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Dear Editor,

It is understandable to want to maximize funding for suffering Bay Area transit agencies through stimulus funding. But Paul Hogarth's editorial calling for elimination of stimulus funding for the Transbay "box" is misguided.

Many feel, myself included, that it is likely we will never get the rail extension from 4th and King to the new Transbay Terminal if we don't invest in the Transbay Box now. Imagine the political difficulty of excavating out a massive subway train box immediately underneath an operating Transbay Terminal with all the planned shops open for business. Additionally, surrounding property owners and businesses will likely resist excavating the Box later to avoid suffering through a second excavation at the massive Transbay site. Even if the rail extension was only delayed (rather than killed outright) due to political difficulties, this would be a huge blow to San Francisco's plans for improving the Terminal and bring Caltrain downtown. The voters of San Francisco have overwhelmingly supported the rail extension. But more importantly, we run the risk of degrading the quality of the entire statewide High Speed Rail project if it is forced to stop south of downtown at 4th and King. We must build the box now.

The Transbay Terminal project is one the most transit "shove-ready" in the Bay Area, and it is moving forward rapidly. Final design work is to begin in March with demolition in August. Additionally, constructing the Box now will save about \$100M over attempting to excavate at a later date. I suspect the savings are much more when considering the cost of litigation and delay that will likely result from excavating at a later date.

Finally, even given the dire situation for transit agencies, we need to continue to plan to improve the rail and other transit infrastructure for the future. Balancing the stimulus money between our short-term needs and the long-term vision required to create a more sustainable society is the right thing to do.

Daniel Krause