



ATTACHMENT A

BILL: SENATE BILL 17 – AS AMENDED
AUTHOR: SENATOR RICHARD PAN (D – SACRAMENTO)
SUBJECT: OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY
STATUS: RE-REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
PASSED – SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (9-3) ON 3/23/2021
ACTION: SUPPORT

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Directors adopt a SUPPORT position on Senate Bill 17 (Pan), as amended.

ISSUE

This bill was recently amended in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee. Specifically, the bill would:

- Establish in state government an Office of Racial Equity, an independent public entity not affiliated with an agency or department, that shall be governed by a Racial Equity Advisory and Accountability Council;
- Authorize the council to hire an executive director to organize, administer, and manage the operations of the office;
- Task the office with coordinating, analyzing, developing, evaluating, and recommending strategies for advancing racial equity across state agencies, departments, and the office of the Governor;
- Require the office to develop a statewide Racial Equity Framework providing guidelines for inclusive policies and practices that reduce racial inequities, promote racial equity, address individual, institutional, and structural racism, and establish goals and strategies to advance racial equity and address structural racism and racial inequities;
- Require the office, in consultation with state agencies and departments, to establish methodologies, a system of measurement, and data needs for assessing how state statutes, regulations, and practices contribute to, uphold, or exacerbate racial disparities, and to prepare an annual report that evaluates and reports on progress in meeting statewide goals and policies established under the Racial Equity Framework;
- Require the Governor to direct the Secretary of each state agency to adopt and implement the Racial Equity Framework through each agencies' Racial Equity

Action Plan, which would be adopted by each state agency and integrated into the agency's strategic plan;

- Require the office to provide technical assistance to agencies during development of the Racial Equity Action Plan, to review and approve each agency's Racial Equity Action Plan, and to provide technical assistance to agencies implementing strategies for racial equity consistent with the Racial Equity Action Plan;
- Require the Racial Equity Action Plan to be posted publicly on each agency's internet website; and
- Require each agency to prepare an annual report on the agency's progress towards goals set forth in the Racial Equity Action Plan and to submit the report to the office, the Governor, and the Legislature.

DISCUSSION

In March 2018, Metro's Board formally adopted an Equity Platform, with the objective of increasing access to opportunities including housing, jobs, healthcare, education and other key determinants of healthy and thriving communities. In 2019, Metro published an Equity Platform Activation Plan to highlight the agency's work in implementing initiatives that aim to meet these goals. In January 2020, Metro hired its first Executive Officer, Equity and Race to lead, coordinate and develop the efforts included within the Equity Platform.

Metro's Equity and Race Department has taken on the effort of establishing how to define and measure equity for Los Angeles County and for the agency. From the August 2020 Equity and Race Program Update:

Equity is both an outcome and a process to address racial, socioeconomic, and gender disparities, to ensure fair and just access - with respect to where you begin and your capacity to improve from that starting point - to opportunities, including jobs, housing, education, mobility options, and healthier communities. It is achieved when one's outcomes in life are not predetermined, in a statistical or experiential sense, on their racial, economic, or social identities. It requires community informed and needs-based provision, implementation, and impact of services, programs, and policies that reduce and ultimately prevent disparities.

Senate Bill 17 (Pan), as amended, would establish the Office of Racial Equity and Racial Equity Advisory and Accountability Council for the state. The Office of Racial Equity would be an independent state government office governed by the Advisory and Accountability Council. The office would establish a statewide racial equity framework and would provide guidelines and oversight for agencies and departments to establish specific goals and policies to meet the goals outlined in the framework.

The bill would require the new Office of Racial Equity to coordinate, analyze, develop and evaluate strategies for advancing racial equity across state agencies, departments and the office of the Governor. The bill also requires the establishment of methodologies, ways to measure and data assessment on how policies uphold or exacerbate racial

disparities. It would also include research activities and stakeholder and community engagement.

The Senate Governmental Organization Committee bill analysis notes that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has already established the Race & Equity Action Plan over the course of two years, in collaboration with the Caltrans Alliance on Race and Equity Solutions team. The framework is a plan that identifies internal communication and training of Caltrans staff, delivering equity-focused pilot projects and policy changes.

SB 17 will help to advance the agencies goals of ensure equity across all of Metro's projects and programs and will also help to advance those goals statewide. The Board has established clear policy goals to advance strategies to achieve equity and SB 17 will focus those efforts in a statewide office.

For these reasons, staff recommends that the Board adopt a SUPPORT position on Senate Bill 17 (Pan).

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The impact of this bill on safety is still being evaluated.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The estimated financial impact of this action is still being evaluated.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Staff recommendation supports strategic plan goal #4: Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership. Metro shares the region's commitment to environmental sustainability and will take a strong leadership role in managing and building a resilient mobility system that effectively reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and helps to address public health issues while moving people throughout the County.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Staff has considered adopting either an OPPOSE or WORK WITH AUTHOR on the bill. However, an oppose position would be counter to the agency's goals to develop and implement a regional transportation system that expands access to transit and opportunities and serves the people who live in Los Angeles County, home to the state's greatest concentration of disadvantaged communities.

NEXT STEPS

Should the Board approve the adoption of a SUPPORT position on the legislation; staff will communicate the Board's position to the author and work to ensure its passage. Staff will continue to keep the Board informed as this issue is addressed throughout the legislative session.