

Date: November 17, 2021
W.I.: 1111
Referred by: Commission

ABSTRACT

Resolution No. 4489

Resolution of Appreciation for Randy Rentschler upon his retirement after 31 years of service to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, including more than 20 years as Director of the Legislation and Public Affairs section.

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RE: Resolution of Appreciation for Randy Rentschler

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution No. 4489

WHEREAS, Randall Rentschler is retiring after 31 years of service to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), including more than 20 years as Director of Legislation and Public Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Randy's route from the flatlands of Michigan to the top of the LPA ladder wound through the verdant campus of Michigan State University, the cobblestoned streets and rutted backroads of eastern Europe during the crumbling of the Iron Curtain, the ski slopes of the Rocky Mountains and the wilds of investment banking; and

WHEREAS, six years spent structuring municipal debt for local government clients prepared Randy for the California Trail and his 1990 arrival at MTC, where he held a series of increasingly responsible positions, including a senior finance post, before his selection to lead the agency's legislative, communications and public involvement activities; and

WHEREAS, serving as a liaison between MTC and the state Legislature during his decades at the helm of the agency's advocacy efforts, Randy led the Commission's work to ensure the timely replacement of the original 1936 East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, helping to steer the project through design debates, funding fights and myriad political minefields to become a 21st century icon of engineering and architectural excellence; and

WHEREAS, evidence of Randy's influence in the halls of the California state Capitol also can be seen in the 1997 establishment of the Bay Area Toll Authority, the placement on the 2004 primary ballot in seven Bay Area counties of Regional Measure 2, and the inclusion of Regional Measure 3 on the 2018 primary ballot in all nine of the region's counties; and

WHEREAS, Randy's groundwork on both voter-approved measures led to a long list of vital transportation improvements that includes BART extensions, the seismic retrofit of the Transbay Tube, expanded ferry services, the Muni Metro Central Subway, the Salesforce Transbay Transit Center, the Caldecott Tunnel fourth bore and improvements to the Cordelia

interchange, among many others; as well as future investments to advance a new transbay rail crossing, complete work on U.S. 101 through the Marin-Sonoma Narrows, and upgrade Highways 37 and 29; and

WHEREAS, Randy worked closely with legislative leaders to craft the landmark 2017 SB1 transportation investment package, which provides billions of dollars annually for local street and road repairs, transit improvements, highway repairs and safety upgrades, bike-ped projects, and local transportation planning as well as additional support to leverage local funds raised through voter-approved transportation measures; and

WHEREAS, Randy led regional and statewide efforts to protect transportation funding from diversions for other uses and captained work done by numerous Bay Area agencies in 2018 to inform the electorate of the risks of passing Proposition 6, which aimed to repeal SB 1 and ultimately was rejected by 55 percent of voters statewide; and

WHEREAS, through his direction of MTC's advocacy efforts, Randy played a role in steering California's land-use and transportation investment policies away from greenfield development and highway expansion toward a focus on infill projects and investments in public transit, walking and bicycling to curb greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that a quarterback must sometimes change the play at the line of scrimmage, Randy during a Capitol Hill lobbying trip once audibled into a misdirection — sending a member of his squad in motion to the right, where the late Sen. John McCain was enlisted to pull at the snap and trap a chronically logorrheic member of the Bay Area squad; an assignment the one-time GOP standard bearer grasped immediately and executed perfectly, thus sealing the edge for Randy and the rest of his team to score public transit, pavement maintenance and bridge preservation points; and

WHEREAS, though many are the acts of impresarial legerdemain Randy executed while hosting various potentates over the years, the “by land, by air, by sea” extravaganza engineered through conspiracy with longtime MTC lobbyist Tom Bulger to chauffeur, chopper and ferry then-House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman Bud Shuster to every corner of the Bay Area stands among the most memorable; and

WHEREAS, the upshot of the multimodal mischief masterminded by Mssrs. Rentschler and Bulger was the passage of a federal transportation program reaffirming metropolitan areas' ability to harness the flexibility of the STP and CMAQ programs to tailor solutions to their unique mobility needs; and

WHEREAS, Randy's appreciation of the epicurean arts and penchant for party planning perhaps made inevitable his emergence, again in cahoots with Mr. Bulger, as an organizer of the lavish Capitol Hill receptions that made maximum use of MTC's minimal budget and capped the Commission's annual advocacy trip to Washington; and

WHEREAS, later in his career, Randy expanded his production portfolio to become an orchestrator of major public events, the greatest of which involved gathering several hundred of his closest friends in an overheated former railcar repair shop to celebrate the opening of the new Bay Bridge East Span; and

WHEREAS, being the son of an educator, Randy also picked up the pedagogical trade, serving for many seasons as a ski instructor, while also moonlighting first as an instructor of public finance at the University of San Francisco and later teaching public policy and communications courses at the University of California; and

WHEREAS, one can take the boy out of Michigan but one cannot take Michigan out of the boy, as evidenced by Randy's enduring affection for the internal combustion engine, his abiding thirst for Bell's Brewery ales, a personal schedule organized around Michigan State basketball telecasts, and a cheerful acceptance of the spectrum of partisan passions; and

WHEREAS, Randy's generally libertarian leanings never prevented him from advising others on precisely how they should live, work and play; and

WHEREAS, Randy took quiet but evident pride in the accomplishments and enthusiasms of his children, from daughter Emily's exploits on the soccer pitch to son Kyle's role as a co-founder of a Bay Area tech startup; and

WHEREAS, Randy maintained an open-door policy for his office, which featured a table frequently festooned with peanut butter jars and half-eaten apples, as well as an open-drawer policy for his chocolate supply; and

WHEREAS, distilled from dozens of Randy's oft-used aphorisms is the set of principles now widely known as Rentschler's Laws of Physics, among these being that (stuff) flows downhill; that one ought never let the perfect be the enemy of the good; and that one ought not ask for permission but for forgiveness; and

WHEREAS, in a demonstration of this third law, Randy without the prior knowledge or consent of his superiors once purchased — and directed a member of his staff to deploy — an aerial drone inside the Bay Area Metro Center during the building's redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, Randy provided clear direction for any reader of this resolution who may advocate for the incorporation of more Rentschlerisms into the laws of physics: You decide; and

WHEREAS, the fact that many of the longest-serving members of the entire MTC staff work in Legislation and Public Affairs is testament to Randy's team's affection for and appreciation of their dashing and charming leader's swashbuckling style; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the staff and commissioners of MTC thank Randy for his countless contributions to the agency and to the people of the Bay Area, congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement and wish not only Randy, but also his wife Rosemary and their family, the long enjoyment of easy laughter; short lift lines; deep powder; warm pools; plentiful Sparty championships; sure handling, tight cornering and rapid acceleration; and the peaceful pursuit of pleasure absent pressure to pacify either politicians or personnel.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Alfredo Pedroza, Chair

The above resolution was approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission at a regular meeting of the Commission held in San Francisco, CA and at other remote locations, on November 17, 2021.