

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

50 California Street • Suite 2600 • San Francisco, California 94111 • (415) 352-3600 • Fax: (415) 352-3606 • www.bcdc.ca.gov

November 23, 2011

TO: Commissioners and Alternates
FROM: Will Travis, Executive Director (415/352-3653 travis@bcdd.ca.gov)
SUBJECT: **Staff Report on Implementing the Bay Plan Climate Change Amendments**
(For Commission consideration on December 1, 2011)

At its December 1, 2011 meeting the Commission will discuss the steps that can be taken to ensure that the Bay Plan climate change amendments approved on October 6, 2011, are properly implemented. Of particular concern is Climate Change Policy #6 which states, "The Commission, in collaboration with the Joint Policy Committee, other regional, state and federal agencies, local governments, and the general public, should formulate a regional sea level rise adaptation strategy."

To assist the Commission in its discussion, attached is the report from the Executive Directors of the four Joint Policy Committee agencies recommending that at its December 2, 2011 meeting, the JPC should agree to take the lead in facilitating the development of a regional sea level rise strategy as recommended by BCDC.



Bay Conservation and Development Commission



Association of Bay Area Governments
Bay Area Air Quality Management District
Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street
P.O. Box 2050
Oakland, CA 94607-4756
(510) 464-7942
fax: (510) 433-5542
info@abag.ca.gov
www.abag.ca.gov/jointpolicy

JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE — REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM

Date: November 23, 2011
To: Joint Policy Committee
From: ABAG, BAAQMD, BCDC and MTC Executive Directors
Subject: **Report and Recommendation on *San Francisco Bay Plan Climate Change Amendment* (for Joint Policy Committee consideration on December 2, 2011)**

Summary and Recommendation. On October 6, 2011, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission voted 24-0 to amend the *San Francisco Bay Plan* to address climate change. Among the many revisions to the Bay Plan made by the amendment is one recommending that BCDC, in collaboration with the Joint Policy Committee, other regional, state and federal agencies, local governments, and the general public, should formulate a regional sea level rise adaptation strategy. We recommend that the Joint Policy Committee should agree to take the lead in facilitating the development of such a strategy.

Staff Report. In early October, BCDC amended the Bay Plan to amend existing findings and policies to dealing with sea level rise and to add a new section to the plan addressing climate change. The amendments were the result of more than two years of planning, drafting, and public hearings, which were contentious at times. Some development and business interests initially argued that the proposed policies would discourage development and economic investment in the Bay Area, while environmental groups pressed BCDC to issue a moratorium on new shoreline development. Local governments also raised concerns about the policies, fearing that they would allow BCDC to intrude into local planning decisions. However, by the time of adoption, key environmental organizations, business groups, labor and local governments expressed their support for the amendment, which the Commission passed unanimously.

Attached are: (1) a short document with responses to some of the most frequently asked questions about the amendment; and (2) the resolution adopted by the Commission which contains the detailed revision language approved by the Commission.

The revision that principally affects the Joint Policy Committee is Bay Plan Climate Change Policy 6 on pages 17-19 of the resolution. In part, that policy states, “The Commission, in collaboration with the Joint Policy Committee, other regional, state and federal agencies, local governments, and the general public, should formulate a regional sea level rise adaptation strategy for protecting critical developed shoreline areas and natural ecosystems, enhancing the resilience of Bay and shoreline systems and increasing their adaptive capacity.”

The policy further states, “The Commission recommends that: (1) the strategy incorporate an adaptive management approach; (2) the strategy be consistent with the goals of SB 375 and the principles of the California Climate Adaptation Strategy; (3) the strategy be updated regularly to reflect changing conditions and scientific information and include maps of shoreline areas that are vulnerable to flooding based on projections of future sea level rise and shoreline flooding; (4)

the maps be prepared under the direction of a qualified engineer and regularly updated in consultation with government agencies with authority over flood protection; and (5) particular attention be given to identifying and encouraging the development of long-term regional flood protection strategies that may be beyond the fiscal resources of individual local agencies.”

Some undeveloped low-lying areas that are vulnerable to shoreline flooding contain important habitat or provide opportunities for habitat enhancement. In these areas, development that would have regional benefits could preclude wetland enhancement that would also have regional benefits. There are multiple local, state, federal, and regional government agencies with authority over the Bay and shoreline. Local governments have broad authority over shoreline land use, but limited resources to address climate change adaptation. Working collaboratively with local governments, including agencies with responsibility for flood protection is desirable to optimize scarce resources and create the flexibility needed to plan amidst a high degree of uncertainty. Moreover, retrofitting the Bay Area’s transportation infrastructure system to be resilient to flooding will be extraordinarily expensive. However, the potential exists that the process of providing flood protection for transportation facilities can also provide flood protection for low-lying area inland of the transportation facilities along the shoreline.

The Joint Policy Committee provides a framework for regional decision-making to address climate change through consistent and effective region-wide policy and to provide local governments with assistance and incentives for addressing climate change. Therefore, we recommend that the JPC agree to take the lead in facilitating the formulation of a regional sea level rise strategy as recommended by BCDC.

Attachments:

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[BCDC Resolution No. 11-08](#)