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June 23, 2021

The Honorable Richard Bloom
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4001
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 917 (Bloom) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Bloom:

On behalf of the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors, we are pleased to support AB 917, legislation that will expand current state law to authorize transit agencies to use camera technology to discourage illegal parking in transit-only lanes and at transit stops where parking is already prohibited under existing law. Under AB 917, transit agencies would be authorized to install forward-facing cameras on their transit vehicles to collect images of parking violations that occur in transit-only lanes and at transit stops. The parking citations do not negatively impact a driver's record, carry the same fine as a parking ticket, and can be appealed. The bill contains privacy protections and sets noticing requirements for this new program.

In addition to the service impacts, a partially blocked transit stop creates significant safety concerns. When an operator of a transit bus is not able to reach the curb, riders are forced to navigate the street and the gap that is created between the transit vehicle and the curb. This is a potentially dangerous maneuver for riders to make, and an impossible one for those with a disability or mobility limitations, including seniors.

OCTA is currently building the Orange County (OC) Streetcar, which will be an electric-powered rail car on tracks built into the street operating within traffic lanes, with stops planned throughout a high-traffic business district. In planning for its operation, AB 917 can provide an important tool to discourage parking at the stops along the route, which can compromise OCTA's ability to provide safe, reliable, and accessible public transit services. If a parked vehicle is blocking the operation of the OC Streetcar, it would effectively be rendered out of service until the vehicle is moved, since it cannot move around the parked vehicle. This reduces transit system reliability by slowing down transit vehicle speeds and negatively impacts transit riders. AB 917's authority also provides another tool for OCTA's consideration at other bus stops in its service area, and as the potential for bus-only lanes is analyzed for future consideration.

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June 23, 2021

Page 2

A SUPPORT position is consistent with the OCTA 2021-22 State Legislative Platform's principle to "SUPPORT policies that aim to enhance transit services and the overall safety and security of transit riders, coach operators, and on-road vehicles."

If you have any questions regarding OCTA's position on AB 917, please contact Kristin Jacinto, Manager of State and Federal Relations, at (714) 560-5754 or kjacinto@octa.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Do".

Andrew Do
Chairman

AD:al

c: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Members, Orange County State Legislative Delegation
Topp Strategies, LLC