
May 7, 2026

Secretary Toks Omishakin
California State Transportation Agency
400 Capital Mall, Suite 2340
Sacramento, CA 94814

SUBJECT: Support for NCTD's 2026 TIRCP Application

Dear Secretary Omishakin:

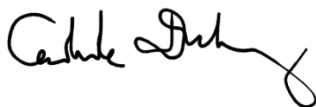
On behalf of Circulate Planning & Policy, whose mission is to create excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods, I am writing to support North County Transit – San Diego Railroad's (NCTD) application to the 2026 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) for the SPRINTER Zero Emission Transition (ZEST) Program.

This investment will position California to lead in the deployment of zero-emission rail vehicles as well as provide necessary service capacity and reliability to support jobs and housing growth. The ZEST Program will advance critical investments along the SPRINTER rail corridor in northern San Diego County, including the procurement of four hydrogen fuel cell rail vehicles and key railroad infrastructure upgrades such as signal modernization and Positive Train Control (PTC) installation. These improvements will enhance safety, reliability, and operational efficiency while enabling the transition toward a cleaner, more sustainable rail fleet.

The ZEST Program represents a significant step toward modernizing transit service and improving regional mobility while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By transitioning to zero-emission rail vehicles and modernizing railroad infrastructure, the project will support increased transit ridership, improve service quality, and contribute to state climate goals. In addition to the environmental benefits, this project will strengthen connections to employment centers, housing, and regional transportation networks.

The ZEST Program clearly aligns with the 2026 TIRCP eligibility criteria by demonstrating a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, increasing ridership, enhancing rail and transit integration, providing benefits for low-income and disadvantaged communities, and addressing affordable housing needs.

Sincerely,



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Director of Planning and Community Engagement
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