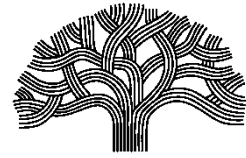


CITY OF OAKLAND



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Office of the Mayor
Libby Schaaf
Mayor

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April 13, 2022

Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Proposed Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding Between the Federal Highway Administration and the California Department of Transportation Pertaining to Federal Environmental Responsibilities (Docket No. FHWA-2022-0001)

Dear Federal Highway Administration:

Our community of Oakland, California, is suffering from a crippling housing and homelessness crisis. Due to rising housing costs, the homeless population in our city nearly doubled between 2015 and 2019, rising from 2,191 to 4,071.

Addressing this crisis requires flexibility and creativity. Since 2019 the city has added 800 crisis-response beds/spaces/units in the form of emergency shelters, transitional housing, communities of cabins and tiny homes, and safe parking sites. Some of these solutions are located on Caltrans land near highways. We appreciate the partnership with Caltrans on this issue, but we must quickly do more if we are to fully address this crisis.

Federal environmental responsibilities, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), can slow, discourage, or prevent these creative solutions. We must streamline the NEPA process as much as possible, including maximizing the use of Categorical Exclusions for these types of projects. In the spirit of the Biden Administration's House America initiative, which seeks to re-house 100,00 households and add 20,000 new affordable homes to address homelessness nationwide by the end of this year, we must act with a sense of urgency.

While I recognize these comments may pertain to matters beyond the scope of the proposed MOU with Caltrans, due to the significance of the issue it is important that we pursue all opportunities to address this humanitarian crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Darin Ranelletti, Policy Director for Housing Security, at (510) 238-3460 or dranelletti@oaklandca.gov if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Libby Schaaf", written in a cursive style.

Libby Schaaf
Mayor of Oakland