

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2023

Nuria Fernandez, Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Water Emergency Transportation Authority's (WETA) application for funding through the 2023 Passenger Ferry Grant Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez:

We write to support the Water Emergency Transportation Authority's (WETA) application for funding through the 2023 Passenger Ferry Grant Program. WETA is requesting \$16 million to install on-site battery energy storage systems on four existing floats in the cities of Alameda and Downtown San Francisco to help facilitate the agency's shift to zero emission ferries. In support of the Justice40 initiative, 100% of the locations included in this project are located directly in Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) and all the terminal locations have adjacent DACs which will benefit from the conversion of an existing diesel transit system to a zero -emission option and the resulting reduction of pollution across the San Francisco Bay Area.

WETA has always been an environmental leader in developing clean vessel technology. From its inception, WETA pushed for the development and implementation of new diesel engine technology that exceeded Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) standards, proving at the time to the industry that increasingly stringent federal emissions requirements were achievable. Today, WETA remains committed to operating the cleanest vessels possible and to that end, has developed a plan to shift 50% of its vessel fleet to zero emissions by 2035. According to the organization, the requested funding will allow WETA to make considerable progress towards this objective.

WETA will use the requested funding to make key modifications to existing floats on certain short-distance ferry routes and install batteries to increase useable storage volume and supplement the electric power grid. According to WETA, the battery energy storage system that will be installed on these select routes will not only reduce and smooth peak grid demand for each location, the modifications to the float will also create space for additional batteries, giving WETA the ability to grow its electric ferry service over time, including to new locations around the Bay Area.

While the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) makes \$50.1 million available through the Passenger Ferry Program for FY23, the NOFO indicates that FTA may award additional funding that is made available to the program prior to the announcement of project selections. Given the possibility of additional funding being available, WETA is requesting \$16 million.

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However, if additional funds are not made available, the project is scalable, and WETA could utilize less funding.

The requested funding will help expand WETA's existing ferry service in a way that aligns with FTA priorities, including renewing our nation's transit systems, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from public transportation, connecting disadvantaged communities, and reducing vehicle miles traveled. We request that you give the WETA application full and fair consideration, consistent with applicable law and regulations.

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress