



A Transit Riders' Association for San Francisco
P.O. Box 190966, San Francisco, CA 94119
voice mail 415/273-1558 • www.rescuemuni.org

June 29, 2005

President Aaron Peskin and Members
San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Dear Supervisors:

Rescue Muni strongly urges you to vote **no** on **both** MTA charter amendments coming before the Board of Supervisors.

Six years ago, Muni riders, SPUR, environmental advocates, and the business community joined forces to pass Proposition E for Muni reform, creating an independent Municipal Transportation Agency, insulated from political interference and governed by strong service standards and a strengthened transit-first policy. The results are clear: in almost every year since 1999, Muni has **consistently improved** in reliability and service quality, as measured both by Muni and by Rescue Muni's independent rider survey.

We understand the frustration that many feel about the pace of progress at Muni, but these charter amendments are not the answer. If the Board of Supervisors takes more control over the MTA Board, we will return to the bad old days when Muni accountability was diffuse and when everyone pointed fingers at everyone else to explain Muni failures.

Right now, the MTA is engaged in an intensive, nationwide search for a new executive director. The threat of a charter amendment disrupting the structure of the MTA will seriously hamper efforts to attract and retain the kind of world-class professional transit manager we all want hired. Furthermore, if a charter amendment splitting the MTA Board passes this fall, we will likely see at least three new MTA Board members appointed, none of whom would have any ownership in the decision to hire the new executive director. **The timing of this effort to split the MTA Board couldn't be worse.**

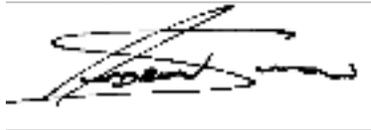
The Board of Supervisors should hold off on any effort to split the MTA Board until the new executive director has an opportunity to manage the agency and bring it up to the Proposition E service standards we all support. There **is no reason whatsoever to rush** a split of the MTA Board; the split does not address or solve any actual

problem facing the MTA. And, as shown by the give-and-take on fares, parking fines, and meter rates in this year's budget cycle, the Board of Supervisors continues to retain considerable influence over the agency, even without the split board.

We think the Board of Supervisors has better options under the existing charter language to influence the composition of the MTA Board. We believe, for example, that the Board of Supervisors should subject mayoral appointees to the MTA Board to considerable scrutiny, and to reject candidates found wanting. We think a strong Board of Supervisors confirmation process is a positive influence on the selection of MTA Board members. But Board of Supervisors appointment of even a minority of MTA Board members will blur the lines of authority and take us right back to the days of circular blame.

These charter amendments are the **wrong idea**; more importantly, they're being considered at the **wrong time**. We strongly urge you to vote no on both, and to give a new executive director time to make the improvements in the agency we'd all like to see.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Sullivan", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Andrew Sullivan, Chair