

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP**

Of The Ventana Chapter

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April 8, 2015

Regional Transportation Commission  
1523 Pacific Ave  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Comments on Proposed Regional Transportation Sales Tax Measure

Dear Executive Director George Dondero, RTC Staff, and RTC Commissioners;

The Mission of the Sierra Club is to "Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Environment". As we consider the proposed Regional Transportation Sales Tax measure it is clear to us that the Rail Trail project has by far the highest relevance to the mission of the club and the greatest appeal to our membership. The project will draw tourists from around the world and be extraordinarily popular within the community. The Sierra Club is heavily engaged in fighting climate change, and therefore we do not support a disproportionate amount of funding going to highway widening. That said, we recognize the need for a balanced approach to pass a Regional Sales Tax Measure.

RTC Staff presented us with 5 categories of projects that would be funded by the proposed tax. After review and consideration of the above, we are proposing that funds be allocated evenly between the 5 categories. This would mean that each category that has been identified would receive 20% of the total funding generated. Our informal surveys indicate that, of the five project categories the Rail Trail is the most popular and that Santa Cruz County voters will not pass proposed taxes that fund it at less than the level of highway car lane expenditures. We believe that with this balance, the proposed tax has the greatest chance of passing, both among Sierra Club members and the general community at large. We therefore urge you consider this formula for the measure. We would be eager to work to engage our more than 3,300 members in passing such a measure in our Community.

Sincerely:

Greg McPheeters  
Chair, Santa Cruz Group, Sierra Club