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Public Comments for September 2nd, 2020 RTA Board of Directors Meeting

Below are comments received verbatim if by email, or summarized if verbally provided by telephone. Note that the sender's email address has been redacted. These comments will be posted on the RTA website as soon as possible. Any additional comments received after September 1st, 2020 at 11 AM, will be read aloud at the teleconference meeting.

Comments received as of September 1st, 2020 11 AM:

From: Eric Greening <**REDACTED**>

Sent: Mon 8/31/2020 3:56 PM

To: Info <Info@slorta.org>

Subject: **Comments by Eric Greening on Agenda Item A-1 for the special RTA Board meeting of September 2nd**

"Thanks to all who have been working extra hard adjusting service to ever-shifting demands of viral safety and government mandates in an environment in which a stable "normal," new or old, seems to continue to elude us!

Having "sheltered in place," I haven't been on a bus since March, and want to raise a question and a concern. The question, IF you are able to disclose the information: with the great care that is being taken to keep the buses safe for drivers and passengers, despite many people's fear that any congregating carries a risk, do we know of any documented cases of transmission involving an RTA bus or any other transit line in the county? When I asked it previously in writing to the Board of Supervisors meeting of August 11th, I received a kind reply from Micki Olinger, Supervisor Arnold's Administrative Assistant, who checked with the Emergency Operations Center and the Medical/Health staff, and stated that, as of that time, no cases had been linked to transmission on any transit vehicle. Can you confirm this, and is it still true?

The linked issue is, given the rationed availability of seats due to social distancing requirements, there has been a policy of restricting service to passengers whose travel met the criteria for an "essential" reason to leave home under the Governor's "Stay at Home" order. Permitted uses include: "permitted work, local shopping or other permitted errands, or as otherwise authorized." Is this limitation still in effect? Is the plan for it to remain in effect as long as the Governor's "Stay at Home" order remains in effect? If so, it could be all but permanent, given the Governor's recent reshuffling of the reopening plan. We had been on Stage Two of a climb in which the "Stay at Home order" would cease upon reaching Stage Four. Now, we are on Stage One of a climb in which progress from one stage to the next

The Regional Transit Authority is a Joint Powers Agency serving residents and visitors of:

Arroyo Grande Atascadero Grover Beach Morro Bay Paso Robles Pismo Beach San Luis Obispo and The County of San Luis Obispo

is greatly slowed, and in which not even the attainment of Stage Four will end the effect of this constraint on free association. People who drive tend to ignore the "Stay at Home order;" in other words, it is selectively enforced, both draconian and ineffective at the same time. Barber shops, beauty salons, manicurists, and similar businesses opened TODAY, but an end to the criminalization of visiting loved ones is not even remotely on any imaginable horizon.

My question, then, is: if the RTA is enforcing this on its passengers, how much longer will it co-operate with seriously distorted priorities that open all sorts of risky businesses months before it is legal to see a close friend or non-household family member? Is the "essential trip" criterion necessary to ration seats at present levels of service and demand for service? If not, is the system under any legal obligation to enforce a fundamentally senseless order? Most states have long ended their own stay at home orders (eight never had one) and are not doing worse--some are doing better--in disease prevalence than we are. Does the RTA have the latitude to simply provide service to all who seek a ride, with no inquiry as to purpose? To what extent might farebox recovery improve if it could?"