November 26, 2018

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board
1250 San Carlos Ave.
San Carlos, CA 94070

To Chair Jeannie Bruins:

The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition is proud that Californians recognized the need to invest in our statewide transportation infrastructure and soundly defeated Proposition 6 in the recent November election.

While $5 billion in critical transportation funding is preserved annually statewide, we are particularly relieved that the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) will continue forward to help modernize transit systems across California. With $164.5 million allocated to Caltrain’s Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project in the 2018 TIRCP award cycle, we now urge Caltrain to swiftly move forward with the planning and allocation of those funds.

We continue to strongly support the purchase of new electric multiple unit (EMU) rail cars in order to electrify the fleet with the goals of increasing capacity and reliability for all Caltrain passengers.

However, we also continue to have strong concerns that new EMU car design is conducive to bike theft. With thousands of people who bring their bikes onboard every day, Caltrain must use the opportunity provided by the purchase of additional EMU cars to reconfigure train layout to address bike theft. Therefore, our request is simple: EMU cars must provide fixed seats within view of bikes.

At a minimum, there should be no fewer seats in bike cars than the current ratio, but we also acknowledge bikes are being stolen onboard even with today’s layout. Given that, it is irresponsible of Caltrain to provide fewer seats within view of bikes on EMU bike cars than what exist today on Gallery and Bombardier bike cars, and we hope the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board will acknowledge this issue by directing staff to develop a design that addresses this problem directly.

Beyond the issue of design, the purchase of new EMU cars will expand capacity and we hope to see longer trains run beyond the originally expected six-car trainsets. Given that, we are in support of increasing bike capacity onboard with the goal of providing 96 bike spaces per eight-car EMU trainset, corresponding to the same proportion of 72 bike spaces per six-car EMU trainset.

Additionally, we reaffirm our support for funding of wayside bicycle facilities so that Caltrain passengers who bike have a safe storage option to park their bikes at the stations.

We hope the Joint Powers Board takes our concerns seriously by taking action at the upcoming meeting on Dec. 6. As decisions are made about TIRCP funding, we encourage transparency around the process to ensure that Caltrain, as a public transit agency, is held accountable to the public interest so that we can see electrification come online as urgently as possible.

Sincerely,

Janice Li
Advocacy Director
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition