier, our air cleaner, and our communities more vibrant places. Transbay Coalition members around the region are excited to get the word out to all corners of the Bay Area to support our transit systems that support us so much.”