



**METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION  
SERVICE AUTHORITY  
FOR FREEWAYS  
AND EXPRESSWAYS**

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***Memorandum***

Agenda Item No. 3

TO: Members of the Authority

DATE: December 14, 2011

FR: Executive Director

W.I.: 6031

RE: Supplemental Information Regarding Reduction in Call Boxes

Staff presented a recommendation to reduce the call box system at the December 9, 2011 Operations Committee meeting, which the Committee referred to the full Authority for approval, subject to a report by staff on the ability to reuse the removed call boxes from urban areas to install a network of call boxes in rural county roads, specifically Mines Road in unincorporated Alameda County. This memorandum seeks to address the Committee members' concerns.

At the Committee meeting, staff reported that call boxes must be installed on state highways. Based on further investigation, however, the authorizing legislation for the Service Authorities for Freeways and Expressways (California Streets and Highway Code Section 2557) permits SAFE to place call boxes along state freeways and expressways, county expressways, and unincorporated county roads such as Mines Road. Although legislation allows such installations, the CHP/Caltrans Call Box and Motorist Aid Guidelines state that the following specifications and conditions must be met:

- Roadway Design: call boxes must be installed in shoulders 8 feet or wider
- Telecommunication Facilities: presence of existing telephone utility poles or reliable cell service
- Emergency Response: public agency who will respond to emergencies or dispatch roadside assistance
- Site Accessibility: site slope must be less than 1% to accommodate motorists in wheelchairs

The installation of call boxes in remote locations, especially if telecommunication facilities do not currently exist, can be costly. In addition, the traffic volume of these locations and the estimated number of calls from these call boxes considering the overall trend of declining call box usage may make installing call boxes in some unincorporated areas cost ineffective. However, staff will assess the inclusion of call boxes on Mines Road and any other sites requested by the Authority as part of the overall evaluation and recommendation of a call box reduction plan. Staff will report to the Operations Committee after the evaluation has been completed with a recommendation on how to proceed.

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Steve Heminger

SH: SP