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**Snoble Disputes Times Editorial Calling Eastside Project ‘Pork’**

- [Letter to the Times](#) (PDF)

(Sept. 25, 2007) CEO Roger Snoble is disputing an LA *Times* editorial that characterizes the Metro Gold Line’s Eastside Extension as a “pork item” in the U.S. Department of Transportation’s 2008 budget.

In its Sunday editorial titled “The Value of Pork,” the *Times* called for greater scrutiny of legislative “earmarks” – those add-ons to congressional legislation that allocate funding or tax breaks to specific projects that many times are promoted by special interests.

According to the editorial, \$8.5 billion or 13.5 percent of the U.S. DOT’s \$63 billion budget “was diverted to lawmakers’ pet projects.” Among the projects the *Times* took exception to as a “pork item” is the six-mile Eastside Extension that will connect Union Station and East LA.

In his letter to the editor, Snoble wrote that the administration’s proposed budget for FY 2008 recommends \$80 million from the Federal Transit Administration’s “New Starts” program as the fourth installment for construction of the \$898.8 million project.

The CEO agreed that “transparency of the congressional earmarking process is a step in the right direction...However, there is an important distinction to be made between narrowly-drawn, poorly vetted earmarks pushed by a member of Congress versus legitimate projects that have undergone intense scrutiny and evaluation by the federal government through an established process.”

Noting that the Eastside Extension “underwent rigorous review by several agencies and the U.S. Secretary of Transportation,” Snoble concluded his letter agreeing that the newspaper was “right to call for greater disclosure of earmarks and funding decisions...” but added, “...let’s be mindful of the fact that not all projects are alike...(and) many have been thoroughly analyzed in an open manner and deserve to be seen in a more positive light.”

The Eastside Extension will feature eight new stations (two underground) and will run between Union Station and Atlantic/Pomona boulevards in East Los Angeles via the Little Tokyo/Arts District and Boyle Heights.