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**Subject:** letter to Mr. William Nack, San Mateo County BCTC re sand mining application permits

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December 22, 2014

Mr. William Nack  
Business Manager  
San Mateo County  
Building & Construction Trades Council

Dear Mr. Nack,

It is surprising that 14,000 men and women of the San Mateo County Building and Construction Trades Council all seem to agree that sand should be mined, relatively indiscriminately, to support “thousands of construction activities/projects throughout the greater San Francisco Bay Area.” Regardless of whether sand is “locally harvested” or taken from beaches farther afield or dredged from the ocean, the impact on the bay and on the public trust, on coastal erosion and sedimentary balance, is inestimable in potential damage.

Our bay, our achingly beautiful and fragile bay, replete with not-yet fully discovered eco-systems, marine life and co-dependencies involving everything from whales and other large mammals to the smallest invertebrates, mussels, plankton, and the sediment and vegetal forestation that support, complement and complete these systems, is perhaps the greatest treasure which we human beings bear the responsibility to preserve and protect.

It is high time other alternatives are found to “harvesting” our bay sands. One cannot “harvest” sands in the sense that another harvest will bring replenishment. Sand is finite; it does not seed; it cannot be harvested in the fall and replanted in the springtime. Scientists need to be called upon to discover perhaps a useable material that can truly be harvested. There is enough intelligence on this planet to figure out how to grow materials that can be used in construction without injuring the planet itself. Our ancestors made homes from bamboo, reeds and trees, and many still do. With care, those resources can replenish themselves. There too, our responsibility to life is to insure that it thrive and not be destroyed.

There is absolutely no benefit to the construction industry and economic growth from sand mining that is not at the same time potentially detrimental if not lethal to society, to children, to the future of our bay and coasts and our very human existence. We are facing unfathomable challenges in climate change, sea level rise, and increased viral infections and cancers from pollutants that are intrinsically woven into the fabric of our global eco-system.

The only way we can face these challenges as a mature society is to respect the only home we know, which is this beautiful planet. And to respect earth, we need to ask her humbly, what we can do so that she will thrive. Robbing her sand and polluting or filling up her streams, clearing her rainforests and destroying her beaches is not the answer she would give us.

The San Francisco Baykeeper has given you statistics and graphs that indicate quantities of sediment extracted in the past. I suggest that should there be any mining at all, the quantities revert to the 1974 levels, and that other means and materials for construction be discovered.

Most respectfully,

Karen Melandera Magoon,

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Cc: William Travis; Mr. Lawrence Goldzband, Executive Director, SF BCDC; Billy Edge, Orville Magoon