

September 21, 2012

TO: Commissioners and Alternates

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SUBJECT: Staff Report and Recommendation on an Interagency Agreement with the State Coastal Conservancy to Support the Technical Update to the Baylands Habitat Goals
(For Commission consideration for October 4, 2012)

Summary and Recommendations

The staff recommends that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to enter into an interagency agreement with the State Coastal Conservancy to expend \$10,000 during an eighteen-month period to procure technical support for updating the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals report.

Staff Report

Focused on the wetlands at the Bay's edge, the *San Francisco Baylands Habitat Ecosystem Goals Report (Goals)* was released in 1999. For over a decade, the Goals report has guided and inspired wetlands restoration and enhancement around the Bay. With the ongoing and impending significant effects that climate change will have on the Bay's wetland ecosystems, there is a timely need to incorporate a science-based assessment of the predicted impacts and associated potential adaptation strategies into a technical update of the report.

The Commission last updated its Bay Plan tidal marsh and tidal flat, and fish, wildlife and other aquatic organisms findings and policies in 2001. That update reflected current scientific understanding of Bayland ecosystem processes, and these regional habitat enhancement and restoration goals. This technical update of the Goals report eleven years later will better enable the Commission and other local, regional, state, and federal agencies to formulate wetland resilience strategies as part of sea level rise adaptation programs. As such, BCDC will use this information when it considers future permit applications and consistency determinations. The updated Goals report will also support the integration of regional sea level rise adaptation planning in the Plan Bay Area sustainable communities strategy because wetlands will be a key part of that strategy.

BCDC staff is participating with federal and state resource and regulatory agencies throughout the region and with environmental organizations to update the Goals report. The Coastal Conservancy is providing primary financial support for the project, and hired



consultants to provide overall project organization, guidance, and technical assistance, as well as writing, meeting planning, agenda development and meeting summaries. The project is progressing well and is on schedule. However, it became apparent during the development of detailed outlines for report chapters that additional technical expertise is necessary to develop conceptual models to characterize existing conditions and ecosystem functions, and to better characterize the likely impacts of sea level rise on wetlands at the Bay's edge.

The Commission would provide these funds from its federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) grant provided through the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The grant includes a project to provide assistance and technical support to local governments. This proposal is consistent with the grant task that requires the Commission to "develop content for and offer workshops, trainings and discussion forums for local planners and resource managers on...the state of the science regarding climate change, impacts and options for coastal adaptation." The staff recommends that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to enter into an interagency agreement with the State Coastal Conservancy to expend \$10,000 during a period of no more than eighteen months to provide support for the technical update to the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals.