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April 17, 2017

The Honorable Matt Dababneh  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0045  
Fax: (916) 319-2145

AB 1421 (Dababneh): Railroads: noise and vibration levels  
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Dababneh:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing the 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of all four California AAP regional chapters statewide, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 1421 (Dababneh). This bill would require the State Department of Public Health to conduct a study to determine the noise and vibration levels associated with all railroad lines in the vicinity of residential areas or schools.

Excessive noise can be highly damaging to health and well-being. The most obvious negative health effect is hearing loss, which can occur with extended exposure to sounds above 80 dB; but this is only one of many consequences of heightened exposure to noise. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, noise can induce a stress response in the body at 65 dB, and even sounds as low as 40 dB can contribute to sleep deprivation. Additionally, exposure to noise levels greater than 70 dB regularly causes undesirable cardiovascular effects in children. Even learning can be affected: “Most studies of children at schools with high levels of aircraft or traffic noise... demonstrated negative effects on difficult cognitive tests or reading comprehension.” As such, it is important that we minimize children’s exposure to high levels of noise. However, doing so requires reliable data that would enable us to determine the sources of undesirable noise and how best to mitigate them.

AB 1421 (Dababneh) would help protect children’s health and well-being by ensuring that we have reliable data about the noise and vibration levels produced by railroad lines that are placed near schools and residential areas. This would lay the groundwork for effective regulation and mitigation of noise pollution that harms children.

California pediatricians strongly support AB 1421 (Dababneh). We thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Graff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" written in a more legible style than the last name "Graff", which is more stylized.

Nancy Graff, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne