

October 2, 2008

Message About Financial Market Instability

A Special Message from Tom Forese

Dear SBERA 401(k) Plan Participants:

As Plan Administrator, I recognize that market downturns are troubling, and participants may be concerned about the safe keeping of their assets in light of headline news about failing banks and financial service companies. The trust and safe keeping of your assets is one of the most important responsibilities of the fiduciaries of the Plan, including the Trustees of SBERA. It is important to understand that under federal law, the funds held in the Plan are protected and therefore not subject to the creditors of any failed bank or financial service company. If for instance, we had a Lehman Brothers mutual fund in the Plan, its assets would be intact and held by SBERA as Trustee for the Plan. This special message is to convey that in this period of market turmoil, the trust and safe keeping of your assets is intact; although you are of course exposed to the every day gains and losses associated with market movements.

With respect to money market and capital preservation funds specifically, the SBERA Money Market Fund consists entirely of Government Agencies with maturities less than 6 months so that investors can feel as safe about money fund assets as they do about FDIC guaranteed bank deposits. The Money Market Fund is intended to provide a relatively low, predictable rate of return. Participants who elect to invest in the Plan's low risk option should feel confident that the fundamental structure of the fund remains sound.

It is important to understand that staying the course and not making sudden financial decisions in anticipation of market fluctuations is the best approach for most market participants. History has shown that some of the worst short-term declines have been followed by abrupt rallies, rallies that investors would have missed had they not been invested for the long-term.

As a reminder, the SBERA Plan is a retirement savings plan in which investments are intended to be made for long-term savings and retirement income needs. How you utilize the plan's available investment options should be based upon a personal investment strategy that reflects your risk tolerance, time horizon and investment objectives. In general, creating an investment strategy and sticking to it are critical factors in achieving your financial savings and retirement goals.

The SBERA Trustees and NEPC, our advisers, will continue to monitor market conditions and manager performance, and will take actions on behalf of plan participants and beneficiaries if deemed necessary and appropriate.