



Agenda Item No. 1.a

To: Governmental Affairs & Public Information Committee/Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 25, 2007

From: Celia G. Kupersmith, General Manager

Subject: **STATUS REPORT ON SB 976 RELATIVE TO THE CREATION OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA WATER EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

Recommendation

The following report is provided for informational purposes and no action is required.

Summary

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed SB 976 which was authored by Senator Torlakson on October 14, 2007. This Bill establishes the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) and consolidates all of the existing public ferry operations on San Francisco Bay, except for the District's ferry operations, under WETA. However, this bill does not provide any new operating funds for ferry operations on San Francisco Bay.

Pursuant to the Bill, WETA steps in and assumes all of the roles, responsibilities, contracts, liabilities, assets and existing revenue streams of the existing San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority (WTA). WTA is required to transfer and assign all of its contracts for the study and development of possible water transit services to WETA no later than 60 days after the effective date of the Bill. The timeline for the transfer of all other assets shall be consistent with a transition plan.

On or before January 1, 2009 WETA shall create and adopt a transition plan for the transfer of the other existing public ferry operations on San Francisco Bay, except for the District's ferry service. This transition plan will outline the timeline and steps for the transfer of all terminals, ferries, vehicles, buildings, parking facilities, concessionaire contracts, and existing operating subsidies from WTA and the other operators to WETA.

It is possible that the implementation of this bill may require clean up legislation to address potential outstanding issues associated with the transfer of assets of the existing Vallejo and Alameda/Oakland ferry operations.

WETA is also tasked with developing an emergency water transportation system management plan for water transportation services in the bay area region in the event that bridges, highways and other facilities are rendered inoperable. Also, during a declared emergency WETA shall be known as the Bay Area Maritime Emergency Transportation Coordinator and in cooperation with the State Office of Emergency services, the United States Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and The Metropolitan Transportation Commission shall coordinate emergency activities for water transportation services.

WETA will have a five member Board. Three members will be appointed by the Governor, subject to the confirmation by the Senate. One member will be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and one member will be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly. Members serve for six year terms. The Governor designates the chair and the vice chair of the Board.

The District's current ferry ridership is greater than the current combined ridership of all of these agencies.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact to the District.