



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Water Emergency Transportation Authority Holds
Public Hearing
On the
Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (DEIR/S)
For Proposed New Berkeley/Albany Ferry Terminal**

To Provide a Forum to receive Public Input on Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

San Francisco, CA (October 28) – Launching the beginning of the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact/Report Statement (DEIR/S) for the proposed Berkeley/Albany Ferry Terminal, the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) today announced plans to hold a public hearing to solicit comments on the Draft EIR/S. The public and media are encouraged to attend a public hearing which will provide an overview of the project, potential terminal locations, construction and operation impacts and proposed mitigation measures. The public hearing will be held on:

**Tuesday, November 18, 2008, 7 - 9 p.m.
North Berkeley Senior Center
1901 Hearst Avenue
Berkeley, California 94709
(Downtown Berkeley BART station)**

“We encourage residents, business owners and anyone interested in providing input on the DEIR/S to attend the public hearing,” said WETA Community Relations Manager Shirley Douglas. “We welcome comments on any issue in the DEIR/S at the public hearing or in writing during the public comment period, which runs from October 24 – December 31, 2008.”

The public hearing follows the completion of the DEIR/S, which was prepared over the last year in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and includes an evaluation of environmental impacts of four potential ferry terminal sites. Two sites are in the Berkeley Marina-near the Double Tree dock and just south of the Berkeley pier. One site is near the Albany/Berkeley city boundary-at the foot of Gilman Street- and one site is in Albany –at the foot of Buchanan Street.

The DEIR/S considers public comments and other issues raised during the scoping period and two public scoping meetings held in March, 2007 in Berkeley and Albany. The Board of Directors of WETA is expected to consider comments received during the public comment period and adopt a locally preferred alternative for the project at its meeting on January 8, 2009.



In addition to the public hearing, copies of the DEIR/S can be downloaded from WETA's website at www.watertransit.org and can be found at the following local libraries:

**Berkeley Central Library
2090 Kittredge at Shattuck
Berkeley, CA 94704**

**Albany Library
1247 Marin Ave
Albany, CA 94706**

WETA is also placing an ad in local newspapers, reaching out to the media to generate broad awareness about the project and meetings, and providing updates via a newsletter on their website.

The Water Transit Authority (WTA) - WETA's predecessor agency - completed a Regional Ferry Plan in 2003 which identified a new Berkeley/Albany route as one of a limited number of new bay area ferry routes which could provide cost effective transit service. This project would play an important role in reducing traffic congestion on I-80 and provide additional transit alternatives to serve Berkeley, Emeryville and other communities located along the East Bay Shoreline. Water transit service to and from Berkeley is forecast to have one of the highest riderships of the new Bay Area ferry routes that are planned in the Bay Area. The majority will be drivers shifting from cars to water transit.

A ferry terminal in Berkeley/Albany would also play an important role in our region's emergency response/disaster response capabilities. Ferry service could provide emergency access to the East Bay if highway and bridge travel were disrupted, similar to what occurred after the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989.

Service would operate during the day and evenings, including Saturdays and Sundays, at headways that would reflect the travel demand for commute and non-commute periods. The project would involve constructing a new ferry docking facility, passenger ticketing and sheltered waiting area on the pier, car and bike parking, bus boarding, and provision for pedestrian, bicycle and traffic circulation at a location along the Berkeley/Albany waterfront. In San Francisco, existing San Francisco Ferry Terminal facilities would be utilized for this new service and would not require modification.

For further information regarding the proposed ferry project go to <http://www.watertransit.org> or contact Shirley Douglas at the WETA (douglas@watertransit.org; 415-364-3191). Written comments on the DEIR/S should be submitted to John Sindzinski, WETA Planning and Development Manager, at sindzinski@watertransit.org.

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