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August 1, 2014

The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier
Chair, Senate Transportation and Housing Committee
State Capitol, Room 2209
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator DeSaulnier:

I appreciate the opportunity to provide an initial high-level response to the Senate Bay Bridge Review Panel's (Review Panel) Draft Report titled "Technical Review of Design and Construction of New East Span of San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge". The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) participated fully with the Review Panel's inquiry on the Bay Bridge, including providing any documentation, information, and experts that the Review Panel requested.

I am pleased the report concluded that the Department used appropriate methodologies, approaches, and assumptions during design and construction activities. These findings are consistent with and support prior conclusions of our engineers, private sector engineers, and expert peer review panels, specifically, that the bridge is safe.

The Review Panel's report provides a fully-independent review with conclusions for the four tasks that the panel was commissioned to respond to by the California State Senate. Specifically:

Task 1: Review the seismic design criteria for the bridge.

Conclusion: It appears that in general, Caltrans used appropriate methodologies, approaches, and assumptions in the hazard evaluation, design criteria and analysis methods, particularly as it pertains to the seismic performance of the bridge.

Task 2: Quality of foundations in the main span (Part I).

Conclusion: Caltrans used appropriate and generally accepted procedures in the design and construction of the Tower Foundation (T1).

Task 3: Quality of foundations in the main span (Part II).

Conclusion: Caltrans performed appropriate analyses to address the impact of potential construction defects on the Tower Foundation (T1).

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Task 4: Review of broken bolts on Shear Keys S1 and S2 and the repair implemented.

Conclusion: The approach for the repair implemented by Caltrans on T2 [E2] appears to have restored the strength provided by the original design. However, there are lessons to be learned including more stringent quality control and quality assurance during construction that would help avoid such situation in future projects.

We have also completed an initial review of the additional technical recommendations proposed by the Review Panel in their report. I view these recommendations as thoughtful, informed feedback that in many cases we agree with, and in other cases warrant further conversations to add clarity to the recommendation or concern. We have already taken up and/or completed some of these recommendations, and we would like to share that information with the Review Panel in order to assess if additional action would be appropriate. Toward that end, I am inviting the Review Panel to a public workshop to go over each one of the recommendations and discuss appropriate steps in greater detail. This would allow for a transparent discussion on things like risk-assessments, future maintenance and monitoring efforts and plans, design modifications, and quality assurance approaches going forward.

In summary, I am pleased with the Review Panel's conclusion that the department has acted reasonably on the four main tasks assigned to it for review. These conclusions help underscore our contention that the new bridge is safe. I appreciate the opportunity to provide an initial response to the Review Panel's report, and look forward to discussing the report in-depth on August 5 at the scheduled Senate Transportation and Housing Committee hearing, as well as in a proposed public workshop with the Review Panel members.

Sincerely,



MALCOLM DOUGHERTY
Director