

RESOLUTION NO. BOS-2016-130

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
EXPRESSING ITS INTERESTS IN THE BAY-DELTA ESTUARY PLANNING
PROCESS**

WHEREAS, at 1,600 square miles, the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary is the largest estuary on the West Coast and drains nearly 40 percent of California's land area, provides a portion of drinking water to nearly two-thirds of the state's population, and supplies irrigation water to four million acres of farmland; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, over the last 150 years, the Delta has been altered by a system of manmade levees, reservoirs, and dredged waterways constructed to support farming and urban development and to provide flood protection for local towns and cities, eliminating 98% of the wetlands that used to exist there. The natural flows in the Delta also are altered by upstream and in-delta diversions, including operation of the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP), which deliver water to millions of Californians. Many other factors affect species' health in the Delta, including water quality issues; nonnative species; illegal fishing; and smaller, local water diversions. The Delta is also threatened by continuing land subsidence, seismic risk, and effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, on average, approximately half of the watershed's runoff is diverted for consumptive uses such as drinking water and agriculture, and approximately half flows out of the Delta for fish and wildlife benefits, recreation, salinity control, water quality, and other non-consumptive uses; and

WHEREAS, federal and state regulatory agencies have commented on the importance of adequate freshwater flows to the health of the San Francisco Bay-Delta system, and there is concern in the scientific community that existing flow standards may not sufficiently protect several native fish species; 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 have proposed large-scale changes to address these factors. Proposed changes include new water conveyance through and around the Delta to address statewide water supply needs; habitat restoration and other improvements 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 use, allocations, and management; and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary, as a world-class destination and a desirable place to live, helps to power the economic engine of the San Francisco Bay Area, including Santa Clara County, home to Silicon Valley and one of the best-performing metro economies in the United States; and

WHEREAS, permanent land surface subsidence of up to 13 feet in San Jose from 1915 to 1970 due to groundwater overdraft was effectively halted by improved water management, including the use of imported water from the Delta and Delta watershed for treated surface water deliveries and groundwater recharge; and

WHEREAS, since the 1960s Santa Clara County has relied upon the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) to import water from the Bay-Delta Estuary and water diverted upstream of the Delta to meet the water supply needs of the County. Imported water has helped manage the County's groundwater basins and reduce the threat of land surface subsidence and salt water intrusion; and

WHEREAS, in a 2010 survey, 92% of Bay Area voters agreed "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 Delta Reform Act passed by the State Legislature in 2009 calls for the coequal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. As part of the Delta Reform Act, state policy orders each region that depends on water from the Delta watershed to improve its regional self-reliance; and

WHEREAS, Santa Clara County is becoming a Bay Area leader in water conservation policies and practices. The County has increased its use of recycled water for irrigation and cooling purposes significantly and has plans to further increase recycled water use. The County's commitment to a sustainable community is reflected in its practices and public policy, programs and services, including adoption of an ordinance establishing permanent and mandatory water waste and conservation measures for unincorporated areas, and a new water-conscious landscaping policy for county-owned properties. The County has also acted aggressively to reduce residential and business water use in response to the current drought; these actions all serve to help reduce reliance on the Delta; and

WHEREAS, the District has implemented water conservation programs, progressive water shortage contingency planning, and a Water Wise House Call program, and has demonstrated an increasing commitment to water efficiency and reuse through the completion and expansion of the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center in partnership with the San Jose/Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility. These programs will aid the county in its growing efforts to reduce its reliance on imported water through the expanded use of recycled and purified water, as well as reducing the amount of wastewater released to the Bay; and

WHEREAS, continuing to rely on the existing system of through-Delta conveyance for the County's imported water supplies is not sustainable, and various planning processes are working toward the restoration of important species and habitat, and a more resilient, reliable,

sustainably managed water resources system (water supply, water quality, flood protection and the environment) that can better withstand inevitable and unforeseen pressures in the coming decades; and

WHEREAS, the vulnerability of Santa Clara County's Bay shoreline to sea level rise and flooding has been identified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and others; wetlands restoration efforts such as the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project and South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study can provide flood and storm protection to shoreline businesses and residents, reduce vulnerability to sea level rise, sequester carbon, and provide habitat benefits to fish and wildlife and water quality improvements to the Bay. These efforts are benefited by inflows from the Delta, the ocean, and local watersheds, and

WHEREAS, the long-term Delta solution should promote a resilient Delta ecosystem by basing all actions on sound science and addressing the full range of environmental stressors, including toxics, flows, invasive species, and all watershed diverters; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County Santa Clara, State of California, that the County hereby acknowledges the Santa Clara Valley Water District's lead role for the County in the planning processes that will affect the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary and urges that as part of any solution or conclusions reached in critical Bay-Delta planning and regulatory processes, the following principles be applied:

- **Healthy Bay-Delta Estuary.** Recognize that protection and restoration of a healthy, sustainable Bay-Delta Estuary includes improvements in habitat, water quality, flows, and water supply, to support fisheries, wildlife, and a resilient ecosystem.
- **Habitat Restoration.** Provide for the restoration of native habitat to protect endangered fish, wildlife, and plant species, and to improve the ecological functions of the Bay-Delta Estuary as a whole.
- **Flow Patterns.** Ensure restoration of more natural flow patterns within the Delta and San Francisco Bay to support robust fish and wildlife populations and their required habitat.
- **Water Quality.** Ensure water quality conditions that meet Federal and State water quality standards that will support all beneficial uses, including recreational water sports/activities, fishing, drinking water, and Bay and Delta agriculture.
- **Invasive Species.** Take measures to control and reduce invasive species that impair the health of the Bay-Delta Estuary ecosystem.
- **Sacramento-San Joaquin River and Delta Water Supply.** Recognize the significant role that Sacramento-San Joaquin River and Delta watershed water supply sources have played to date in groundwater recharge efforts and the economic well-being of the citizens of Santa Clara County, including protection against further land subsidence.
- **Regional Self-Sufficiency.** Incorporate sustainable approaches for improved water supply, water quality and reliability through increased regional self-sufficiency. Methods such as increased conservation and water use efficiency, recycling and reuse, conjunctive use of groundwater, and other methods appropriate for the region help increase regional self-sufficiency and contribute to the statewide priority of reducing reliance on the Delta.

- **Bay Area Communities.** Protect the economic viability of industry, recreation, tourism, fisheries, and agriculture, and the ongoing vitality of communities throughout the counties encompassing the greater San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem.
- **Full Financial Disclosure.** Support full public disclosure of the costs of all proposed solutions, including the multi-decade costs of restoring habitat and establishing new or modified water management facilities in the Bay-Delta. Disclosure should also include a cost-benefit analysis of any proposed project that covers all affected geographic areas.
- **Fair Representation.** Represent local and affected governments in any planning efforts 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 the improvement and maintenance of flood control levees and structures where necessary.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara, State of California, on August 30, 2016, by the following vote:

AYES: - **CHAVEZ, CORTESE, SIMITIAN, WASSERMAN, YEAGER**

NOES: **NONE**

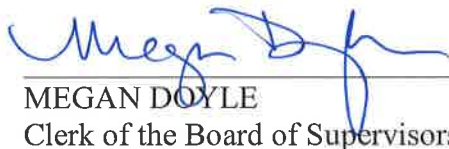
ABSENT: **NONE**

ABSTAIN: **NONE**



DAVE CORTESE, President
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:



MEGAN DOYLE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:



8/16/2016
ELIZABETH G. PIANCA
Lead Deputy County Counsel