



# High Pressure Fire Fighting Water Supply System



## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **The Earthquake Safety and Emergency Respond Bond (ESER).**

The City and County of San Francisco is proposing a \$412 million Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response Bond for the June 2010 ballot to prepare San Francisco to quickly respond to a major earthquake or disaster. It's critical to make these repairs and upgrades now before another major disaster happens. Responding quickly in an emergency will have a direct role on how well San Francisco recovers after the next big earthquake. One element of the Bond is repairing and upgrading the city's aging emergency fire fighting water supply system otherwise known as the Auxiliary Water Supply System (AWSS).

### **What is AWSS, or the Emergency Firefighting Water Supply System?**

The Emergency Firefighting Water Supply System is our city's emergency water supply system. It is comprised of a vast network of dedicated underground pipes connected to strategically placed reservoirs, pump stations, and water tanks.

Officially called the Auxiliary Water Supply System (AWSS), the system is an independent high-pressure water supply dedicated to fire protection that is used by the San Francisco Fire Department to fight multiple alarm fires. It was built in 1913 in response to the 1906 Great Earthquake. The fire department relies upon the AWSS to deliver unlimited amounts of water from the Bay at much higher pressures to fight fires and keep San Franciscans safe.



### **Why is the AWSS important?**

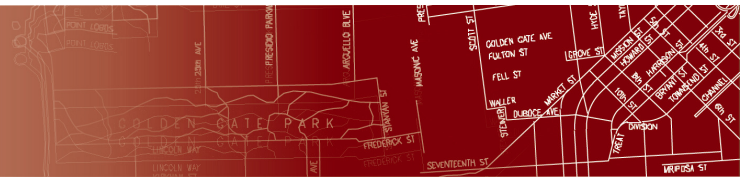
San Francisco has experienced several large earthquakes. Most of us are familiar with the Great Earthquake of 1906 and more recently the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989, which measured a 6.7 on the Richter scale. What you may not know is that the majority of the damage came not from the shaking, but the fires that erupted thereafter. Being able to respond quickly after an earthquake is critical to our survival and recovery as a City.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) indicates there is a 63% probability of a large earthquake striking the Bay Area within the next 30 years.

San Francisco could expect up to 100 fires following such an earthquake. Under such a scenario, the San Francisco Fire Department relies upon the AWSS to combat fires and prevent further damage and destruction in the City.

### **How will the bond affect me and my safety?**

Fire is the greatest threat to our neighborhoods and homes after an earthquake. The Bond money will ensure that the San Francisco Fire Department has reliable and broad access to the water needed to extinguish large fires, save lives and protect against the loss of buildings and homes. By modernizing the City's water systems so that the Fire Department is able to pump water where and when the city needs, our homes, businesses and our communities are better protected.



### **What will be done to the AWSS under the ESER Bond?**

The elements of the AWSS that provide pressurized water to the system, called *core facilities*, are extremely debilitated. The following core facilities are in need of repair and will be modernized to provide increased public safety and reliability under the bond:

- Pump Station No. 1
- Pump Station No. 2
- Twin Peaks Reservoir
- Jones Street Tank
- Ashbury Heights Tank
- Construct cisterns (underground storage tanks)
- Replacement of select underground pipes

### **How much will it cost?**

The current estimate for this proposal \$104 million.

### **What is the existing condition of the facilities above ground?**

Many of the core facilities that are above ground have serious structural, mechanical, and related engineering problems that threaten public safety and the viability of the system. Inspections and assessments of the AWSS core facilities show deterioration, seismic safety issues, and corrosion due to rust, poor foundations, leakages, and outdated technologies.

### **What happens if we do not rehabilitate the AWSS facilities?**

If the core facilities are not repaired, the City may compromise its ability to respond to and extinguish multiple large fires.

### **Why Now?**

This bond is about getting prepared. Although we're experiencing an economically challenging time, San Francisco must continue to prepare for a major earthquake or disaster.

- **Using Tax Dollars Wisely.** Every year that we delay repairs and needed upgrades to our public safety buildings, the cost increases. These buildings must be fixed sooner or later: by acting now, we can improve safety and save local taxpayer dollars.
- **Protecting Lives.** The longer we delay making these repairs, the longer our police and first responders - and the San Franciscans who depend on them in an emergency - will have their lives at risk.

### **What kind of oversight is in place to ensure funds are spent properly?**

The Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response Bond will have extremely strong accountability standards in place including:

- A framework for defining and prioritizing projects in the bond.
- Review by the Police and Fire Commissions, the Capital Planning Committee and the Board of Supervisors where the public can participate.
- Review by the Citizens General Obligation Bond Oversight Committee.

### **Where can I go for more information?**

For more information contact the Capital Plan Program at (415) 554-6926 or visit [www.sfearthquakesafety.org](http://www.sfearthquakesafety.org)