



June 16, 2020

Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

**DELAYING VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT) REQUIREMENTS
OF SB 743 (STEINBERG, 2013)
Fiscal Impact: None**

This is to request your Board adopt a position in support of delaying the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) requirements of SB 743 (Steinberg, 2013).

Due to Legislative changes adopted in 2013, beginning July 1, 2020, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will require projects in California to account for how many new miles of automobile travel they produce, rather than how much congestion they produce. The amount of driving, as measured by VMT, will be the new lens for assessing transportation impacts on the environment for projects subject to CEQA. The effect on cities and counties may not be immediate, but it will be profound in the long run and will change the way planners analyze projects. Implementation of the VMT standard, as recommended by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, will require that new developments achieve a 15% reduction in VMT.

Considering that the State of California is in the midst of a housing affordability crisis and is in desperate need of more affordable housing options, making new housing significantly more expensive by imposing VMT reduction requirements on new projects will only serve to exacerbate the State's housing affordability crisis. The California Building Industry Association estimates that 10,000 Californians are priced out of a home for each \$1,000 added to the overall cost of a project.

Rural communities throughout the Central Valley already lag behind other parts of California in terms of economic development and many of our rural communities will be disproportionately affected by the implementation of VMT standards created by SB 743 because many of our residents must drive longer distances to find employment in urban centers. Simply put, VMT builds barriers to the creation of jobs, housing, and infrastructure development in rural communities.

Making matters worse, the COVID-19 recession has driven a surge in unemployment and will significantly worsen the economic hurdles facing Kern and the Central Valley. From a public policy standpoint, the sensible and appropriate approach should be to delay the implementation of the VMT standard for a minimum of two years until the disastrous effects of the COVID-19 recession have subsided enough to pursue a path forward that benefits Kern County citizens, businesses, and workers.

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Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that your Board adopt a position in support of delaying the VMT requirements of SB 743 and authorize the Chair to sign correspondence to the appropriate officials.

Sincerely,



Ryan J. Alsop
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment

cc: Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
Kern County Public Works
Kern Council of Governments

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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June 16, 2020

KATHLEEN KRAUSE
CLERK OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Kern County Administrative Center
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Bakersfield, California 93301
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The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: DELAYING VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT) REQUIREMENTS
OF SB 743 (STEINBERG, 2013)**

Dear Governor Newsom,

The Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that your Administration delay implementation of the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) requirements of SB 743 (Steinberg, 2013).

Due to Legislative changes adopted in 2013, beginning July 1, 2020, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will require projects in California to account for how many new miles of automobile travel they produce, rather than how much congestion they produce. The amount of driving, as measured by VMT, will be the new lens for assessing transportation impacts on the environment for projects subject to CEQA. The effect on cities and counties may not be immediate, but it will be profound in the long run and will change the way planners analyze projects. Implementation of the VMT standard, as recommended by your Office of Planning and Research, will require that new developments achieve a 15% reduction in VMT.

Considering that the State of California is in the midst of a housing affordability crisis and is in desperate need of more affordable housing options, making new housing significantly more expensive by imposing VMT reduction requirements on new projects will only serve to exacerbate the State's housing affordability crisis. The California Building Industry Association estimates that 10,000 Californians are priced out of a home for each \$1,000 added to the overall cost of a project.

Rural communities throughout the Central Valley already lag behind other parts of California in terms of economic development and many of our rural communities will be disproportionately affected by the implementation of VMT standards created by SB 743 because many of our residents must drive longer distances to find employment in urban centers. Simply put, VMT requirements build barriers to the creation of jobs, housing, and infrastructure development in rural communities.

Making matters worse, the COVID-19 recession has driven a surge in unemployment and will significantly worsen the economic hurdles facing Kern and the Central Valley. From a public policy standpoint, the sensible and appropriate approach should be to delay the implementation of the VMT standard for a minimum of two years until the disastrous effects of the COVID-19 recession have subsided enough to pursue a path forward that benefits all citizens, businesses, and workers across the State of California.

Sincerely,

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Ms. Kate Gordon, Governor's Office of Planning and Research
Honorable Members of the Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange