

# CONNECT BAY AREA

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**Contact:** Jeff Cretan – (415) 308-6782, [jcretan@west-advisors.com](mailto:jcretan@west-advisors.com)

## **Campaign to Save Bay Area Public Transit Crushes Signature Goal, Submits Over 305,000 Signatures for November Ballot Measure**

*Fueled by major grassroots transit organizing effort and broad business and labor support, Connect Bay Area far surpasses the 186,000 signatures required to qualify regional transit funding measure*

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA** — The Connect Bay Area campaign today announced it has submitted more than 305,000 signatures to qualify a regional transit funding measure for the November ballot — blowing past the 186,000 valid signatures required.

The success of this effort is built on one of the largest grassroots transit organizing efforts the region has ever seen and major support from business and labor organizations.

The Connect Bay Area five-county sales tax measure would provide long-term operational funding for major Bay Area transit agencies, while supporting projects to strengthen and connect transit systems across the region. It will protect major transit agencies like BART from devastating service cuts and help VTA grow to better serve residents, workers, and businesses.

Connect Bay Area also strengthens accountability for transit agencies. SB 63 – the legislation authored by Senators Scott Wiener and Jesse Arreguin that enabled Connect Bay Area – set strong accountability requirements to take effect before the measure even gets on the ballot. The measure requires independent financial reviews and continued efficiency improvements from transit agencies.

### **Unprecedented Grassroots, Labor, and Business Support**

The Connect Bay Area Campaign has grown in support over the last several months with more than 80 elected officials and more than 90 labor groups and advocacy organizations signing on in support. Major businesses from across the region have helped to fundraise over \$5.5 million so far to get the measure on the ballot and prepare for the November election.

Since launching in January, Connect Bay Area has mobilized more than 1,000 volunteers and advocates across Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. Supporters gathered signatures at transit stations, farmers markets, community events, neighborhood meetings, and major public gatherings throughout the Bay Area.

The overwhelming signature total reflects the broad support for transit and the awareness of urgency surrounding the future of Bay Area public transit.

Without sustainable transit funding, the Bay Area could face catastrophic service reductions:

- **BART:** Up to 15 station closures, elimination of two lines, and service cuts of up to 70%
- **Caltrain:** Hourly train service, no weekend service, and weekday shutdowns after 9 p.m.
- **Muni:** At least 20 bus routes eliminated and service reductions of 30% or more
- **AC Transit:** Service cuts of at least 16%

The more than 300,000 signatures – which were the result of both a paid effort and an advocate-led grassroots effort – will now be officially counted and validated by the Departments of Elections for each of the five counties over the next few weeks before the measure can officially be placed on the ballot.

“We're blown away by the over 1,000 Bay Area volunteers, transit advocates, and labor partners who contributed to getting transit funding on the November ballot.,” said **Lian Chang, co-lead of the Connect Bay Area grassroots signature gathering effort.** “This is the largest grassroots signature-gathering effort in the history of the Bay Area, and represents thousands of hours spent by people from all backgrounds and all corners of our five-county region to protect this thing—transit—that matters to millions of Bay Area residents. Everyday more voters are getting on board to support our economy, social justice, the environment and reducing congestion. And we're just getting started.”

“This is a resounding statement by Bay Area voters that they believe in the value of our regional transit systems and how important they are to keeping our region moving,” said **Libby Schaaf, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council.** “Now we must turn our attention to November and protecting the many billions of dollars we've invested over many decades to build these systems while also making them more efficient, cost-effective, safe and convenient for the millions of commuters who rely on them.”

“Public transit is a cornerstone of our economy and an essential public good that keeps our region affordable for residents,” said **Congressman Kevin Mullin.** “Connect Bay Area will protect the public transportation service we all rely on while ensuring strong accountability so every dollar delivers reliable, safe transit.”

“The Bay Area's public transit is a core pillar of our region's ability to usher in a climate-smart, affordable, and just future,” said **Amanda Brown-Stevens, Executive Director of the Greenbelt Alliance.** “Greenbelt Alliance is excited to be a part of this grassroots coalition to help protect and enhance our public transportation and reduce pollution.”

### **About Connect Bay Area**

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 0.5%, with the exception that San Francisco will be set at a 1% 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.

The Connect Bay Area measure will support the future of public transportation in the Bay Area:

- **Protect and improve** service on BART, Muni, Caltrain, SamTrans, VTA, and AC Transit
- **Prevent catastrophic service cuts** that could devastate the Bay Area

- **Keep traffic and emissions down**, preventing gridlock and protecting climate progress;
- **Support the Bay Area's economy**, ensuring that downtown recovery and regional mobility remain strong.

Connect Bay Area has strong accountability and oversight provisions, including dependent financial reviews for every transit operator, regional coordination mandates to ensure systems work better together, and a citizen oversight committee to monitor spending and performance. A [recent independent study required by Connect Bay Area](#) found the agencies had saved \$1 billion in operational efficiencies and set new actions for the agencies to take to further improve efficiency and service.

The Connect Bay Area Transit Committee is comprised of labor, business, and transit advocates, including Bay Area Council, SEIU 1021, ATU 1555, SPUR, and SAMCEDA, alongside an advocacy council of more than 20 organizations representing transit, housing, environmental, equity, and senior and disability groups.

For more information about the Connect Bay Area campaign or to get involved, visit <https://connectbayarea.com/>