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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
REGIONAL PLANNING AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

Thank you for the invitation to appear and testify.

I will focus my remarks on the White House's call for the integration of private sector assets to improve logistics and enhanced regional response capabilities.

Integrated planning for disaster preparation and recovery is essential in a region of 7 million people such as the Bay Area, with its compact geography, and yet, 9 counties and 101 cities. In the Bay Area, and places like it, a natural disaster or a terrorist event in one city will very likely impact other cities and counties.

Unfortunately, in the past the Bay Area has been fragmented when it comes to preparation and planning for disasters.

Its 110 cities and counties, multiple ports and airports, and numerous transportation agencies make planning excruciatingly difficult, as each jurisdiction tends to protect its territory. Even after 9/11, a culture of cooperation and coordination has only recently started to take shape among the region's emergency services entities: OES, police, fire and public health departments.

Given this situation, the State can and frankly must play a key role, helping to coordinate and unite the jurisdictions. In the last year of the Davis administration, its regional emergency services office in Oakland was effectively shut down, and the state largely abdicated its regional role. This was despite the fact that many jurisdictions welcomed and looked to the state for leadership. The Oakland office has reopened, and the State is playing a more active role. But given the region's fragmentation, that role must be increased and then sustained.

On the federal level, the experience with the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grants from the Department of Homeland Security is instructive. They were created after 9/11 to supplement formula grant funding to the states, in order to direct funds to key urban areas. The first grants were made four years ago. A UASI working group of regional OES directors met for years to decide how to spend the segment of that funding that was designated for regional purposes (the lion's share was divided up by individual jurisdictions). There was no enthusiasm for a regional strategy, much less an appetite for

cooperation. Indeed, the first contract to utilize those funds – to draft a regional plan – was only signed by San Francisco in the middle of last year.

To be fair, the planning process has been complicated by DHS. The first UASI grants let the cities and counties decide how to spend the regional funds without a point of reference. After that DHS broke up the Bay Area into three regions, centered on San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. Last year DHS required all the major jurisdictions in the Bay Area (San Jose, Oakland and San Francisco, as well as the other large cities) to submit a single grant application - forcing a regional approach. They did get together, and submitted a proposal under a very tight time frame.

This was a great step in the right direction, led by Annemarie Conroy, Director of San Francisco's Office of Emergency Services. It will be followed by the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan for the Bay Area. This is a very large undertaking and is actually a national first. This will result in a plan that covers areas including communications, transportation, fire/rescue, law/ enforcement and medical/health response. The drafts will be done this June. Training and exercises are set to run into 2007.

This gives me hope for the future.

That said, the private sector has largely been left out of the picture. Private companies tend to look to their local Office of Emergency Services, Police, Fire or Public Health office – or perhaps the Red Cross – for support in the event of an emergency. In part, this is a self fulfilling prophecy because these agencies tend to view the private sector as the recipients of information and services, rather than partners in how those services are delivered.

Yet many companies have incredible resources that could be mobilized in an emergency – employees, facilities, transportation equipment, supplies, etc.

Since, if an emergency happens, we'll all be in the same boat together and it's guaranteed that public resources will be stretched, it's in the interest of state and local governments to open a new dialogue with private business around planning for future emergencies.

There are a couple of ways the private sector can help before a disaster takes place:

1. Businesses can pre-register resources (equipment, mobile command centers, warehouse space, etc.) that they'd be willing to voluntarily provide to emergency officials, thereby saving time and lives.
2. In a mass vaccination or other public health emergency, companies can provide volunteers to help staff Points of Dispensing (POD) sites and can help distribute medical supplies among these sites. Companies can also reconfigure cafeteria or warehouse space into a POD site to serve their communities.

Those are just some ideas, I'm sure we can find more.

Before I conclude I want to share an effort the Bay Area Council is working on with Senator Perata to dramatically heighten our capacity to survive and recover from a manmade or natural disaster. **We are preparing a report due next month on how to make ferries on the Bay a primary disaster recovery service.**

We will report on what infrastructure is needed (ships, terminals, routes); what legislative changes are needed to make it happen; and what capital outlay is needed.

The distinguishing feature of our region is of course the Bay, which both unites and divides us. The region functions by virtue of several major bridges and a single BART tube. We depend on our mobility to thrive. Indeed, California depends on our ability to thrive as we represent one-fifth of the states population, one-quarter of its economy and one third of its tax revenue.

Our urgency is driven by the threats we face. According to the national Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 – reauthorized in December of 2005 – Washington, D.C., New York City, San Francisco and Chicago are the areas most likely to attract terrorist attacks. Regarding earthquakes, an authoritative analysis by the U.S. Geological Survey found that there is a 2 in 3 chance of a major 6.7 earthquake or worse in the Bay Area in the next 30 years. In 2001, a FEMA report ranked hurricane damage to New Orleans, a terrorist attack on New York City, and an earthquake in the Bay Area as the three most likely catastrophes facing the country. Two of those have now struck.

Ron Cowan, CEO of Doric Development – who’s previous efforts led to the creation of the Bay Area Water Transit Authority – and Bruce Spaulding, Vice Chancellor of UCSF are co-chairing our Blue Ribbon Task Force. We now estimate that a system of 22 new terminals and 52 new vessels is required in order to maintain a bare-bones semblance of productivity in the event of major earthquake. This is based on data and input from numerous agencies, including the existing Water Transit Authority and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

In the event of a disaster ferries will transform the waters of the bay from a transportation obstacle into a transportation asset, especially with bridges and roads down for repair or inspection.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before this Commission. I look forward to our discussion.