



CITIZENS COMMITTEE TO COMPLETE THE REFUGE

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Chairman Randolph and Commissioners,

Thank you for holding this workshop. My name is Carin High, I'm a member of the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge. The success of our group in acquiring and restoring wetlands demonstrates the overwhelming public desire to protect in their natural state the lands that ring San Francisco Bay.

I am reminded the Commission "is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of San Francisco Bay and to the encouragement of the Bay's responsible use."

That's precisely what we are advocating – "encouragement of the Bay's responsible use" and we are extremely disappointed that the Climate Change Amendments were not approved last year and that there has been significant degradation of the language since that time.

We are particularly concerned with the definition of "infill" in its current iteration, that rather than being tightly defined the term could be applied to almost any location within BCDC's jurisdiction.

We are also concerned that environmental protection has become subservient to consideration of development and that while language from the California Climate Adaptation Strategy (CCAS) has been added to the proposed Amendments, the spirit and intent of the CCAS has been lost – the definition of "infill" as one example.

We recommend that Climate Change Policy 4 be Policy 1 to set the tone for the review of new development proposed in vulnerable and undeveloped areas. We recognize there will be a tremendous need to protect critical, existing infrastructure and do not believe it is in the public interest or that of the environment to locate additional development in harms' way.

The CCAS recognizes the importance of preserving California's biodiversity and in particular that it is in the public interest to do so. To quote the CCAS:

The preservation of healthy, resilient ecosystems with a rich plant and animal biodiversity is critical to the health, safety and welfare of human populations. Human development has already reduced, degraded, and fragmented natural communities.

And,

The high degree of development and infrastructure placed in near-shore areas restricts the inland migration of wetlands in many locations, thus more coastal wetlands are likely to be lost.

Also,

...the tidal marshes of San Francisco Bay also provide essential wintering habitat for hundreds of thousands of birds as they migrate north and south along the Pacific Flyway. Humans

additionally benefit from the ability of healthy wetlands to buffer storm impacts, reduce shoreline erosion, improve water quality, and provide beautiful areas for recreation.

Lastly,

The economy and the natural resources that sustain human life are dependent upon the state's biodiversity. These species and ecosystems provide numerous goods and services, including provisioning services (e.g. food....) [in SFBay fisheries]

...regulating services (e.g. water purification and carbon sequestration), supporting services (e.g. climate regulation and nutrient cycling) and cultural services (e.g. aesthetic values and a sense of place). Not only do these goods and services support California's economy but they support numerous recreational activities for residents.

In summary, we ask that the amendments revert back to language that sets a higher standard for new development of undeveloped and vulnerable areas, and begins with the presumption of protection of the natural environment. We recognize there may be exceptions to this presumption. However, if we are interested in the long-term sustainability of the Bay and the benefits that we reap from a healthy Bay ecosystem, then protection of environment must not be subservient to development.

Respectfully submitted,

Carin High
CCCR Vice-Chair