

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Maintenance

Structures Maintenance and Investigations

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June 20, 2008

Joan Lundstrom, Chair
Harbor Safety Committee c/o Marine Exchange
San Francisco Bay Region
Fort Mason Center, Building B, Suite 325
San Francisco, CA 94123-1380

Dear Ms. Lundstrom:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with the members of the Harbor Safety Committee and to discuss our ongoing efforts to enhance safety along the waterways in the San Francisco Bay Area. As I mentioned, our primary responsibility at the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is to ensure the safety and reliability of the bridges on the California State Highway and local agency road networks. We are also committed, however, to working with other local, state and federal agencies and private industry to enhance our state's unique environment and dynamic economy.

As I mentioned, Caltrans designs, builds and maintains the protective fender systems around bridge piers in California's navigable waterways to the standards and regulations developed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the U.S. Coast Guard. The fender designs currently employed have performed very well in protecting bridge piers from major damage. We recognize the importance of adapting new technology where appropriate. It is our intention, therefore, to submit a research proposal to study new bridge protective fender system designs to AASHTO for funding in the 2009/2010 fiscal year.

At the same time, in our role to be good stewards of the environment, we are very interested in the progress of other research efforts designed to provide the desired level of protection for bridge piers while minimizing the damage to vessels in an allision.

As new design concepts for protective fenders are developed and successfully tested, it is our intention to deploy such advances where appropriate in waterways with heavy maritime traffic.

We look forward to working with your group in the future. If you have any additional questions about the protective fender system used by Caltrans or would like information about the Caltrans bridge maintenance program, please contact my office.

Sincerely,



BARTON NEWTON
Chief, Structure Maintenance & Investigations