

September 3, 2004

Dear Regional Transportation Commissioners and Staff:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the Santa Cruz County community as Executive Director of the SCCRTC for the past nineteen years. From my first day as interim director in November 1985, I have enjoyed and appreciated the challenges of the position and the working relationships I have had over the years with Commissioners, Commission staff, City, County, and Metro staff, the media, local, state, and federal government officials and staff, consultants, private businesses and organizations, and the community at large.

I am writing to inform you of my plan to leave my position with the RTC. I have for a while considered my next steps, and the recent events in my personal life have challenged me to reach for a new understanding of our short lives on this planet. I am ready to do something different.

Notwithstanding my personal decision to step out, it is already a time of change at the RTC. A major transportation tax measure is on this November's ballot to pay for widening Highway 1 and other priority projects, and a Highway Construction Authority has been established to oversee the highway widening project. The RTC has advanced negotiations and developed a full financial and business plan for acquisition and future public ownership of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, a significant underutilized transportation resource. I am satisfied that the RTC staff and I have employed the full measure of our professional abilities to help bring these important transportation choices to their present moment.

I am honored to have been a part of what the RTC has accomplished in the past two decades. In addition to the major projects noted above, and in collaboration with our member and partner organizations, the RTC has

- Fully engaged the public in discussion of transportation plans, issues, options, funding, and policy decisions which can affect their daily lives, and about which they can make informed choices,
- Distributed over \$300 M for transportation infrastructure, transit operations, and programs throughout the county which have helped keep our roads maintained, our highways safer, and our buses running, and which have assisted and encouraged thousands of people to carpool, use transit, walk, and ride bicycles,
- Significantly reduced accidents on Highway 17 with the *Safe on 17 Program*,
- Improved Mission Street/Highway 1 in Santa Cruz, the 41<sup>st</sup> & Bay Avenue Highway 1 interchanges in Capitola, and funded improvements to the Highway 1 & 17 interchange,
- Conducted the award-winning "*Consider the Alternatives*" public information campaign, demonstrating statewide leadership around transportation policy options,
- Improved motorist safety and roadside assistance through the SAFE call box and freeway service patrol programs,
- Supported the *Community Traffic Safety Coalition* and *Bike To Work*, successful public-private partnerships that improve the safety and efficiency of non-automobile travel,
- Increased special transportation services and awareness of the needs of elderly and disabled residents,
- Increased information and research about transportation issues in smaller urban areas, and

- Recognized the exemplary contributions of volunteers, government and private sector employees, elected officials, the media, and others toward improving our regional transportation system.

None of these accomplishments were achieved without some difficulty, disagreement, and disappointment along the way. Public funding for needed public services and infrastructure is at risk in our state. Transportation is a hot-button issue and community agreement on what to do about it can take time and stretch our collective public decision-making skills. I believe that in the long run, the Santa Cruz County community will be well served by supporting and funding a robust and varied transportation system that can enhance mobility and, at the same time, contribute toward achieving other important community goals.

Thank you again for many years of stimulating challenges. I extend very special appreciation to the RTC staff, an outstanding team of seasoned professionals who exemplify the dedication, integrity and creativity of our very best public servants.

I will work with the Commission, the Commission's Deputy Director, and the County Administrative Office on an exit plan that allows for continuity and is timed appropriately for the RTC and for me. I expect to conclude my work in the office by the end of December 2004. After a travel and gardening break, I look forward to continuing to be an active member of this wonderful Santa Cruz County community that I have lived in and loved for the past 37 years.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by/*  
Linda Wilshusen

cc: (via email only)

AMBAG  
CALCOG  
Caltrans  
County Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Legislators  
RTC Committees  
RTC Consultants  
RTC Member Agencies  
TAMC