

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2006
TO: MERA Executive Committee
FROM: Martin J. Nichols, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM F: INCREASING SYSTEM CAPACITY

Motorola has provided us with the attached cost proposal to increase the capacity of MERA based upon the acquisition of nine new frequencies. That estimated cost is \$3,685,000. At our meeting, Richard Chuck will be making a presentation on the capacity effects of acquiring the frequencies and obtaining the new Motorola equipment to implement them.

The policy issues for discussion by your Committee follows:

1. Proceeding with the project
 - a. We could not increase the capacity of the system and make some changes to the allocation of sites between the east and west simulcast zones to increase capacity in the east simulcast zone (where most of the busy signals were instantly occurring). We can also retrain users on the call back and tactical channel functions of MERA to improve the efficiency of the current system.

This policy option requires an assumption that MERA will not substantially increase users in the future.

- b. If we do not implement this expansion at this time, we will likely lose future access to the frequencies we are now near acquiring.

Also, the Motorola equipment that will expand our capacity will not be available after the end of 2006. This means that if, in the future, we decided to expand the system and could still acquire frequencies, all new equipment would be required to increase system capacity.

2. CEQA review for the expansion Project

Based on news stories about the Board's decision to seek new frequencies, the Mt. Tiburon neighbors have advised me that they will expect MERA to fully comply with CEQA in implementation of the new system capacity.

The new frequencies will increase electromagnetic radiation (EMF) at each site. In our project EIR, we did specify EMF's at each site.

While this addition of the new frequencies will not exceed FCC guidelines, they will increase EMF's above what are quantified in our EIR. This will require a project amendment to that EIR and expose MERA to potential new litigation.

If the Board does proceed with the system expansion project, very careful CEQA and legal planning will be required to proceed with the project.