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Vote NO on Measure I

A NO vote on Measure I won't kill SMART because they have money to keep operating another 10 years. But a NO vote will give voters time to see if SMART can perform better than it has so far. A YES vote would give them a blank check for \$2.4 billion, making them unaccountable to voters for the next 40 years. The average household has already paid \$970 in sales taxes for SMART and will pay about \$9800 more if Measure I passes.

Beside some bike path the only tangible thing SMART has provided in return, and for just a few, is a nicer ride than driving or using the GGT bus. Naturally they love it since taxpayers pick up about \$100 of the round-trip cost so they only pay \$10. This comes to a \$25,000/year taxpayer subsidy for each regular commuter. Taxpayers have put over \$660 million into SMART; riders just \$9 million. This gift from the many to a lucky few is probably not why voters approved SMART in 2008. They expected some greater social benefit.

To sell SMART officials worded the 2008 ballot as follows. *"To relieve traffic, fight global warming ... shall (SMART) levy a 1/4-cent sales tax for 20 years..."* They did so even though the 2005 EIR said it would not improve congestion on 101 and would have "minimal" impact on GHG. So far, the EIR has proven right and those promises have proven hollow. The 2020 ballot repeats this same deception.

Consider 101 between Petaluma and Novato. It carries about 13,700 people in cars south during the morning whereas the train carries 590. Without SMART perhaps half would take the bus, but even if all drove, the train is taking only one car in every 23 off the road. Meanwhile SMART is causing hours of delay at its many street crossings.

Having just written a book about global warming I know the urgency of reducing GHG, but it appears SMART is either making the situation worse or helping just a little depending on how many of its riders would take the bus versus drive if SMART didn't exist. A detailed study (at notsosmart.org/numbers-dont-lie/) shows that SMART now emits about three times more GHG than if all its riders took the bus. If all drove cars SMART could be saving a little. The truth lies somewhere between but it's impossible to know where because SMART never asked their riders which mode they would use without SMART. Public Records Requests reveal that SMART has never done any analysis of its impacts on GHG or congestion, which suggests that SMART's management simply doesn't care whether SMART is honoring its promises or not. Yet they expect us to trust them with \$2.4 billion more.

In a misleading handout, which assumes 100% of SMART riders are commuters who would have driven cars, SMART claims it's saving about 1300 tons CO2/yr. That figure is clearly wrong but let's assume it's true for the moment. Consider the alternative.

To solve climate change we need to spend money where it gets the most bang for the buck. If we spent the \$37 million in sales-tax now going to SMART in just one year on large wind turbines instead, they would save about 15,000 tons of CO₂/yr. That's over ten times what SMART claims to save in that misleading handout. At the end of the second year we would be saving twenty times as much as SMART, and so forth. Turns out the extra \$2.4 billion SMART wants could buy enough wind turbines to supply all the homes in Marin and Sonoma County. Alternately we could greatly expand large solar systems, or the use of electric cars. In short, SMART is a very wasteful and ineffective way to fight climate change.

SMART says they need time. Let's give it to them by voting NO on Measure I and asking them to return in a few years after having time to improve performance and restore trust. Then we can decide if that's still the best way to spend \$2.4 billion. If we yote YES now the games over, SMART will remain unaccountable and we can never decide to spend this tax money elsewhere.