Letter from the President

Dear members and friends,

City Council members need to hear your support for the BART Airport Connector. The Chamber's position, the projected benefits, and City Council telephone numbers can be found here. **Support BART to the Airport: call Council today**!

Also - no decision has been reached on the parking rates & hours. *To date, over 40,000 tickets have been issued*. Read our letter to Council here. We encourage you to mail your own letter or call your Council member at the same numbers as above.

God Bless America!

September 21, 2009
Oakland City Council
Dear Councilmember:

RE: Parking fees & enforcement changes

On behalf of the Board of Directors and our business members, I offer our input regarding the deliberations on September 22, 2009 regarding the fees and enforcement of parking. This is an issue which directly affects businesses and their customers as well as residents and visitors to the city.

We believe that the changes to the Master Fee schedule in July were important policy matters which were undertaken without adequate public input. Although we are pleased that the City Council, the Mayor, and City Administrator have seen fit to address the complaints and offer solutions, the fact remains that no meaningful economic impact analysis was conducted to justify the decisions to raise parking meter rates, increase fines, and extend hours of enforcement.

Parking meter rates
It is a mistake to characterize as "insignificant" a 30% increase in the parking meter rate. Changing the rate from $1.50 to $2.00 per hour has a direct impact on parking-customer attitudes and behavior. Confusion is added by signs not corresponding to meter instructions and some meters being a different rate from others. Absent any examination of how increasing parking meter revenue may be offset by declining sales tax revenue, the **Chamber encourages you to consider returning to the rate to $1.50 per hour**.

Hours of enforcement
Extending the hours of meter usage and parking enforcement to 8 p.m. was a drastic miscalculation. Businesses and residents alike are impacted by the changes. Many businesses which depend on commute-pattern shopping report declines in customers following the extension of parking enforcement to 8 p.m. Restaurants also reported problems as patrons refused to risk being ticketed while enjoying a meal in Oakland. Residents returning from work complained of tickets also. We urge you to **return to the schedule of 6 p.m. as the end of enforcement**.

We encourage you to use this opportunity to thoroughly consider and evaluate proposals to address public concerns to ensure that decisions about parking promote customer access, invigorate our merchant districts, and foster economic activity in Oakland.

Sincerely,
Joseph J. Haraburda
President & CEO

Copy: Mayor, City Administrator