

October 22nd, 2020

Sam Schuchat, Executive Director
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority
c/o State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th floor, Oakland, CA 94612



Re: Support for the Evolving Shorelines Project at Bothin Marsh

Dear Director Schuchat,

Marin Conservation League wishes to express its enthusiastic support for the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy's grant proposal to the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Measure AA Program for sea level rise adaptation planning at Bothin Marsh. The Bothin Marsh project is precisely the kind of project that the Measure AA Program was intended to fund: the project is intended to protect and enhance tidal wetlands and immediately adjacent upland habitats; it will enhance shoreline levees as part of a larger project to protect tidal wetlands; and, by improving existing flood conditions it will enable all-year access to a well-used recreation and transportation facility.

MCL has been engaged in the environment of Richardson Bay for many decades, beginning with obstructing proposals to fill 900 acres of eastern Richardson Bay in the 1950s; supporting passage of the McAteer-Petris Act and the formation of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission in the 1960s; and opposing a proposal that would fill in areas known as Bothin Marsh for massive development. In recent years, evidence of a rising sea has become increasingly obvious around the Bay. Both Hwy 1 and the Mill Valley-Sausalito Multi-use Pathway along the shoreline of Richardson Bay are particularly impacted. MCL has participated in numerous studies, workshops, and other public education activities centered on the episodic flooding of these transportation facilities and biologically rich shoreline habitats of Richardson Bay in the vicinity of Manzanita, Tamalpais Valley, and Mill Valley.

The Bothin Marsh Evolving Shorelines Project is an outcome of these studies and promises to move forward with a positive solution that will enhance the resilience of the 106-acre Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve and the Pathway. In particular, the Pathway provides a critical public access link on the Bay Trail between Sausalito, Marin City and Mill Valley. It crosses a portion of the Preserve, which encompasses the shoreline habitats of upper Richardson Bay. Nearby are the unincorporated community of Tamalpais Valley and the City of Mill Valley in Marin County.

Bothin Marsh contains both tidal and mudflat habitats that support hundreds of resident and migratory bird and other wildlife species, including the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse and Ridgway's Rail. The Bay Trail, in addition to serving as a vital transportation corridor for bikes, allows people on foot to observe these habitats at close range. Under present

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Marin Conservation League was founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance the natural assets of Marin County.

conditions and with projected sea level rise both \pathway and marsh habitats will become increasingly compromised.

By elevating and/or relocating infrastructure and incorporating nature-based strategies to allow for the mudflats, tidal wetlands, and adjacent upland habitats to shift over time and migrate with rising sea level, the proposed project is designed to yield multiple benefits: maintain biodiversity within the marsh, and at the same time, reduce the risk of tidal flooding on the safety of the shoreline trail network and the health and safety of the adjacent communities.

The Parks Conservancy and Marin County Parks have collaboratively managed the project to this stage. With the many planning workshops and community outreach events in which individuals and organizations such as MCL have participated, they have been successful in garnering broad community support. The requested funding from the Restoration Authority will allow for continued progress from vision and concept to the project's design.

MCL is committed to continued collaboration with the Parks Conservancy and Marin County Parks to ensure its successful implementation. We have confidence that the expertise and experience demonstrated by the Parks Conservancy and Marin County Parks will be brought to bear in implementing successful adaptive solutions at Bothin Marsh.

Sincerely,



Robert Miller
President



Nona Dennis
Chair Parks & Open Space Committee