

## LETTERS TO THE TIMES

■ Jon Markman and Richard Simon report in their news analysis that County Supervisor Gloria Molina wants to replace Drew with someone "who can say 'I'm going to get this choo-choo built.'" The MTA should proceed differently. If the MTA board predicates its search on the requirement that the director's top priority be implementation of a bankrupt, ineffective rail plan, then the next director's tenure will be even briefer than Drew's.

The consent decree resulting from the Bus Riders Union lawsuit against the MTA and Drew's near-simultaneous withdrawal from "hypercriticism" provide a signal of such clarity it is surprising Molina has not gotten the message. The rail plan is a mistake. Los Angeles has spent billions on rail since 1986, and lost more than 100 million annual transit system boardings in the bargain. If the MTA continues to bleed the bus system for the sake of this inflexible, expensive rail network, then we risk the effective collapse of public transit in Los Angeles.

The board should ignore Molina's advice and recruit more than an acquiescent manager. They need to pursue a leader who can bear the private and public burden of telling them the truth. And they need to be willing to weigh his or her words against their own uncritical, unscientific addiction to rail.

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KIRK McKOY / Los Angeles Times

Joseph E. Drew

### Drew Resigns

■ Re "MTA Chief Drew Quits; Cites Politics, 'Hypercriticism,'" Dec. 5:

Once again, politics has pushed out another CEO, Joseph E. Drew, from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Hundreds of millions of tax dollars have been paid out over sinkholes and damaged buildings, while federal officials investigate the agency. Maybe the real problem is the 13-member board of directors and their micro-management of the agency.

I believe Gov. Pete Wilson should declare a state of emergency, disband the board of directors and appoint a CEO accountable only to the governor. Wilson has two years remaining in his term and could help sort out the many problems of the MTA, without political interference from the present board.

**JACK McGRATH**  
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### Air Quality and the Economy

■ Paul King's letter (Nov. 21) misses the point about Southern California's air quality program.

Rather than forcing Californians to move away, the program has achieved dramatic improvements in air quality over the past 50 years at the same time the population has tripled and the number of automobiles has more than quadrupled. Without controls, pollution would have tripled instead of being cut by two-thirds from its 1955 level, which already was worse than Mexico City's pollution today. The area would have become unlivable and the economy stymied.

Today, the program to clean the air continues just as it has for the past 50 years—reducing pollution from each small category of smog-forming emissions as it becomes technologically and economically feasible. The good news is that if the area can keep up this effort for another 10 to 15 years, it will win the war on smog.

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### Green Line

■ I found your Dec. 1 article on adding a possible stop to the Green Line interesting. If the businesses near the proposed stop are willing to donate land and money, then the stop will not cost the MTA very much, and it would be a good idea.

However, I think that extending the line to the airport should be a high priority, even though it may be expensive. Around 45,000 people work at the airport. Since the Green Line only carries around 15,000 people a day, if 10% of the airport employees started using the Green Line, its ridership would go up around 30%.

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