

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Newest Ferry Joins Fleet of San Francisco Bay's Growing Regional Ferry System

***Opening celebration includes free ferry rides for the public and remarks by
Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Congressman John Garamendi
and other State and Bay Area civic leaders***

***Public invited aboard for free rides
on the Bay Area's latest environmentally friendly vessel***

OAKLAND – U.S. Reps. Barbara Lee and John Garamendi join CalEMA Secretary Matthew Bettenhausen, Bay Area Council President and CEO Jim Wunderman, Speaker pro Tempore and Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, Berkeley Mayor and Metropolitan Transportation Commissioner Tom Bates, and Charlene Johnson, Chair of the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), on Monday to christen Taurus and welcome the public aboard the latest environmentally friendly vessel to join the Bay Area's growing regional ferryboat system.

When: 10 a.m., Monday, May 17

Where: Oakland Ferry Terminal, foot of Clay Street, Jack London Square

Ride Schedule: Departures hourly, 11:30 a.m. & 12:30 and 1:30 p.m.

"Expanding our regional ferry system is a key component in the Bay Area's strategy to cut freeway congestion and provide sustainable transportation options in the San Francisco Bay Area," Congresswoman Lee said.

Congressman Garamendi added. "Moreover, the investment we are making to build a robust regional ferry system today is essential to ensuring we are equipped to respond to natural disaster and other emergencies tomorrow."

Taurus is WETA's fourth new passenger vessel. These vessels represent the initial investments in a regional ferry system with plans to add up to seven new routes that are expected to triple ridership.

“I am delighted to be here today for this important step forward in achieving Governor Schwarzenegger’s goal to ensure the safety of Californians. WETA’s work is important to prepare the Bay Area to respond and recover from man-made or natural disaster,” CalEMA Secretary Matthew Bettenhausen added. Cal EMA is responsible for leading the state’s emergency response to natural and man-made disasters.

Service for WETA’s first new route, from Oakland to South San Francisco, links the East Bay to the Bay Area’s many biotech employers and is scheduled to begin in Fall 2011. The additional boats will also increase WETA’s capacity to respond in the event of a regional emergency. Additional boats also increase WETA’s capacity to respond in the event of a regional emergency. Environmental review and design work is also underway for new ferry routes linking Berkeley, Richmond, Hercules, Martinez, Antioch and Redwood City to downtown San Francisco.

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“Many thanks to everyone who has been instrumental in helping WETA to bring a world-class regional ferry service to the Bay Area,” WETA Board of Directors Chair Charlene Haught Johnson added.

Bridge tolls approved by Bay Area voters in 2004 through Regional Measure 2 provide the primary source of funding for Taurus and WETA’s other newly-acquired ferries. Additional WETA funding comes from a variety of sources including the U.S. Department of Transportation Ferry Boat Discretionary Program, State Proposition 1B Transit Security Grant Program, Regional Measures 1 and 2, and county transportation sales tax measure funds approved in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Mateo counties.

About WETA

Originally created in 1999 by the California legislature as the Water Transportation Authority, the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) was renamed in 2007 and tasked with developing and overseeing a regional passenger ferry system that would also provide disaster response and recovery in the event of a natural or man-made event that affected the Bay Area.

Taurus Facts

As part of the Bay Area’s growing regional ferryboat system, *Taurus* is WETA’s fourth new high-speed passenger boat, and an exceptionally “green” vessel. The 199-passenger, double-hulled catamaran vessel runs *85 percent cleaner* current EPA mandates for marine engines in this class. *Taurus’* sleek, low-wake hull allows it to run more efficiently, thus reducing fuel consumption. The engine uses a biodiesel/ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel mix and is equipped with a catalytic reduction system – similar to the catalytic converter on an automobile – which drastically reduces the amount of emissions. The new boat provides comfortable seating on multiple interior and exterior levels for passengers, including booth and tables as well as lounge-style seating and weather deck areas. The vessel includes a multi-service bar with drinks and snacks, as well as WiFi

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<http://www.watertransit.org/newsInformation/pressinfo.aspx>