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Memorandum

TO: BATA Oversight Committee

DATE: January 6, 2010

FR: Executive Director

W.I.:

RE: Revisions to the Toll Schedule on the State-owned Bay Area Bridges (BATA Resolution No. 90)

Streets and Highways Code Section 31011 authorizes BATA to increase the toll on the seven state-owned toll bridges in the Bay Area to pay for the completion of the Toll Bridge Seismic Retrofit Program. Additionally, Assembly Bill 1175, which was signed by the Governor in October 2009 and became effective January 1, 2010, adds the seismic retrofits of the Antioch and Dumbarton Bridges to the Seismic Retrofit Program.

The law (Streets and Highways Code Section 30918 (a)) requires BATA to hold a public hearing in regard to a proposed toll increase for seismic improvements before taking any action. In accordance with the law, we have held four public hearings in Alameda, San Mateo, Contra Costa and San Francisco Counties to receive public testimony on the proposed toll increase.

The current toll rates for the state-owned bridges are as follows:

Vehicle Class	Current Toll
2 axles	\$4.00
3 axles	\$6.00
4 axles	\$8.25
5 axles	\$11.25
6 axles	\$12.00
7 axles or more	\$13.50
Carpool	\$0.00

Reasons for a Toll Increase and Toll Increase Options

A toll increase on the bridges is needed for three primary reasons 1) to fund the seismic retrofit of the Antioch and Dumbarton Bridges, 2) to off-set reduced revenues due to declining traffic volumes on the bridges, and 3) to fund increased costs of our debt financings. The estimated new funding to complete the seismic program, including the seismic retrofit of the Antioch and Dumbarton bridges and to carry out other existing BATA toll commitments, is approximately \$160 million in new annual revenues.

Three toll increase options have been presented for consideration and discussion, as follows:

- Option #1 – \$5 toll for 2-axle autos, \$3 toll for carpools, and a \$6 per axle toll for trucks.
- Option #2 – \$5 toll for 2-axle autos, maintaining toll free passage for carpools, and a \$10 per axle toll for trucks.
- Option #3 – Same as Option #1 for 6 Bridges, and congestion pricing for the Bay Bridge, which includes a \$6 toll for autos in the peak period, \$4 toll for autos in the non-peak, and a \$5 toll for autos on weekends.

Public Hearing Comments

Four public hearings were held to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the toll increase proposals. In addition to the public hearings, the public was encouraged to provide comments through letters and e-mails and an on-line survey was available on the MTC website in regards to the toll increase proposals. In addition, petitions expressing opposition were received from the California Trucking Association and a private individual.

A total of 1,716 comments and survey responses from the public were provided through the close of public comment period on December 21, 2009, as follows:

Type	Comments Received
Public hearing comments	45
Letters and E-mails	408
Web Survey responses	1,265
Total	1,718

In summary, the major issues raised in the public comments and our responses are as follows:

Issue	Response
1. Toll rates should not be increased and the seismic requirements for the bridges should be funded from other sources.	AB 1175 makes the seismic retrofits of the Antioch and Dumbarton Bridges eligible for any remaining seismic retrofit program contingency funds; however, other state funding is not available.
2. The retrofits of the Antioch and Dumbarton Bridges and the toll increase should be delayed.	The proposed toll increase funds the current seismic program and the retrofits of the Antioch and Dumbarton Bridges. We do not believe that it would be a responsible action to delay work to ensure the seismic safety of those two bridges.
3. Tolls should not be implemented for carpools, since this will reduce the number of carpools on the bridges.	Carpoolers will continue to have a significant time savings, especially in the Bay Bridge corridor, which is the prime motivator.

Issue	Response
4. The toll increases for trucks (multi-axle vehicles) as proposed are burdensome, especially since many trucking firms have fixed contracts.	The proposed options begin to restore the auto/truck per axle toll differential that existed in 1992, when the per axle truck toll was three times the per axle auto toll.
5. Toll rates should be increased to fund other projects, such a bicycle access on the West Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.	BATA only has authority to increase tolls for seismic retrofit of the bridges and other existing commitments. (Streets and Highways Code Section 31011 (a) states “The authority may increase the amount of the surcharge for the purpose of completing the state toll bridge seismic program described in Section 188.5 and to meet its obligations under the act adding this section in the 2005-06 Regular Session.” Additionally, the \$350 to \$850 million estimate (2014 dollars) for the West Span bicycle path would require substantial new toll revenues.
6. Motorcycles should be provided toll free passage on bridges at all times.	It is proposed that the toll charges for motorcycles be the same as for carpools. Motorcycles would pay a reduced rate during carpool hours and the full toll during non-carpool hours. As with carpools, motorcycles would be required to use FasTrak [®] . Currently, motorcycles are able to use FasTrak without issue.

Recommended Toll Increase

As presented to the Committee at its meeting in December 2009 and in consideration of the public comment received, staff’s recommendation for a toll increase on the state-owned bridges is as follows:

Vehicle Class	Bridges	Toll Formula	Proposed Toll
2-axle Vehicles	Antioch, Benicia, Carquinez, Dumbarton, Richmond and San Mateo Bridges	NA	\$5.00 (base toll)
	San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge	NA	Peak - \$6.00 Non-Peak - \$4.00 Weekends - \$5.00

Vehicle Class	Bridges	Toll Formula	Proposed Toll
Carpools	All Bridges	50 percent of 2-axle base toll (\$5.00) rate	\$2.50
Trucks (multi-axle vehicles)	All Bridges	2-axle base toll (\$5.00) rate times number of axles.	3-axle - \$15.00 4-axle - \$20.00 5-axle - \$25.00 6-axle - \$30.00 7+-axle - \$35.00

Staff further recommends:

1. That the toll rate increases for 2-axle vehicles, including congestion pricing on the Bay Bridge, and carpools be effective on July 1, 2010.
2. That trucks (multi-axle vehicles) are provided a one year grace period from the proposed toll increase. As a result, the toll increase for trucks would be effective on July 1, 2011. The estimated revenue reduction of delaying the increase for trucks for one year totals \$40 million.
3. That an evaluation of congestion pricing for the Bay Bridge be conducted and provided to the BATA Oversight Committee on an annual basis after congestion pricing is implemented.

The Toll Schedule for the State-owned Bridges (BATA Resolution No. 90) pursuant to the staff recommendation and the powerpoint slides to be presented at the Committee’s January 13th meeting are attached.

Toll Increase Proposed Adoption and Implementation Schedule

The proposed schedule for adoption and implementation of the proposed toll increase is as follows:

Date	Meeting	Discussion/Action
January 13, 2010	BATA Oversight Committee Meeting	Committee action on toll increase
January 27, 2010	BATA Meeting	Authority action on toll increase
July 1, 2010		Toll increase is effective for 2-axle autos and carpools
July 1, 2011		Toll increase is effective for trucks

Recommendation

Refer to the Authority for approval BATA Resolution No. 90 to amend the Toll Schedule for the State-owned Brides in the Bay Area.

Steve Heminger

SH:rmc