



Press Release – April 27, 2006

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FIRST TWO LOW EMISSIONS FERRIES ORDERED FOR SF BAY

San Francisco – Two new passenger ferries that will be 10 times cleaner burning than existing vessels were ordered today for San Francisco Bay, culminating more than five years of planning. These will be the first ferries to meet the strict air pollution standards adopted by ferry planners in response to Bluewater Network's calls for cleaner water transit. The Water Transit Authority committed \$14.7 million to two shipyards to construct the pair of spare vessels that will be the first built for a new baywide ferry system.

"This marks a revolution in ferry design that will set the standard for cleaner ferries around the world," said Teri Shore, Clean Vessels Campaign Director for Bluewater Network. "We salute the WTA's bold leadership and commitment to water transit that helps protect the air we breathe."

The new 25-knot, 149-passenger ferries must meet air pollution standards that are 85 percent stronger than national regulations. They will be equipped with advanced air pollution controls that cut smog-forming emissions and cancer-causing particulate matter by 80 to 90 percent.

The ferries are expected to be on the water by next year and to go into regular service as needed by 2008. The vessels will be built by a team of Washington-state shipyards, Nichols Brothers and Kvichak. Funding comes from state Regional Measure 2 transportation monies earmarked for ferries.

Bluewater Network won strict pollution standards in the legislation that authorized the Water Transit Authority to roll-out a new ferry system on San Francisco Bay. To respond to concerns from the environmental community about expanded ferry service, the WTA adopted a number of measures to protect the bay and marine life from potential disturbance by new ferry routes. These include low-wake, low-wash hulls; systems for avoiding collisions with whales and other marine mammals; and commitments to monitor and avoid impacts on birds.

The WTA is now evaluating site-specific impacts at new terminals planned for South San Francisco, the Berkeley area, Richmond and Hercules.

Bluewater Network works to stop environmental damage from vehicles and vessels, and to protect human health and the planet by reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Bluewater Network is a division of Friends of the Earth – the U. S. voice of the world's largest network of environmental groups with one million supporters in 70 countries across five continents

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