

Press Democrat, December 2010

Rail Benefits vs Bus

In his letter of Nov. 24, Wayne Diggs cites his credentials as a former manager for Golden Gate Transit. But it is apparent from what he writes that he has either forgotten what he learned on that job, or is deliberately trying to mislead the readers of this newspaper.

He should know that the SMART rail corridor can't be used for bus transit; the North Coast Railroad Authority has an easement allowing it to run freight trains on those tracks. And, even if we did decide to do away with both freight and passenger rail in the North Bay, it wouldn't save either time or money to create a "busway" along the rail corridor.

Building a 70-mile bus highway is no easier than building a 70-mile train system. It still requires all of the grade crossings, signal systems, bridges and tunnels that make SMART so expensive. And while buses may be cheaper than trains, they don't carry as many passengers, so we'll need more vehicles, more drivers and more mechanics.

Buses and trains can complement each other in the North Bay, but neither can replace the other. This is a false choice that was put to rest years ago. Why is Diggs digging it up now?

Tanya Narath
Santa Rosa