



San Mateo County Harbor District

Board of Harbor Commissioners

Sabrina Brennan, President
Tom Mattusch, Vice President
Nicole David, Secretary
Robert Bernardo, Commissioner
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Scott Grindy, Acting General Manager & Treasurer

May 18, 2015

R. Zachary Wasserman and Commission Members
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 10600
San Francisco, CA 94102-7019

Subject: **Sand Mining in San Francisco Bay**

Dear Chair Wasserman and Commission Members,

The San Mateo County Harbor District is a countywide Special District that includes Oyster Point Marina and Pillar Point Harbor. Our mission is to provide the public with clean, safe, well-managed, financially sound and environmentally pleasant marinas. The Harbor District supports active recreation, tourism and waterfront business communities that are dependent on healthy beaches.

The Board of Harbor Commissioners is concerned about the recent decision to permit further sand mining in San Francisco Bay. Sediment flows through the Delta and smaller tributaries into San Francisco Bay and continues from there to open ocean beaches along San Francisco and the northern part of San Mateo County. However, a sharp long-term decrease in sediment supply to San Francisco Bay has occurred due to modifications of the rivers and the Delta. The rate of sand mining has not decreased proportionately with the decreasing sand supply. Especially, during the ongoing drought we would expect the amount of sediment coming into San Francisco Bay to be less than in normal years.

Sand mining in San Francisco Bay should only be permitted at a rate that does not exceed replenishment. Good estimates for sediment loads coming into the Bay have been made previously but these sediment loads cannot support the mining demands in the Central Bay and Suisun Bay. Excessive mining will adversely affect shorelines and possibly shoreline restoration projects, especially since maintenance dredging also has to be considered. Aggregate mining is not the only way that sand is removed from the Bay.

Previous bathymetry studies have indicated that the reduction in sand mining by 71% after 2007 left the Bay floor with a slight net accretion and minor changes through 2014. Increasing the amount of sand to be removed again is concerning and we would recommend further studies to be conducted to enhance our understanding of sediment processes in the Bay before increased sand mining is allowed.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Brennan (President)