



## MEMO

Date: May 6, 2012

To: Executive Board

From: Judy Kelly  
Director, San Francisco Estuary Partnership

Subject: **San Francisco Bay Delta System**

### Summary

Approval of a Resolution expressing the interest of the ABAG Executive Board that the health of the San Francisco Bay Delta system be adequately considered as part of water supply planning processes now underway regarding Delta facilities, Delta area planning, State Water Resource Control Board plans, and in other important Bay-Delta planning programs.

### Background

The San Francisco Estuary Partnership, as an ABAG program for over 15 years, has the charge of helping the citizens and leaders of the region understand and describe the values of our Bay Delta system, the health of the system, and the challenges to that system. The health of the Bay Delta system was recently reviewed in the Partnership's 2011 State of the Bay Report (Report). Results of this Report were presented and discussed at the February 2012 Administrative Committee Retreat. The presentation and ensuing discussion centered on the need for adequate freshwater flows into the Delta and Bay and noted that the results of the Report show a serious diminishment over time of freshwater into the Bay Delta system and a decline of the resources depending on such flows. The Committee was also informed of the result of a 2010 survey in which 92% of Bay Area voters agreed that "It is important for the region's economy to have a clean, healthy and vibrant San Francisco Bay." (See attached slides.)

The Report and the Committee noted that adequate inflows are not the only element needed for a healthier Delta and Bay system, but that they are a critical part of any long-term solution to the issues in the Delta now receiving so much attention by both the Federal and State governments. The Committee directed staff to draft a resolution for consideration by the Executive Board describing the concerns of ABAG regarding these issues and asking that any solutions put forward by the various planning efforts

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underway recognize that the health of the Bay is affected by freshwater inflows and that these critical flows must be improved over current conditions.

The resolution does not call for specific outcomes from the various planning processes underway regarding Delta facilities and planning efforts. Instead, it expresses the will of the Committee that freshwater inflow improvements during critical periods be part of whatever set of solutions is agreed upon as outcomes to these processes.

Attachments:

Resolution No. 08-12

Slides (2)

**ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS  
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**RESOLUTION NO. 08-12**

**ON ECOSYSTEM HEALTH AND THE NEED FOR FRESH WATER FOR THE  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY DELTA ESTUARY**

**WHEREAS**, the Association of Bay Area Governments is the home for the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, a coalition of resource agencies, non-profits, citizens, and scientists working to protect, restore, and enhance water quality and fish and wildlife habitat in and around the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary. One of the San Francisco Estuary Partnership's purposes is to inform local governments in the region on issues critical to the health of the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary and to enable them to effectively engage in processes that will affect its health; and

**WHEREAS**, at 1,600 square miles, the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary is the largest on the West Coast and drains nearly 40 percent of California's land area, provides drinking water to nearly two-thirds of the state's population, and supplies irrigation water to four million acres of farmland. Although significantly altered since 1850, the Estuary still supports hundreds of fish, wildlife, and plant species, many found nowhere else on Earth: Almost two-thirds of the state's salmon travel through the Estuary as young fish and return to spawn as adults; almost half of the migratory birds on the Pacific Flyway pass by the Golden Gate or stop in San Francisco Bay's remaining wetlands. Brackish habitat in the Suisun Marsh provides critical habitat to many species important to the estuarine ecosystem; and

**WHEREAS**, the San Francisco Bay Area is the United States' fourth largest exporting region, accounting for 36 percent of California's exports. In 2009, the San Francisco Bay Area hosted over 15 million visitors, adding some \$8 billion to the Bay Area economy and many more billions of dollars to our nation's wealth. The San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary helps to power this economic engine, and the health of the ecosystem is vital to maintaining a healthy regional economy; and

**WHEREAS**, in a 2010 survey, 92% of Bay Area voters agreed that "It is important for the region's economy to have a clean, healthy and vibrant San Francisco Bay." The Bay is the globally recognized symbol of our region, and its health reflects on our region's capacities, values, and vibrancy; and

**WHEREAS**, the San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta are at risk from many factors, and the State and Federal governments are proposing large-scale changes to address these factors. These include new water conveyance through and around the Delta to address state-wide water supply needs; changes to the Bay-Delta ecosystem to address declining ecosystem health and fish populations; changes to land use authority within the Delta; and changes to water allocations and management. These changes will impact the long-term health of the San Francisco Bay Estuary; and

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**WHEREAS**, the California's State Water Resources Control Board determined in 2010 that, in order to protect public trust resources in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta ecosystem, 75 percent of unimpaired runoff from the Sacramento-San Joaquin watershed should flow out of the Delta and into the Estuary during the critical winter and spring periods. From 2000 to 2009, in contrast, on average only 45 percent of estimated unimpaired inflow was actually received into the estuary during these seasons; and

**WHEREAS**, the Association of Bay Area Government/San Francisco Estuary Partnership's *2011 State of the Bay* report also indicates that limited freshwater inflows are having a negative impact on the greater San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary, and finds that fish abundance and diversity are declining in all regions of the Bay except near the Golden Gate and that the fish community is in poor condition in Suisun Bay; and

**WHEREAS**, each county and city and town in the Association of Bay Area Governments will be impacted by planned actions in the Delta through potential changes in water quality and health of the San Francisco Bay.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Executive Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments hereby expresses its interest in the on-going Bay-Delta planning process of the Delta Stewardship Council, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, and the State Water Board's Delta planning and regulatory efforts, and urges that as part of any solution or conclusions reached in these critical planning and regulatory processes, the following principles be applied:

Bay-Delta Ecosystem. Recognize that protection and restoration of a healthy sustainable Bay-Delta ecosystem includes adequate water quality, outflow, and water supply, to support fisheries, wildlife and habitat in perpetuity.

Delta Outflows. Recognize that the Bay-Delta ecosystem has been in a state of "chronic drought" due to current water management practices, and ensure adequate Delta outflows to San Francisco Bay to support fisheries, wildlife, habitat, water quality and other beneficial uses.

Regional Self-Sufficiency. Incorporate sustainable approaches for improved water supply, water quality and reliability through the overarching principle of regional self-sufficiency, linked specifically to reducing reliance on exports from the Delta and reducing the current impacts on the Bay-Delta ecosystem.

Bay Area Communities. Protect the economic viability of industry, recreation, tourism, fisheries, and agriculture, and the ongoing vitality of communities throughout and along the shoreline of the greater San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem.

Full Financial Disclosure. The multi-decade costs of restoring habitat in the Bay and the Delta are expected to be significant as would be the full costs associated

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with any new or modified water management facilities. Realistic cost estimates must be calculated and made clear to both taxpayers and ratepayers throughout California before any final decisions are made. A full cost-benefit analysis of any proposed project must cover all affected geographic areas, and adverse socio-economic impacts need to be minimized and fully mitigated by the beneficiaries of the project.

Fair Representation. Represent and include local governments in any new governance structures for the Delta.

Flood Protection. Support funding and implementation of urban and non-urban flood protection, at the appropriate level of protection, through rehabilitation and restoration of wetlands wherever feasible, and improvement and maintenance of flood control levees and structures where necessary.

The foregoing adopted by the Executive Board this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2012.

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Mark Luce  
President

**Certification of Executive Board Approval**

I, the undersigned, the appointed and qualified Secretary-Treasurer of the Association of Bay Area Governments (Association), do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Executive Board of the Association at a duly called meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2012.

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Ezra Rapport  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Approved as To Legal Form**

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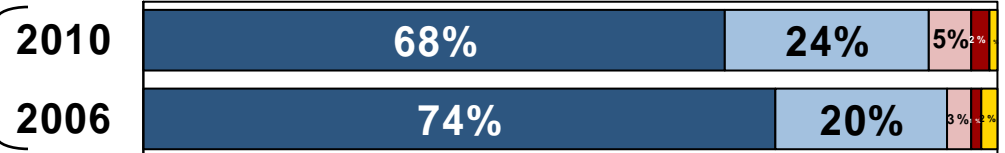
Kenneth K. Moy  
Legal Counsel

# Voters continue to value the contributions the Bay makes to the economy and quality of life in the area.

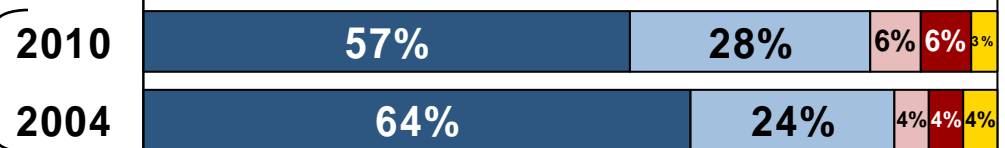
(Ranked by % Strongly Agree)

■ Strng. Agree ■ S.W. Agree ■ S.W. Agree ■ Strng. Disagree ■ DK/NA

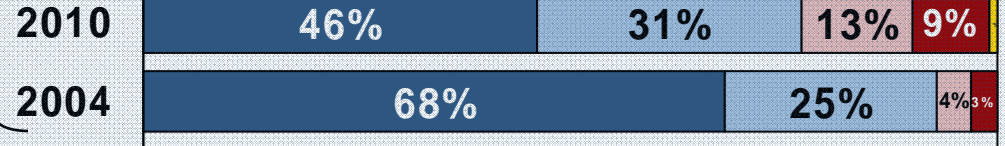
It is important for the region's economy to have a clean, healthy and vibrant San Francisco Bay



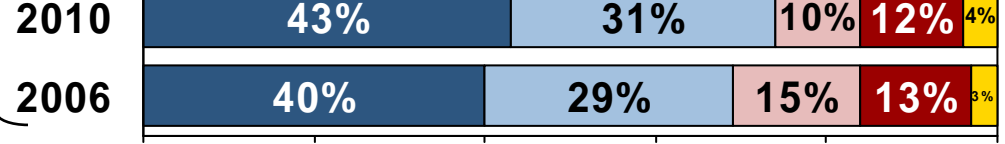
The presence of the Bay increases the value of homes throughout the Bay Area



San Francisco Bay is very important to my quality of life



Taking care of the San Francisco Bay is a government responsibility



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

# Information about the condition of fish in the Bay sparks serious concerns.

(Ranked by % Extremely Concerned)

■ Ext. Conc. ■ Very Conc. ■ S.W. Conc. ■ Not Too Conc./DK/NA

All fish sampled from the Bay have been contaminated with harmful chemicals like PCBs, mercury and pesticides.

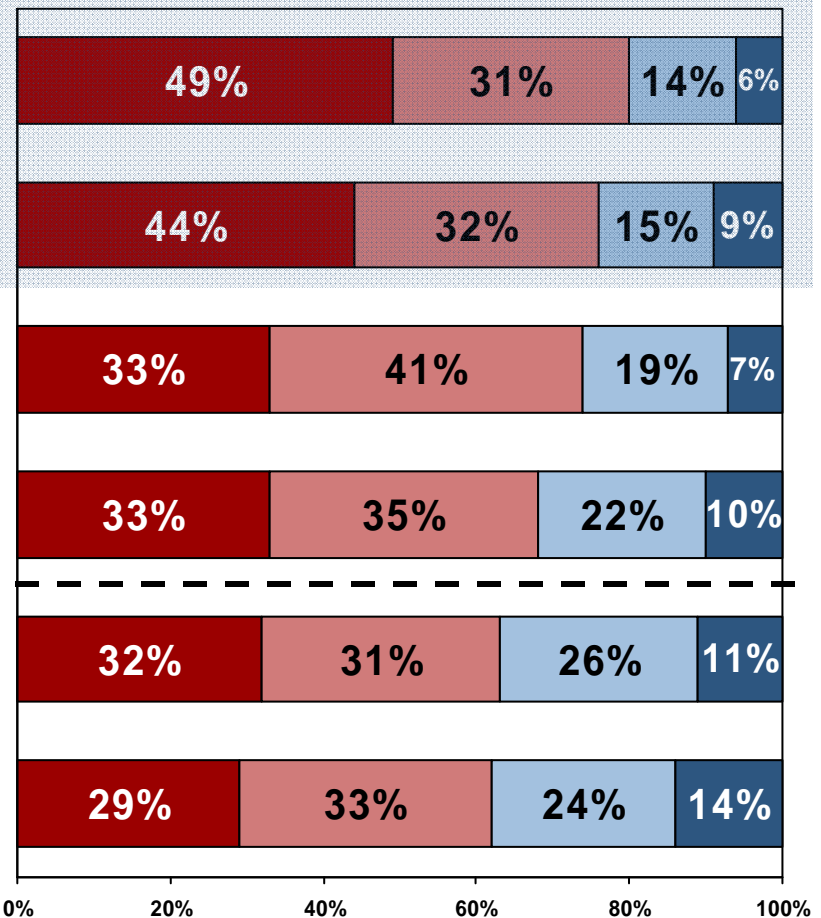
Many fish that are caught in the Bay are not safe to eat.

Many species of fish, birds, and other wildlife that live in San Francisco Bay are dramatically declining.

Today, only 5% of the Bay's original wetlands remain and the Bay is threatened everyday by pollution and sprawl development.

Native non-bottom feeder fish populations in the Bay have declined by 92% in some parts of the bay, leading to a collapse of commercial and recreational fishing.

85% of the original marsh around the San Francisco Bay either no longer exists or has been developed.



15. I'm going to read you a list of facts about the condition of San Francisco Bay. Please tell me how concerned you are about that item: extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned or not too concerned.