

March 4, 2024

Chair Pedroza  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
Bay Area Metro Center  
375 Beale Street, Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Dear MTC Commissioners:

Recently, Commissioner Josefowitz made comments questioning the value of continued investment in regional water transit service.

As Chair of the Board of Directors overseeing the region's largest ferry operator, and as mayors of communities with current San Francisco Bay Ferry (SF Bay Ferry) service, or plans for future service, we understand and appreciate the facts, including that the ferry system:

- Was the fastest growing transit system in the region prior to the pandemic;
- Has been the fastest regional system to recover ridership after the pandemic;
- Has aligned its fares with other transit modes, and in doing so has become a travel mode of choice for riders from all income categories;
- Operates at a cost/passenger mile that is similar to other transit modes carrying passengers along important long-distance trips;
- Has the highest customer satisfaction rating of any transit system in the country;
- Operates the nation's cleanest water-based transit system and is a national leader in the effort to decarbonize the maritime industry.

SF Bay Ferry should be applauded for the changes that have occurred in the four years since Mr. Josefowitz resigned from its Board of Directors. It was the first transit operator in the region to fully restore service following the pandemic and the agency had the foresight to make equity-focused, ridership-incentivizing changes that many other operators around the region have since adopted.

Thanks to the agency's fare changes, the cost of riding the ferry is aligned, and sometimes less expensive than other transit modes. The riders that have fueled the system's impressive recovery are benefiting from faster travel times, the best on-time performance in the region, and a better travel experience and they are paying less for it.

Mr. Josefowitz questions the cost-effectiveness of the service. The fact is that SF Bay Ferry has the 6th lowest cost per passenger mile of the region's 20-plus transit operators.

That leaves Mr. Josefowitz's question about carbon footprint. SF Bay Ferry is the cleanest ferry system in the country and it is getting cleaner. The system's new vessels burn 40% less fuel than the vessels they are replacing, and the agency has leveraged regional funding to raise \$117 million to develop the nation's first network of zero-emission ferries.

These are all reasons that Bay Area voters chose to support increased investment to maintain, expand, and modernize the ferry system. Approximately 9% of Regional Measure 3 (RM3) funds are set aside to support ferry operations. We worked hard to pass RM3 because this investment was included. Ultimately, more investment

will be needed, not less. The region's fastest growing neighborhoods are being built and planned along the waterfront, with little access to other transit modes. We have seen water transit emerge as the best option for our existing waterfront communities and we must invest in the expansion of zero-emission ferry service to these new communities. Doing anything different would be irresponsible and would directly contribute to regional traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and would prevent disadvantaged communities and transit dependent riders from accessing these new job and housing opportunities.

As discussions about new regional funding continue, we urge you to keep these facts in mind. Support for ferry service will be critical to securing regional consensus for those efforts.

Sincerely,

Jim Wunderman, Chair  
San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor  
City of Alameda

Robert McConnell, Mayor  
City of Vallejo

Eduardo Martinez, Mayor  
City of Richmond

Federal Glover, Supervisor  
Contra Costa County

Jesse Arreguin, Mayor  
City of Berkeley

Jeff Gee, Mayor  
City of Redwood City

Juan Banales, Mayor  
City of Pittsburg

Lamar Thorpe, Mayor  
City of Antioch

Brianne Zorn, Mayor  
City of Martinez

Dan Romero, Mayor  
City of Hercules