

RESOLUTION NO. 21-05
of the
San Mateo County Harbor District
to
Support the State Water Resources Control Board's Update of the
Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan

WHEREAS, salmon fishing has been an important part of the San Mateo County economy for close to 100 years; and

WHEREAS, the commercial and recreational salmon fishing industries in San Mateo County provide many jobs across a variety of sectors including boatyards, harbor operations, and income to nearby restaurants and fish processing facilities; and

WHEREAS, salmon fishing draws people from all over California and beyond to fish salmon out of Pillar Point Harbor, both on local charter boats and by using the harbor's launch ramp; and

WHEREAS, salmon fishing draws people from all over California and beyond to fish salmon using the Oyster Point launch facility; and

WHEREAS, the commercial salmon fishing fleet has brought unrivaled attention and economic vitality to the Pillar Point Harbor through off-the-boat fish sales; and

WHEREAS, off-the-boat fish sales have provided an invaluable learning tool, connecting young and old Bay Area residents to the local fishermen who supply their food; and

WHEREAS, for many young visitors off-the-boat sales are often their first experience connecting the food they eat to nature; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo County Harbor District supports the fishing community and derives much of its operating income from salmon fishermen who dock their boats in Pillar Point Harbor; and

WHEREAS, most water agencies in San Mateo County purchase water from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), of which 85% comes from Hetch Hetchy Reservoir on the Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park; and

WHEREAS, water agencies in San Mateo County are represented by the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) in negotiations with the SFPUC; and

WHEREAS, salmon populations on the Tuolumne River have plummeted from well over 100,000 fish historically to just over 1,000 in 2020. In some years as much as 90% of

the Tuolumne River is unsustainably diverted, greatly harming salmon, both in the river and downstream; and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem is a global fish extinction hot spot, with six fish species currently protected under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts, and some, such as Delta smelt, are on the brink of extinction; and

WHEREAS, the entire San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem, including the rivers that feed it, is in a state of crisis, and could completely collapse if action isn't taken imminently; and

WHEREAS, in 2008 and 2009 salmon populations were so low that the commercial salmon fishing seasons had to be cancelled for the first time in state history; and

WHEREAS, the State Water Resources Control Board is charged with restoring the Bay-Delta ecosystem and protecting commercial and recreational fishing; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2018, the State Water Board adopted Phase 1 of the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan, which would require the release of 40% of unimpaired flow into the lower San Joaquin River from its three major tributaries, including the Tuolumne, between the months of February and June to benefit the rearing and outmigration of juvenile fish; and

WHEREAS, lawsuits from the SFPUC, BAWSCA and other water agencies have stalled the implementation of the Bay Delta Plan; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo County Harbor District believes these lawsuits are unmerited due to the fact that the SFPUC could manage a repeat of the six-year drought of record (1987-92) with the Bay Delta Plan in effect; and

WHEREAS, failure to implement the Bay Delta Plan would likely lead to the extirpation of salmon in California's Central Valley, causing a dire impact to the commercial and recreational fishing industries in San Mateo County;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the San Mateo County Harbor District supports the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan update, and encourages the State Water Board to resume work on the Plan, including establishing and implementing new science-based flow requirements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Mateo County Harbor District urges BAWSCA and the SFPUC to abandon their litigation against the State Water Board and work with stakeholders to restore the salmon populations that are such an important part of San Mateo County's history and economy.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Harbor Commissioners of the San Mateo County Harbor District at a regular meeting held on the 17th day of March 2021 by a recorded vote as follows:

For: Chang Kiraly, Reyerling, Mattusch, Zemke, Larenas


Against: None

Absent: None

Abstaining: None

Attest:

BOARD OF HARBOR COMMISSIONERS



Melanie Hadden
Deputy Secretary



Virginia Chang Kiraly
President