

July 5, 2006

Supervisor Tom Ammiano, Chair
Supervisor Aaron Peskin, Member
Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier, Member
Government Audit and Oversight Committee
City Hall
San Francisco, Ca., 94102

Dear Supervisor Ammiano and members of the Committee,

The Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group (NEWAG), advisors to the Port of San Francisco, would like to indicate our support for moving forward with the Exploratorium Project at Pier 15. In order for there to be a future for this endeavor, the Board will need to approve the Fiscal Responsibility and Feasibility Report and the Term Sheet. Though the NEWAG has not had an opportunity to review this particular document, we have met with the Exploratorium at length at our June meeting and at earlier meetings. We are all quite satisfied with the progress the Exploratorium and Port have made to date and feel that this project is a good fit for the Port and for the City as a whole.

In terms of this particular document, it memorializes a number of important points and actions.

- +Pier 15 is in very poor condition, and if improvements are not made, it will be red tagged in the near future. If the pier is not repaired, this historic pier will be in jeopardy.

- +The Port does not have the necessary funds to repair either 15 or 17. Through Port's issuance of rent credits of up to \$23.4 million, the Exploratorium will be able to restore and seismically update Pier and its underpinnings, and then will be able to embark on installing a state of the art and expanded Exploratorium. The restorations will meet the historic standards demanded.

- +The report also outlines the fiscal benefits that will accrue to the Port and the City in terms of revenue and jobs. And the results are substantial.

- +Equally important is a recognition of the Exploratorium, which was founded in San Francisco, and whose basic concept of hands-on science education has now been seeded to new locations around the world. This unique educational institution has been searching for a new home in order to expand their efforts. They have explored several sites...lost one and rejected several. If piers 15, and eventually 17, can be shaped into their new, and enlarged Exploratorium, how fortunate for us all.

The Port has provided the Supervisors and the City with an excellent, well-written tool, as required by ordinance, to analyze this project and to move forward. NEWAG strongly recommends that the Board supports this effort and approves the Fiscal Responsibility and Feasibility and the Term Sheet.

With regards,
Toby Levine, Chair