February 10, 2017

The Honorable Jim Beall
Chair, Senate Housing & Transportation Committee
State Capitol, Room 2082
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: SB 1 (BEALL): TRANSPORTATION FUNDING - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Beall:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, our 1,650 members and the more than 650,000 people they employ throughout the region, I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1. SB 1 addresses a critical funding gap that will allow CalTrans and local governments to improve roads and highways. This is an important step forward, addressing the chronic backlog of deferred maintenance for our state and providing improvements in the efficiency of our overall infrastructure and transportation systems. Specifically, SB 1:

Provides new revenues for transportation. SB 1 is a long-term solution to transportation reform; a funding package that contains new revenues to make road safety improvements, fill potholes and repair local streets, highways, bridges, overpasses, transit systems and freight infrastructure investments. SB 1 raises at least $6 billion annually when fully phased in, which is what is needed to make a dent in the maintenance backlog.

Provides strong accountability provisions. SB 1 includes provisions to streamline projects by removing redundancies. These measures will ensure transportation funds are spent efficiently. SB 1 also gives more independence to the California Transportation Commission and establishes the office of Transportation Inspector General to improve effectiveness, efficiency and increase transparency.

While the Chamber offers its support for SB 1, it should be stressed that we are also advocating for increased protections for transportation revenue. Any new transportation package should be coupled with a constitutional amendment, to be placed on the next ballot, which will ensure the new revenues are not diverted for non-transportation purposes.

For years there has been an obvious void in the state’s transportation budget, jeopardizing the safety of users and stifling productivity throughout California. Every Californian feels the impacts of our deficient infrastructure in one way or another. We must ensure that the condition of our streets, roads and highways can support a strong economy. With the cost to fix a road eight times more than the cost to maintain it, the longer we wait to fix our transportation problems, the bigger and more expensive they become.

Current transportation funding is insufficient and our transportation infrastructure is crumbling. SB 1 is a critical opportunity to address California’s transportation needs. Should you have any questions, please contact Sarah Rascon at srascon@lachamber.com or (213) 580-7573.

Sincerely,

Gary Toebben
President & CEO