Whereas the Southern Environmental Law Center ("SELC") is a non-profit, regional environmental organization dedicated to the protection of natural resources throughout the Southeast;

Whereas SELC works extensively on issues concerning transportation and land use, advocating for systems that encourage compact, dense growth that reduce harm to our health and environment as opposed to land-use choices resulting in destruction or disturbance of natural areas, such as paving over wetlands, filling-in streams, and clear-cutting forests;

Whereas the Wake County Transit Plan effectively addresses current transportation needs and employs a variety of solutions that will benefit the region for years to come, particularly by proposing:

- A commuter rail line from Garner to Durham, a fixed-guideway transit option that will help planners, developers, businesses, and residents make long-term investment decisions that foster dense, walkable communities that are less reliant on cars;
- Bus rapid transit lines, a transit solution that can provide a level of service that is similar to light rail at a lower cost and can potentially increase density and walkability along their routes;
- Increased bus service—including 83 miles of frequent bus routes that run every 15 minutes for most of the day—which can be scaled up quickly and provide needed benefits to those who rely on the existing bus system as well as attract new riders; and
- County-connecting routes that will provide residents across Wake County access to jobs and necessary services;

Whereas the Transit Plan should result in more investments in transit that will reduce reliance on private vehicles in our growing cities; foster dense, walkable, bikeable, and affordable mixed-use developments; reduce environmentally-destructive, sprawling land-uses; and reduce air pollution from tailpipe emissions;

Whereas the transit provisions in the Raleigh Affordable Housing Plan and the additional property tax revenue dedicated to affordable housing are important to: (1) mitigate against potential displacement of long-term residents that might follow from increased property values and gentrification that can accompany new transit corridors and (2) help ensure that the Transit Plan will serve those in the community who most rely on public transportation;
Whereas local government officials in Wake County can continue to learn from other municipalities that have had success in proactively maintaining affordable housing along transit routes as they work to ensure that a significant portion of housing within a one-half mile radius of bus hubs and bus rapid transit stations are affordable; 

Whereas local government officials and GoTriangle will have the opportunity to engage with the public, existing bus riders, bus drivers, and low-income residents to ensure that new bus service that will be made available under the Transit Plan will meet the transportation needs of those residents who rely on bus service; 

Whereas increased investments in transit infrastructure will provide new employment opportunities for Wake County residents; and 

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southern Environmental Law Center endorses the Wake County Transit Plan and urges residents to support passage of the Wake County Transit ballot referendum on November 8, 2016 and to continue support of effective affordable housing policies that are integrated with the Transit Plan.

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2 Affordability can be measured in different ways. At a minimum, we urge officials to foster increased investments in housing that will be affordable to those making sixty percent or less than the area median income.