

Date: October 28, 2020  
Referred by: Commission

ABSTRACT

Resolution No. 4447

Resolution of Appreciation for Tom Bulger upon his retirement after more than 40 years of service to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, including 35 years of leadership at Government Relations, Inc., which represents the Commission in Washington, D.C.

Date: October 28, 2020  
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RE: Resolution of Appreciation for Tom Bulger

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
Resolution No. 4447

WHEREAS, Tom Bulger is retiring after more than 40 years of service to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), including five years as Director of Policy and Legislation, followed by 35 years of representing the Commission's interests in Washington, D.C., as President of Government Relations, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, prior to his arrival at MTC, Tom began his career in the Washington, D.C., area at the federal Office of Management and Budget and then served as a legislative representative and environmental policy director for the National Association of Counties; and

WHEREAS, Tom is an influential builder of enduring coalitions; an architect of MTC's legislative advocacy program; and the principal founder of the Commission's presence on Capitol Hill, where he has played a critical role in advancing national transportation policy for all Americans; and

WHEREAS, Tom shaped development of the landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), signed into law in 1991 and ushering in a new approach to federal transportation funding that included establishment of the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), both of which have become cornerstones of the multi-modal investment policies adopted by MTC and other metropolitan planning organizations across the country; and

WHEREAS, due in no small part to a land-sea-air tour of the Bay Area that Tom arranged for then-House Transportation Committee Chair Bud Shuster, the ability of metropolitan areas to harness the flexibility of the STP and CMAQ programs to tailor solutions to their unique mobility needs has been reaffirmed through subsequent federal transportation programs, including the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998; the Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

(SAFETEA-LU) in 2005; Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21) in 2012; and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015; and

WHEREAS, Tom assembled a national coalition of metro areas to successfully defeat a proposal that would have punished their success by stripping these regions of CMAQ funds because they had attained federal ozone standards; and

WHEREAS, Tom's ability to bridge the gaps between authorizers and appropriators helped broker the compromises needed to bring the House together, after a speech by then-Rep. George Miller decrying the spilling of BART's blood all over the floor, to support funding for the transit district's extension to the San Francisco International Airport; and

WHEREAS, Tom also put his shoulder to the bureaucratic wheel to secure full funding grant agreements for other major transit expansion projects such as the BART extensions from Fremont to Warm Springs and Bay Point to Antioch; VTA's Tasman light-rail line; and the ongoing electrification of the Caltrain corridor from San Jose to San Francisco; and was equally instrumental in delivering federal dollars to advance such critical projects as the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel and seismic safety upgrades to the Golden Gate Bridge and its southern approach, where the obsolete and decrepit Doyle Drive was replaced by the scenic and efficient Presidio Parkway; and

WHEREAS, Tom's quick apprehension of the intricacies and arcana of federal laws and regulations while simultaneously navigating both the wide corridors of the Capitol and the narrow pathways of the administrative state enabled him to help craft the legal strategy to transfer from the U.S. Navy to the U.S. Department of Transportation the land on which the Yerba Buena Island Transition Structure for the new East Span of the Bay Bridge would be built and to devise innovative solutions for overcoming myriad other jurisdictional barriers that delayed progress in the urgent replacement of the original Bay Bridge East Span after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake tragically revealed the structure's seismic vulnerability; and

WHEREAS, Tom in 2005 leveraged his relationship with then-House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi to secure the appointment of MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger to the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, as well as the

appointment of himself as a policy advisor to that body, which conducted hearings across the country and issued its Transportation for Tomorrow report in 2007; and

WHEREAS, playing an inside game, Tom set up a private sector fundraising operation in the Bay Area to improve access to Republican lawmakers; and

WHEREAS, playing an outside game, Tom helped grease the skids for the Drug Enforcement Agency's departure, after some extravagant Las Vegas conferences and under-fire resignations, from MTC's newly acquired property at 390 Main Street in San Francisco, paving the way for its redevelopment as the Bay Area Metro Center at 375 Beale Street; and

WHEREAS, a deep knowledge of transportation policy, combined with his natural affability and genuine respect for the people of both parties who put policy into action inspired Tom to establish the tradition of a commissioners' trip to Washington each March to advocate for shared regional priorities; and

WHEREAS, Tom cultivated a culture of excellence and good taste that was carried from the Commission's original quarters in the depths of the Claremont Hotel to the top of Capitol Hill, where in Washington's epicurean dark ages of the 1980s he arranged to combine MTC's advocacy trip with a reception at which deprived denizens of the District were introduced to the delectable delights of Dungeness crab and fine California wines, thus establishing both the social high point of the spring lobbying season and another annual tradition that has since evolved into an all-Golden State shindig for which our neighbors in Southern California now foot half the bill, and the resumption of which after its 2020 interruption is eagerly anticipated; and

WHEREAS, the thoughtfulness and attention to detail with which Tom takes care of commissioners and MTC staff on their visits to Washington reflect his commitment to hospitality and friendship as well as a fine-tuned understanding of logistics; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his career at Government Relations, Inc., Tom also has served since 2011 as an Alternate Director for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, during which time he avoided being either killed or indicted; and

WHEREAS, Tom's warmth and wisdom have made him a valued mentor and beloved launcher of successful careers on either side of the country, and where his decades of service to MTC, bookended by an April Fools' Day start as a member of the Commission staff and a Halloween retirement from his lobbying business, encapsulate the good humor and infectious spirit of fun with which he approaches each day; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the staff and commissioners of MTC congratulate Tom on his well-deserved retirement and wish not only Tom, but also his wife Diana and their family, the long enjoyment of new adventures; deep drives and short putts; plenty of weather suitable for sandals and Bermuda shorts; smooth sailing aboard their cherished cruiser, the Diana II; and a championship season for the West Virginia Mountaineers; and that the staff and commissioners also extend to Tom and Diana an open invitation to join the throng at MTC's next Washington reception, when their only obligation will be to eat, drink and make merry.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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Scott Haggerty, Chair

The above resolution was entered into by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission at a duly called and noticed meeting held in San Francisco, California and at other remote locations, on October 28, 2020.