



# Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program

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# LEGISLATION

- SB 1339 – Authorizes adoption and implementation of Commuter Benefit Program.
- Air District Unanimously adopted Regulation 14 – Rule 1 which requires employers with more than 50 employees to provide commuter benefits.
- Pilot program through end of 2016.
- The goal of the program is to
  - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion by using the federal tax code
  - Encourage employees to commute via alternatives to driving alone



# COMMUTER BENEFIT OPTIONS

- **Option 1: Pre-Tax Benefit** - Allow employees to exclude up to \$130 of their transit or vanpooling expenses each month from taxable income.
- **Option 2: Employer-Provided Subsidy** - Provide a subsidy to reduce or cover employees' monthly transit or vanpool costs, up to \$75 per month.
- **Option 3: Employer-Provided Transit** - Provide a free or low-cost transit service for employees, such as a bus, shuttle or vanpool service.
- **Option 4: Alternative Commuter Benefit** - Provide an alternative commuter benefit that is as effective in reducing single-occupancy commute trips as Options 1, 2 or 3.



# EXISTING CITY BENEFITS

- City currently provides eflexTRANSIT Benefits that qualify under Option 1 (Pre-Tax Benefits)
- A total of 12 employees are enrolled in the program. They pay \$1 per month to eflex for managing the program.
- Shuttle Study – The City has received two grants to conduct a Transit Connector Feasibility Study.
  - Study will evaluate transit connector feasibility to existing gaps in the system.
  - Evaluate such service for the underserved industrial area as well as Cal-State East Bay and residential areas.
  - Commuter benefit Option 3 (Employer provided transit) will be evaluated as part of this study.

# ENFORCEMENT

- Employers must select commuter benefit and register via program website at [511.org](http://511.org)
- Implement program by September 30, 2014.
- Air-District maintains a list of businesses and has sent out notices to Employers and Chamber of Commerce.
- After the September 30 deadline, the Air District intends to send notices to employers that are not in compliance.
- A monetary fine is expected to follow after the first notice.
- LaShawn Martin is the assigned representative for Alameda County. She can be reached at [martin@rideshare.511.org](mailto:martin@rideshare.511.org) or 510-273-3610.



# NEXT STEPS

- Staff will continue to monitor the enrollment in the commuter benefit program and evaluate ways to emphasize the program.
  
- Some options to evaluate include
  - incentivizing use of commuter benefit program
  - promoting these benefits during open enrollment period to create awareness.