

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF BAY ADAPT: REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR A RISING BAY

Whereas, climate change is accelerating rising sea levels, increasing storm frequency and intensity, and moving groundwater toward the surface. The confluence of more intense winter storms, extreme high tides, and higher runoff, with higher sea levels, will increase the frequency and duration of shoreline flooding long before areas are permanently inundated by sea level rise alone; and

Whereas, a major storm within the next decade in the Bay Area could result in temporary flooding impacts to 13,000 existing housing units and 70,000 planned housing units, 28,000 socially vulnerable residents, 104,000 existing jobs and 85,000 planned jobs, and 20,000 acres of wetlands habitat that may become permanently inundated within 40 years; and

Whereas, there are multiple local, regional, state, and federal government agencies with authority over the Bay and its shoreline, and while local governments have broad authority over shoreline land use they have limited resources to address climate change adaptation; and

Whereas, individual local actions, absent a regional context in which to make policy decisions, will lead to a “tragedy of the commons”; and

Whereas, the San Francisco Bay Area is a vibrant, diverse, ecologically unique, innovative, and pioneering region that will be deeply and deleteriously affected by climate change without tremendous effort and investments to adapt to a constantly changing shoreline. The San Francisco Bay shoreline constitutes approximately one-third of the California coastline, but the Bay Area is estimated to experience two-thirds of the negative economic impacts due to the flooding that would occur absent adequate measures to adapt and protect people, places, and habitat; and

Whereas, the Bay Area region’s most socioeconomically vulnerable frontline communities are at the greatest risk of exposure to climate threats, and the impacts of historic and ongoing social and economic marginalization will compound the risks posed by flooding to those communities by reducing a community’s or individual’s ability to prepare for, respond to, and/or recover from a flood event; and

Whereas, the Bay ecosystem is already stressed by human activities that have drastically lowered its adaptive capacity, and climate change will further alter that ecosystem by inundating or eroding remaining wetlands, changing sediment dynamics, altering species composition, increasing the acidity of Bay waters, changing freshwater flows and/or salinity, altering the food web, and impairing water quality. Moreover, further loss of tidal wetlands will increase the risk of shoreline flooding; and

Whereas, flood damage to vital shoreline development, public infrastructure, and facilities such as neighborhoods, commercial centers, airports, seaports, regional transportation facilities,

landfills, contaminated lands, and wastewater treatment facilities absent adaptation will require costly repairs and likely will result in the interruption or loss of vital services, large-scale social dislocation, and degraded environmental quality; and

Whereas, the increasingly frequent and severe impacts of climate change in the Bay Area do not conform to jurisdictional boundaries or the planning and regulatory authorities of any one agency or organization; and

Whereas, in 2019, BCDC, in collaboration with a Leadership Advisory Group comprised of 35 Bay Area public, private, and non-profit leaders, embarked on the development of “Bay Adapt,” a consensus-driven strategy for regional sea level rise adaptation. The Leadership Advisory Group includes representatives from numerous public agencies, including the Association of Bay Area Governments/Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC/ABAG), San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, State Coastal Conservancy, Caltrans, BARC, BART, East Bay Regional Parks, US Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, San Francisco Public Utility Commission, Marin County, and BCDC, as well as environmental justice, environmental, business, scientific, civic, organizations, local government and flood manager networks, and academia; and

Whereas, in 2020 and 2021, hundreds of stakeholders participated in the creation of the “Bay Adapt Joint Platform” through nine Leadership Advisory Group meetings, two public forums, many expert Working Group meetings, ten community and stakeholder focus groups, over 50 presentations to local governments around the region, and a month-long public feedback opportunity; and

Whereas, the Bay Adapt Joint Platform lays out a set of guiding principles, priority actions, and vital tasks whose implementation will enable the region, and most notably local governments, to adapt faster, better, and more equitably to a rising San Francisco Bay. If fulfilled, it will reduce flood risks for communities, businesses, infrastructure, and habitat; increase technical assistance for local governments and funding for adaptation; protect natural areas and wildlife; recognize and equitably support low-income, frontline communities; robustly integrate adaptation into community-focused local plans; and, accelerate permitting and project construction of local adaptation projects; and

Whereas, the Bay Adapt Leadership Advisory Group supports the Joint Platform and many members agreed to help implement it at its October 2021 meeting, the BARC Governing Board endorsed it on September 17th 2021, and BCDC adopted the Joint Platform on October 21st 2021; and

Whereas, implementing the Joint Platform’s many and varied actions and tasks goes beyond the capacity of any single organization or jurisdiction, requires strong and diverse leadership and participation in all aspects of its implementation, and a broad coalition of stakeholders share responsibility for the success of the tasks outlined in the Joint Platform.

Now, therefore, be it resolved:

1. The Town of San Anselmo supports and Bay Adapt Joint Platform, a regional strategy for a

rising Bay, including the guiding principles, actions, and tasks contained within; and

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2. The Town of San Anselmo looks forward to championing and supporting the implementation of Bay Adapt to ensure that it serves San Anselmo and the Bay Area as a whole in achieving resilient and equitable adaptation to sea level rise.