

Letter from the Chair

Zack Wasserman, Chair of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

The Bay Area is already experiencing the impacts of climate change and rising sea levels through flooding from high tides, storm surge, and bigger storms with more rain. Their ramifications – threatened natural habitats that would otherwise protect shoreline communities, disrupted transportation networks, untreated wastewater flowing into the Bay, parks and open space under water, and water flowing into places that once were dry – are only projected to worsen in decades to come.

Indeed, all of California has begun experiencing the first tastes of the harsh lessons of not preparing for climate change. Now, BCDC and the Coastal Commission have been charged by the State Legislature and the Newsom Administration to help prepare our shorelines for rising sea levels by supporting local sea level rise planning through consistent guidelines and standards for plans and approving the plans once complete.

This Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) provides local governments – and the whole region - with the framework needed to protect the communities who live, work, and play in shoreline cities and counties. Planning for sea level rise will highlight each jurisdiction's different priorities and challenges. But the framework laid out in the RSAP provides the flexibility to enable every jurisdiction to prioritize values that are important locally but still in alignment with regional goals, make tradeoffs among outcomes to best fit their residents, and establish a socially, economically, and environmentally prosperous future.

Without a doubt this planning process will require local governments to allocate meaningful resources to make it robust, inclusive, and impactful. Thankfully, the State of California has already made initial planning funding available that is noncompetitive and aligned with the RSAP. In addition, shoreline adaptation projects within approved plans will be prioritized for State funding.

Finally, BCDC looks forward to working closely with local governments to move their plans forward as quickly as possible by answering questions, suggesting possible policy approaches, and learning with local governments how use local plans to best protect their residents, places, and habitat. As a first-of-its kind plan, BCDC looks forward to working with the Bay Area's cities and counties over the next decade to continually refine and advance the RSAP, local plans, and adaptation projects as they advance through implementation. This version of the RSAP will change over the coming years as we observe how the Pam is implemented and how conditions may change. Our collaborative effort must ensure that the Bay Area not only retains its diverse social fabric and economic prowess, but that our plans for adaptation strengthen both, as well as provide protection for our people, our places, and our habitats. By working together across our region, we can realize that goal.



Zack Wasserman
Chair, BCDC