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Residents Want Single Regional Transportation System, Oppose Proposition 42 Shifts, Bay Area Council's *Bay Area Poll* Finds

'Variable Pricing' on the Bay Bridge Will Take Education

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 14, 2005 — A large majority of Bay Area residents said a regional agency should make decisions to expand freeways, operate the public transit system and manage the Bay Area's commercial airports, according to results of the 2004 *Bay Area Poll* released today by the Bay Area Council.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents said the responsibility for making decisions to expand freeways and highways should rest with a regional agency rather than individual cities or counties. Likewise, 67 percent want the management of the region's commercial airports to be handled by one regional agency.

Instead of the more than 30 individual transit agencies, 63 percent of residents said one regional agency would best operate the public transit system, including buses and commuter rail. Residents of Santa Clara, San Mateo and Alameda counties were the strongest proponents of a regional agency running the Bay Area's transportation system. North Bay residents of Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties were somewhat less in favor, though a regional agency was still widely preferred.

Transportation is the top issue facing the region, according to earlier results of the *Poll*.

"Bay Area residents have made a bold statement in the *Bay Area Poll*," said Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council. "Whether driving, flying or riding public transit, their travel doesn't stop at county lines or voting district boundaries. They are saying the transportation system shouldn't either. The Bay Area Council will incorporate these results into our work plan and explore some options to help enact what appears to be the people's will."

Support for Prop. 42 Strong

Eighty-five percent of Bay Area residents support Proposition 42, which as passed in 2002 dedicated gasoline sales tax revenues for transportation purposes. Nearly three-quarters of residents, or 71 percent, said the state government did "the wrong thing" when it used Proposition 42 funds to balance the state budget in recent years. Eighty-two percent of Bay Area Republicans and 70 percent of the region's Democrats opposed this funding reallocation. Asked about the current budget shortfall, 70 percent of the Bay Area residents said Proposition 42 funds should be spent on transportation and not used to balance the budget.

Bay Bridge Tolls

If another toll increase on the Bay Bridge becomes unavoidable, 58 percent of residents would prefer an increase of \$1 at all times of the day. Nearly a third of residents, or 32 percent, would prefer "variable pricing," when tolls would be increased \$2 during peak commute times while not

increasing tolls during all other hours, providing a financial incentive to spread out more evenly the number of cars crossing the bridge each hour.

“Variable pricing has worked successfully in numerous locations in California and worldwide,” Wunderman said. “If the region wants to pursue variable pricing on the Bay Bridge, it appears more education of residents is required.”

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About the *Bay Area Poll*

A total of 600 residents of the nine-county Bay Area were surveyed by Field Research Corporation during the period of November 18 -24, 2004. Survey respondents were selected using a random probability sampling technique that gives all residents with telephones (listed or not) an equal chance of being selected for the survey. The sample was stratified to obtain representative samples in each of six Bay Area regions: Alameda County, Contra Costa County, San Francisco County, San Mateo County, Santa Clara County and the North Bay counties of Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma. After the completion of interviewing, the sample was weighted to conform to actual population estimates of the nine-county Bay Area. Findings are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

About the Bay Area Council

The Bay Area Council established the *Bay Area Poll* in 1980. Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council (www.bayareacouncil.org) develops and drives regional public policy initiatives and researches critical infrastructure issues. Led by CEOs, the Bay Area Council presents a strong, united voice for more than 275 major employers throughout the Bay Area region in promoting economic prosperity and quality of life. Jim Wunderman became the president and CEO of the Bay Area Council in April 2004.