



August 24, 2009

Senator Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I want to thank you again for all of your support of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (Project). Your engagement has been critical to its success and we wanted to provide you with a project update. This letter and the enclosed report summarize the investments in the Project and its current status.

Since the beginning of the Project, the total public/private investment of \$183 million has resulted in:

- 16,500 acres of former salt ponds placed in public ownership, saved from private development, and disconnected from the salt making process.
- A complex, innovative, science-based, and broadly supported restoration plan developed for the West Coast's largest tidal wetlands restoration.
- Habitat restoration on 4,481 acres (3,081 acres in the South Bay and 1,400 acres in the North Bay) already underway or to be underway in 2010, with the restoration design for another 472 acres to be completed in 2010.
- New public access to be completed in the next 12 months, including 2.2 miles of the Bay Trail adjacent to Moffett Field as well as interpretive facilities at the west end of the Dumbarton Bridge.
- Scientific studies underway that will help us understand how the Bay and its resources respond to restoration, thereby reducing future restoration costs.
- Near completion of a Corps of Engineers' effort to quantify the flood risk to Silicon Valley, including taking into account potential sea level rise due to climate change.

The attached South Bay Salt Ponds Project Status Report provides more detail on these accomplishments and their associated costs, as well as the sources of funds expended or committed.

While much has been accomplished, there is much more to be done. Future work includes:

- The completion of Phase 1. All but three Phase 1 actions are funded; two of these unfunded actions are expected to be supported through State and local funds while the third action, restoration of 242 acres at Pond A16, is projected to cost \$11 million with the Federal share estimated at \$6 million.

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- The completion of the first interim Shoreline Feasibility Study. The State Coastal Conservancy and its partners continue to request \$2.8 million for the Shoreline Study in FY 2010. While this study is being conducted, the Fish and Wildlife Service will need continued funding for levee maintenance until lasting flood risk management solutions are established.
- Ongoing applied studies and adaptive management. The State Coastal Conservancy and its partners continue to request \$1.0 million for the U.S. Geological Survey in FY 2010.

The investment of state, federal, and private funds in the South Bay Salt Ponds is producing meaningful results including significant habitat improvements, unprecedented public access to the Bay, and much needed flood protection planning. Federal support in particular has been critical to ensuring that the Project remains on schedule during the State's financial crisis. Your work on behalf of the Project has been vital to its success, and we appreciate your advocacy and support.

If you would like further information regarding the Project, please don't hesitate to contact me at (510) 286-1015 or Steve Ritchie at (510) 384-4105 or via e-mail at sritchie@scc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Sam Schuchat
Executive Officer

Encl.

cc: Ren Lohoefer, Regional Director, FWS Region 8
Don Koch, Director, California Department of Fish and Game
Steve Schwarzbach, Director, Western Ecological Research Center, USGS
Lt. Colonel Laurence Farrell, Commander, San Francisco District, USACE
South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Management Team