



January 27, 2010

MAYOR DELLUMS' REMARKS RE:

Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Consideration to Continue Funding Airport Connector with Stimulus Dollars

OAKLAND – During a Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission meeting today Mayor Ron Dellums made the following remarks to urge the Commission to continue to provide \$70 million in stimulus funds for the Oakland Airport Connector (OAC) project. Later in the day the Commission voted 11-5 to continue providing the stimulus funds on the condition that Title VI issues are sufficiently addressed.

MAYOR DELLUMS: “In support of the project, back in early October in a letter to the Oakland City Council and community, I laid out my support for the OAC project and three caveats that I thought needed to be resolved. I didn't think it was rocket science for the parties to be able to sit down and figure out how to deal with it. One of them was the issue with the fares; the issue of alternative sites; and the issue of local or targeted hires. Now, I realize that at this very moment that this project is in jeopardy based upon a civil rights complaint that has been filed against the project. And I would say to you, sir, that I take civil rights extremely seriously. I have placed my whole adult life on the line for civil and human rights, justice, fairness and equity. I have been arrested on more than one occasion peacefully demonstrating in that regard and I have been beaten to the ground peacefully demonstrating on the issue of civil and human rights. I don't say that for personal aggrandizement, I simply say that to state that I take civil rights complaints very, very seriously.

“Title VI at the end of the day was designed to challenge large organizations to change, and that ultimately is what needs to happen here. Last week in Washington DC, I met with the secretary of transportation, the deputy secretary of transportation, and staff with respect to the OAC. My comment to them, is the comment I make to you today. I said: I believe that BART wants to come to the table because they realize the risk that is presently involved and I think they ultimately would like to resolve these matters. But there needs to be someone on the other end of the communication at FTA willing to sit down in an open and honest dialogue to ultimately try to resolve these matters. Because fairness is not just about filing the complaint, fairness is about making sure that there is a process that will allow you to resolve the concerns at hand. So, what I'm saying, is what I said to them: give us time to be able to bring the parties together to resolve these matters. Now, I read with great interest, every word of the report that your able staff just presented to you. Their final staff recommendation was to take Option 1 with caveat, with modifications – provide BART and the FTA until February 16, 2010 to submit an action plan to correct any Title VI deficiencies. I think that that is a prudent course to take, because it provides an opportunity for Bay Area Rapid Transit, FTA to sit down to engage in a very serious effort to bring this project forward to resolve these matters. I think that it speaks to the principles of fairness, equity, and justice, because at the end of the day we want BART to comply with civil rights laws on this and other projects moving forward.

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“Last thing ... having spent over 30 something years in Washington DC, the one thing that I came to painfully understand is that the world is not black and white and that Washington DC does not operate on rigid time frames. So, I think if we say to them: take the time to sit down and try to resolve these matters - Title VI is not simply about punishment, it is about resolving issues and change, we should have people who will listen to us. I think that the staff recommendations make sense to bring people together. At the end of the day there are a lot of people out here who need to work. There are a lot of people out here returning from institutions of corrections that are being forced into the margins and the shadows of our community. So there are equity issues here all around. If time is made available, I believe that FTA and BART can work out the remaining concerns. I make a commitment to you to play any role that would be helpful in facilitating an effective resolution. Thank you very much for your time.”

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