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MARIN
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LEAGUE

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National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth St. N.W., Suite 1000
Washington DC, 20005
By e-mail: *rlaporte@parksconservancy.org*

Subject: National Coastal Resilience Fund Application - Bothin Marsh Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project

To Whom It May Concern:

Marin Conservation League (MCL) appreciates the opportunity to support the application by Marin County Parks Department and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy for funding of the design phases of the Bothin Marsh Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project. MCL has for 85-years been protecting and enhancing the natural resources of Marin County. Many of the County's federal, state, and county-owned public lands are the direct result of MCL's efforts in enabling their acquisition. Over the decades, MCL has continued its ongoing stewardship of these lands and waters. In recent years, in response to the escalating evidences of a changing climate, MCL has been increasingly engaged in advocating for adaptation and resilience planning along the county's extensive bay and coastal shorelines. The Bothin Marsh Adaptation Project will help move the county forward in this planning.

The Bothin Marsh, subject of this application, was saved from development many years ago through the combined efforts of several non-profits, including MCL. Over the past half-dozen years, MCL has participated as a community stakeholder in the evolution of the Bothin Marsh Project, as studies of the existing hydrology of Richardson Bay (a branch of San Francisco Bay), projections of rising sea levels, and inventories of marsh vegetation, native wildlife, and affected infrastructure have been undertaken. These studies, in turn, provided the information base on which a vision for the long-term resilience of Bothin Marsh and its environs has been developed and the surrounding community has been engaged. The Project is now poised for the next phase, i.e., conceptual design.

Bothin Marsh presents particular challenges for preservation and adaptive restoration in the face of both existing flooding and rising sea levels. In spite of its constrained position between the bay and immediate urban development and infrastructure, this tidal marsh ecosystem nonetheless provides valuable habitat for endangered species as well as a host of other wildlife. It is appreciated by thousands who walk and bike across it on the Mill Valley/Sausalito Multi-Use Path (Bay Trail), a critical link in the San Francisco Bay Trail network. The challenge is to preserve these values in the face of rising tides, and at the same time protect the vulnerable land uses that adjoin the marsh and bay.

To meet the dual goals of maintaining biodiversity within the marsh and, at the same time, reducing the risk of tidal flooding on the safety of the shoreline trail network and the health and safety of the adjacent community, a viable adaptation project plans to elevate or relocate infrastructure and incorporate nature-based strategies to allow for the evolution and restoration of tidal wetlands. These strategies will likely entail creating a range of marsh habitats, based on tidal elevations, which can shift over time and migrate with rising sea level. It is MCL's hope that the design solutions achieved here can serve as a model for other environments along Marin's bay shoreline threatened by sea level rise.

MCL has enjoyed a working relationship with Marin County Parks since its formation as an open space district more than 40 years ago, and more recently with Parks Conservancy over the past half-dozen years. We have confidence that the expertise and experience demonstrated by their combined staffs in this project as well as others, will be brought to bear in implementing successful adaptive solutions in the Bothin Marsh Project.

Sincerely yours,

Linda J. Novy, President

Nona Dennis, Parks and Open Space Committee Chair

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