



July 19, 2017

Regional Transit Board of Directors
Henry Li, General Manager/CEO
1400 29th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

Re: Excessive Heat and Public Safety Concerns

Dear Board of Directors and Mr. Li:

The Sacramento Transit Riders Union (Sac TRU) is writing to express our concern over the extreme heat exposure, and related health and safety issues experienced by passengers and staff during the summer months in Sacramento on Regional Transit lightrail trains. SacTRU members personally experienced the extreme car temperatures on the light rail during the recent heat waves in June and July and on previous hot summer days. As recently [reported on by Fox40](#), the conditions that riders and operators face as a result of the air conditioning not functioning on trains, often with interior temperatures rising to over 100 degrees onboard, are serious and preventable safety hazards.

Under the OSH Act, employers have a duty to protect workers from recognized hazards in the workplace, including serious heat-related hazards. Workers who are exposed to a hot environment for many hours face avoidable hazards to their safety and health. We want operators and other workers to be provided with a safe environment to do their jobs. These incidents are of particular concern because the health and safety hazards experienced by RT's operators on hot summer days can potentially impact and endanger others.

Passengers are also placed in dangerous situations when exposed to excessive heat. This especially affects the elderly, young children and persons with disabilities. Delayed, malfunctioning trains and buses also cause riders to be exposed in the sun for extended periods of time at unprotected stations in triple-digit temperatures. SacTRU members related their stories about being on light rail cars where the AC had cut out mid-ride during hour-long commutes. During the rush hour, the trains are often very crowded, and so hot, that some of our members have experienced feeling faint.

We have a long summer ahead of us. Riders and operators cannot continue riding and working in these unsafe conditions. RT can help transit riders defeat the heat by educating passengers about how to be prepared to travel safely on extreme weather days, by installing more shade structures at stations and stops, and by fixing and maintaining their cooling and heating systems on all trains and buses.

These are serious issues that riders and operators face annually in the summer as lightrail trains continue to age and RT repeatedly fails to prioritize funding for the maintenance and replacement of lightrail cars and cooling systems. RT must focus on maintaining and enhancing their existing system infrastructure before investing in new expansion projects. We would like to see RT's plan to monitor on-board conditions, identify passengers with special needs that may need additional assistance during extreme heat, and an effective emergency response plan for future extreme weather events.

We ask that RT repair or replace the broken AC units immediately and make vehicle replacement a funding priority before preventable, serious accidents occur. Please include this letter in the public record.

Sincerely,

Sac TRU



Riders Standing in the Heat



Riders waiting in the sun outside the Customer Service & Sales Center (1225 R Street) in extreme heat on July 3, 2017 to purchase new tickets and passes at the beginning of the month. We are told by riders that this is a common occurrence at the beginning of the month when they must get new passes. There was a line most of the day, those in line said they wish RT would at least put up some shade if they cannot provide more staff during busy times, such as the beginning of the month rush.