June 29, 1998

To: Engineering and Design Advisory Panel

Fr: Executive Director

In August 1997, Governor Wilson signed into law Senate Bill 60, which brought to a close a four-year-old impasse over how to pay for the seismic retrofit and replacement of the Bay Area’s state-owned toll bridges. The bill also delegated to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission—acting as the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA)—the selection of a design for the new eastern span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. At its meeting on June 24, 1998, the Commission fulfilled this responsibility by adopting BATA Resolution No. 10, a copy of which is enclosed for your information together with two recent newspaper editorials.

Specifically, the resolution requests that Caltrans extend the $1 seismic retrofit toll surcharge for approximately 15 months to pay for two of the three “amenities” authorized under SB 60: a single-tower self-anchored suspension span adjacent to Yerba Buena Island and a bicycle/pedestrian path on the eastbound deck of the new span. The Commission deferred any action on the third eligible amenity—relocation or replacement of the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco—until staff has completed a cost analysis of various options for improving the terminal. A copy of BATA’s separate motion on the Transbay Terminal also is enclosed.

As you may know, the Commission’s design selection is not without controversy, but few decisions of any importance in the Bay Area occur without controversy. I can assure you, however, that we conducted one of the most open and inclusive design review processes for a major public works project in the region’s history. Over the course of 16 months, we conducted 15 public hearings; heard from thousands of Bay Area residents via letter, phone calls, e-mail, and opinion polls; reviewed more than a dozen different bridge design proposals presented by private firms and Caltrans; and received expert advice on seismic performance and bridge design issues from a blue-ribbon panel of 34 architects, engineers, and geologists. While we may not have pleased every critic, we have afforded every critic an opportunity to comment and influence the design.
Moreover, the design process is by no means complete. We have reached the 30% stage of completion, which means that 70% of the detailed design work is yet to come. Over the next year, BATA Resolution No. 10 provides that the Commission and our blue-ribbon panel will continue to provide design oversight on such critical issues as the design of the long causeway section of the bridge and its touchdowns at the Yerba Buena Island tunnel and the Oakland shore. This continuing design oversight will, of course, allow ample opportunity for public comment and improvement of the current design.

We look forward to working with Caltrans and all interested stakeholders in the remaining design phase for the eastern span. We remain committed to ensuring that the region receives a safe and handsome new bridge at the earliest possible date. On behalf of the Commission, I especially want to thank the members of the Engineering and Design Advisory Panel for their dedicated service to date, and hope that we can continue to borrow your valuable time and professional expertise in the remaining phase of design.

Lawrence D. Dahms

LDD/SH/Iw
Enclosures
ABSTRACT
BATA Resolution No. 10

This resolution approves the extension of the seismic retrofit surcharge to pay for Bay Bridge amenities.

Further discussion of this resolution is contained in the Executive Director’s memorandum on Bay Bridge Design Task Force Recommendations dated June 17, 1998.
RE: Extension of Seismic Retrofit Surcharge for Bay Bridge Amenities

BAY AREA TOLL AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION NO. 10

WHEREAS, Streets and Highways Code Section 30950 creates the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA), which is the same as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC); and

WHEREAS, Streets and Highways Code Sections 30950 et seq. transfers to BATA certain California Transportation Commission and California Department of Transportation (Department) duties and responsibilities for the bridges owned and operated by the Department in the San Francisco Bay Area; and

WHEREAS, the bridges subject to this transfer of duties and responsibilities are defined in Streets and Highways Code Section 30910 to include the Antioch, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez, Richmond-San Rafael, Dumbarton, San Mateo-Hayward, and San Francisco-Oakland Bay bridges; and

WHEREAS, Streets and Highways Code Section 31010 imposes a seismic retrofit surcharge of one dollar ($1) per vehicle for passage on the Bay Area toll bridges defined above; and

WHEREAS, Streets and Highways Code Section 31015 authorizes BATA to request funding for certain amenities associated with the new eastern span of the Bay Bridge defined to include (1) a design of the new eastern span of the Bay Bridge that costs more than the cost of a single tower cable-suspension bridge selected by the Department, (2) replacement or relocation of the transbay bus terminal in the City and County of San Francisco, and (3) bicycle or pedestrian access on the new eastern span, and requires the Department to include any of the amenities requested by BATA if sufficient funds generated by the seismic retrofit surcharge are available to fully pay for those amenities; and

WHEREAS, Streets and Highways Code Section 31050(a)(2) permits the extension of the seismic retrofit surcharge by up to two additional years to pay for the amenities requested by BATA; and
WHEREAS, a two-year extension is estimated by BATA to generate approximately two hundred thirty million dollars ($230,000,000); and

WHEREAS, since February 1997, MTC’s and subsequently BATA’s Bay Bridge Design Task Force (Task Force) has conducted extensive public outreach and reviewed the advice of the Department staff, private design teams retained by the Department, and an engineering and design advisory panel (EDAP) composed of bridge engineers, architects, and geologists in order to develop recommendations to BATA regarding Bay Bridge eastern span amenities; and

WHEREAS, on July 30, 1997, MTC adopted planning and design recommendations to guide the development of the design of the new eastern span and amenities; and

WHEREAS, on June 10, 1998, EDAP provided the Task Force with its recommendations after completion of 30 percent of the design of the new eastern span; and

WHEREAS, on June 22, 1998, the Task Force, guided by the planning and design recommendations previously adopted by MTC, and EDAP’s recommendations, met and recommends extending for 14.7 months the seismic retrofit surcharge on Bay Area bridges to generate an estimated one hundred forty one million dollars ($141,000,000) to pay for certain amenities, listed in Attachment A to this resolution and incorporated herein as though set forth in full; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force recommends a number of other actions and future actions regarding additional amenities and bridge design; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that BATA approves the extension of the seismic retrofit surcharge by 14 months and 3 weeks to generate an estimated $141,000,000 to pay for the Bay Bridge eastern span amenities included in Attachment A of this Resolution; and, be it further

RESOLVED, BATA supports the recommendation that the pile caps for the piers supporting the connecting section of the new bridge be placed above water, with careful attention to the design, and authorizes the Task Force and EDAP to provide continuing design oversight of the remaining design phase for the new eastern span, including, not but not limited to, the
following key issues: the Yerba Buena Island transition and possible replacement ramps, the design of the causeway section of the bridge, and the Oakland touchdown; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the BATA Executive Director is directed to take all actions necessary within his authority to carry out the recommendations included herein; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the BATA staff is directed to distribute copies of this Resolution to the Director of the Department, the Department’s District 04 Director, members of the Bay Area state legislative and congressional delegations, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and members of EDAP.

BAY AREA TOLL AUTHORITY

[Signature]

James R. Spering, Chair

The above resolution was entered into by the Bay Area Toll Authority at a regular meeting of the Authority held in Oakland, California on June 24, 1998.
San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge East Span Replacement Project

1. The new eastern span should have a single-tower self-anchored steel suspension long span at Yerba Buena Island with a variable depth concrete causeway connecting the long span to the Oakland shore.

   Incremental cost: $91 million from the extension of the seismic retrofit surcharge
   Toll surcharge extension: 9.5 months

2. The new eastern span should have bicycle/pedestrian access permanently guaranteed with a single bicycle/pedestrian path 15.5 feet wide and 1 foot above deck level on the south side of the eastbound deck.

   Incremental cost: $50 million from the extension of the seismic retrofit surcharge
   Toll surcharge extension: 5.2 months

Total period of toll surcharge extension - 14.7 months (14 months and 3 weeks)
Bridge design process conformed to the rules

It's no surprise that when it comes to aesthetics in an region as diver- se as the Bay Area, a consensus is as difficult as trying to pull all a persons personal side-

ence. And true to form, when it came to de-

ciding what the new eastern span of the Bay Bridge should look like, dis-

agreement was the order of the day, ex-

cept on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. The MTC voted Wednesday 13 to accept the recommendation of the Bay Bridge Design Task Force to con-

stitute a single suspension bridge with a viaduct con-

necting the span and the eastern span. In the end, though, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, Oakland Mayor Elihu Harris and Oakland Mayor-elect Jerry Brown all called for a "better design." Harris, who cast the lone dis-

senting vote on the MTC, has been a long-term critic of the single suspension bridge because it failed to address rail options. His voice did not con-

vince the other MTC members, and that's by the board. This pro-

cess has been conducted in public, with the other two designs receiving as much publicity as the suspension bridge. The MTC and the task force led by Al-

meda County Supervisor Mary King were responsible for coming up with a new de-

sign by the primary task of providing Bay Area commuters with a span engi-

neered more seismically safe than the current Bay Bridge. This was not a win-

now-dressing issue.

Not on the board

The hue and cry has come primarily from a handful of elected leaders who did not sit on the MTC board, with the ex-

ception of Harris. The public has been paying the additional $1 toll since Jan. 1, so this design is not bidden to the unin-

trained eye, we would have no doubt be-

en. But what we did hear early on in the pro-

cess was that bicyclists wanted bike lanes on the new structure, and they received them. At an additional cost of $650 mil-

lion, pedaling over the bridge will be a re-

ality. At the beginning of the discussions, the bike lanes were thought of as a stepping point, but that didn't turn out to be the case. The contention has arisen over the ease of the design of the bridge, which allows for flexibility such as off-ramps to Yerba Buena Island, an element San Francisco Mayor Brown demands.

Fair compromise

The addition of the suspension portion will add $90 million to the cost of the less-expensive viaduct design, and we see this as a compromise to the critics who call the viaduct design a highway and the eastern span a viaduct. It's the cheapest option. The single suspension allows for the grandeur of a bridge one can see in the Bay Area, but the eastern via-

duct portion is practical and — despite what Brown's condem-

nation — it will give beautifully unobstructed views of Oakland and the East Bay.

Mayor-elect Jerry Brown also alleged this was railroaded through the "old boys network," since engineers who drew up the design options participated in the process. Certainly, our confidence in the design would be considerably shaken if there were no bridge-building expert consulted. The public cannot rely on the safety of a bridge engineered only by politi-
cians wanting to put their imprint on a 81.5 billion structure.

We believe nothing has been forced through. The MTC has done an excellent job over the past 14 months at making this entire process open to the public, conducting hearings with the public and finally recommending a design and voting on it publicly.

The goal for the MTC was to find and agree upon a new, structurally safer de-

sign to replace the current eastern span of the Bay Bridge. Despite the rancor from Brown and some local legislators, the MTC board members held their ground and have done a good job, all the while keeping the cost to the taxpayer in mind. They should be applauded for a job well done.
EDITORIALS

Bridge the Differences

MORE THAN a year ago we suggested the design of a new eastern span for the Bay Bridge merited a panel "of international rank," similar to those that were enlisted for the conception of the Golden Gate Bridge or the original Bay Bridge. We reiterated that call on Monday in asking the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to hold off approval on a controversial design that resulted from a more provincial process.

We had hoped the MTC would pause — for no more than a few months — to solicit more ideas from world-class engineers.

The design isn't perfect, but more delays and threats poorly serve Bay Bridge drivers

However, despite the loud objections of some architects, engineers and political leaders from both sides of San Francisco Bay, the MTC this week decided to move forward with its plan for a single-tower suspension bridge.

This leaves critics with several options, all of them likely to generate far more than a few months of delay. The Legislature could undermine the MTC's authority in several ways, including putting the matter to a public vote, but that is unlikely in the face of opposition from Governor Wilson. San Francisco could pursue legal action, citing the plan's potential interference with redevelopment of Yerba Buena and Treasure islands. Or perhaps Mayor Willie Brown could refuse to take that section of the island from the Navy, thus leaving the new span without its western anchor.

A couple of points need to be considered here. For one, the design that has been made public is "about 30 percent complete," said MTC spokesman Steve Heminger.

"The causeway could look substantially different," he said. By now, Caltrans should have received the clear message that it needs to fine tune this uninspiring design.

Secondly, while Mayor Brown and Oakland Mayor-elect Jerry Brown were right to register their objections and push for a short delay for further review, they should think about the risk of trying to overturn the MTC decision with an all-out battle. Their interests may not be served if the process goes back to square one.

This plan's alignment, north of the existing span, does not cut into the Port of Oakland's expansion plans on the eastern end. And a redeveloped Treasure Island would be worthless if a major earthquake were to disable the existing bridge. This must not be allowed to become a war among petty parochial interests.

The MTC-approved proposal is not perfect — and it is hard to imagine that there are not better ideas in the world — but it is not the worst option. The worst option is a bridge that could not withstand a 7.1 earthquake centered many miles away, and would take even more lives and time to repair in a strong temblor closer to home.

While we would have preferred a decision that involved a little more time and a few more creative minds, the focus should be on looking for aesthetic and technical improvements for this plan. The region needs a new bridge, not more lawsuits and elections.
Motion on TransBay Terminal - 6/24/98

In order for the Bay Area Toll Authority to develop its position on whether to request the extension of the seismic retrofit surcharge to provide toll bridge funds for replacement or relocation of the Transbay Terminal, staff is directed to prepare a long-term capital and operating cost analysis of three options to improve the Transbay Terminal:

(a) renovate the existing facility;
(b) replace the existing facility with a new facility on the same site;
(c) relocate the existing facility to a new facility at Howard and Beale Streets

BATA requests that Caltrans consider delaying demolition of the east ramp to the existing facility until the study results are known. BATA further requests AC Transit, the City and County of San Francisco, Caltrans, and other affected stakeholders to meet and confer concurrent with the conduct of the cost analysis to seek consensus on a supported option for improvement of the Transbay Terminal. BATA reserves its right, however, to make the final decision on the expenditure of toll bridge funds that it is responsible for on improvements related to the Transbay Terminal.