



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congressman Garamendi's Strong Leadership Could Finally Make Hovercraft a Reality in the Bay Area

San Francisco—The Bay Area could finally add hovercraft to its arsenal of regional traffic-fighting tools after East Bay Congressman John Garamendi secured passage of a critical amendment to transportation funding legislation that for the first time will allow federal investment in the levitating vessels.

The Bay Area Council, which has been working for more than a decade to expand regional water transit service, had asked Rep. Garamendi to request the amendment in the INVEST Act ([H.R. 3684](#)) under the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program. And Garamendi, along with North Bay Congressman Jared Huffman, delivered. The amendment was unanimously approved earlier this month removing what had been a longstanding financial barrier of launching hovercraft in the Bay Area.

"Hovercraft can be a unique and innovative solution to traffic congestion in the Bay Area, opening up important new routes for serving busy job centers," said Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council and Chair of the Water Emergency Transportation Authority. "The Bay Area Council commends Congressman Garamendi for recognizing the potential of hovercraft to improve our regional commute and we thank him for his continued leadership throughout our region. Because of his creative thinking and steadfast dedication to finding all possible solutions to the Bay Area's long-standing traffic mess, we now have another tool with which to improve regional mobility."

The Bay Area Council has long championed deploying hovercraft services on the bay, working with member companies and partner cities alike to bring this technology to the Bay Area. Before the amendment secured by Garamendi, hovercraft were officially classified as aircraft and not eligible for transportation funding.

"Hovercraft could be a pivotal solution to our regional mobility and transportation challenges." said Foster City Councilmember Sam Hindi. "I am pleased that Congressman Garamendi sees the value that hovercraft technology could bring and appreciate both his leadership and the instrumental role of the Bay Area Council. It's a tremendous milestone to have the amendment to the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill ([H.R. 3684](#)) introduced, which would make hovercraft and hovercraft facilities eligible for funding under the Surface Transportation Block Grant program. This is a step in the right direction that could make hovercraft facilities more feasible and attainable, and Foster City is definitely on board for this ride."

"The inclusion of hovercraft facilities as eligible grant expenses is an exciting step towards launching a local hovercraft service, which could provide some relief to those experiencing long Bay Area commute times," said Andy Jefferson, Director of Transportation at Genentech.

Hovercraft offer several key opportunities as a transportation mode. Due to shallow depths, vast parts of the region have traditionally been unreachable by water transit, including much of Silicon Valley. Hovercraft can open up a new, environmentally sensitive option to locations beset by some of the worst traffic in the country, as well as provide emergency evacuation services.

“Having an additional transportation mode for emergency response in areas otherwise inaccessible by water transit is critical for the Bay Area,” said Water Emergency Transportation Authority Board Director Jessica Alba. “With the types of crises we have faced in recent years from wildfire disasters to a global pandemic we now more than ever need to be prepared to provide emergency evacuation services throughout the region.”

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About the Bay Area Council

The Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored, public-policy advocacy organization for the nine-county Bay Area. The Council proactively advocates for a strong economy, a vital business environment, and a better quality of life for everyone who lives here. Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council is widely respected by elected officials, policy makers and other civic leaders as the voice of Bay Area business. Today, more than 300 of the largest employers in the region support the Bay Area Council and offer their CEO or top executive as a member. Our members employ more than 4.43 million workers and have revenues of \$1.94 trillion, worldwide. Learn more at www.bayareacouncil.org.