Bay Area Regional Collaborative

Joint Resolution on Bay Adapt: Regional Strategy for A Rising Bay

September 17, 2021

WHEREAS, scientific estimates forecast that climate change will alter key factors that contribute to shoreline flooding and inundation, including rising sea levels and groundwater, storm frequency and intensity, and the coincidence of intense winter storms, extreme high tides, and high runoff, in combination with higher sea levels, will increase the frequency and duration of shoreline flooding long before areas are permanently inundated by sea level rise alone[1]; and

WHEREAS, rising sea levels could lead to as much as ten feet of sea level rise by the end of the century[2]. A major storm within the next decade 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, which may become permanent within 40 years; and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Bay shoreline is approximately one-third of the California coastline, but is estimated to experience two-thirds of the negative economic impacts due to the flooding that would occur absent adequate adaptation and protection[3]; and

WHEREAS, important shoreline development, public infrastructure, and facilities such as neighborhoods, commercial centers, airports, seaports, regional transportation facilities, landfills, contaminated lands, and wastewater treatment facilities, are at risk of flood damage that could require costly repairs or result in the interruption or loss of vital services or degraded environmental quality; 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 may compound risks posed by flooding to communities by reducing a community's or individual's ability to prepare for, respond to, or recover from a flood event; and

WHEREAS, the Bay ecosystem is already stressed by human activities that lower its adaptive capacity, and climate change will further alter that ecosystem by inundating or eroding wetlands, changing sediment dynamics, altering species composition, raising the acidity of Bay waters, changing freshwater flows and/or salinity, altering the food

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[1] San Francisco Bay Plan, Climate Change Finding d. San Francisco Bay Plan (ca.gov)

[2] California Ocean Protection Council Sea Level Rise Guidance (2018), H++ extreme risk adverse scenario. State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance

[3] Barnard, P.L., Erikson, L.H., Foxgrover, A.C. *et al.* Dynamic flood modeling essential to assess the coastal impacts of climate change. *Sci Rep* **9,** 4309 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-40742-z

web, and impairing water quality. Moreover, further loss of tidal wetlands will increase the risk of shoreline flooding;[4] and

WHEREAS, there are multiple local, state, federal, and regional government agencies with authority over the Bay and its shoreline, and while local governments have broad authority over shoreline land use, they have very limited resources to address climate change adaptation; 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 October 2011, following a lengthy public process, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) voted to amend the San Francisco Bay Plan to include Climate Change policies that state that the "Commission, in collaboration with the Joint Policy Committee [now known as Bay Area Regional Collaborative (BARC)], other regional, state and federal agencies, local governments, and the general public, should formulate a regional sea level rise adaptation strategy for protecting critical developed shoreline areas and natural ecosystems, enhancing the resilience of Bay and shoreline systems and increasing their adaptive capacity"[5]; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, BCDC, in collaboration with a Leadership Advisory Group comprised of over 30 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. Executive leadership from the majority of BARC agencies participated in the development of the Bay Adapt Joint Platform through the Leadership Advisory Group, including Association of Bay Area Governments/Metropolitan Transportation Commission, BCDC, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, State Coastal Conservancy, Caltrans, and BARC. The Leadership Advisory Group also includes representatives from environmental justice, environmental, business, scientific and civic organizations; local, state, and federal agencies; and, academia; and

WHEREAS, in 2020 and 2021, hundreds of stakeholders participated in the creation of the Bay Adapt Joint Platform, including nine Leadership Advisory Group meetings, two public forums, many expert Working Group meetings, ten community and local government focus groups, over 50 presentations around the region, and a public feedback opportunity. The BARC Governing Board also received briefings on Bay Adapt in September 2000 and July 2021; and

WHEREAS, the draft Bay Adapt Joint Platform lays out a set of guiding principles, priority actions, and tasks that will allow the region to adapt faster, better, and more equitably to a rising San Francisco Bay. If implemented, it will reduce flood risks for communities, businesses, infrastructure, and habitat; protect natural areas and wildlife;

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[4] San Francisco Bay Plan, Climate Change Finding m.
[5] San Francisco Bay Plan, Climate Change Policy 6.

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robustly integrate adaptation into community-focused local plans; recognize and equitably support low-income, frontline communities; accelerate permitting and project construction; increase technical assistance for local governments and funding for adaptation; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Adapt Leadership Advisory Group unanimously recommended that the Joint Platform move forward toward implementation at its June 2021 meeting; and

WHEREAS, implementing Bay Adapt goes beyond the capacity of any single agency or entity, and requires broad leadership and participation, and the leadership by the BARC member agencies will be paramount to its success; and

WHEREAS, Plan Bay Area 2050, the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy pursuant to SB 375, makes major inroads into incorporating sea level rise into the plan. The Bay Adapt Joint Platform aligns with Plan Bay Area 2050 and can be viewed as a more fine-grained implementation scheme of Plan Bay Area's "Adapt to Sea Level Rise" strategy; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Area Regional Collaborative (BARC) is a consortium of member agencies that come together to address crosscutting issues of regional significance, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life for all Bay Area residents, with climate resilience as its primary focus area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BARC GOVERNING BOARD IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP OF THE BARC MEMBER AGENCIES:

1. The BARC Governing Board endorses the draft Bay Adapt Joint Platform, a regional strategy for a rising Bay, including its guiding principles, actions and tasks contained within; and,

2. Through the BARC Governing Board's endorsement of a Joint Resolution to Address Climate Change that supports the development of a Shared Work Plan, the Member Agencies of BARC will support and help implement the Bay Adapt Joint Platform individually and collectively.