

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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TO: Commissioners and Alternates
FROM: Will Travis, Executive Director (415/352-3653 travis@bcdc.ca.gov)
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SUBJECT: The Commission's Partnership with the Dutch
(For Commission consideration on April 21, 2011)

Summary

The Commission has fostered a productive partnership with technical and policy experts from the Netherlands to assist the Bay Area in addressing the threat posed by accelerating sea level rise. This partnership is continuing through two main initiatives: participating in the Dutch-led international Delta Alliance; and cosponsoring a workshop on adaptation to sea level rise.

Staff Report

In its May 20, 2010 strategic plan, the Commission directed the staff to define the next phase of the partnership with the Dutch to address sea level rise. This report outlines how best to continue the Commission's productive engagement with the Dutch.

Dutch Partnership. To take advantage of the Netherlands' centuries of experience in protecting low-lying areas from flooding, BCDC entered into a unique partnership with the Dutch in 2008. Experts from the Netherlands worked with BCDC's staff on planning for adaptation to sea level rise, funded by the Dutch government. The respective situations in the Netherlands and the Bay Area were compared and contrasted. Technical research regarding the impact of sea level rise on the Bay was performed using a numerical model. The analysis showed that tidal elevations due to sea level rise will largely be linear across the Bay, while tidal velocities and wave heights within the Bay will likely increase. The resultant impacts remain to be evaluated.

In planning for adaptation to sea level rise, the team analyzed a range of shoreline types; identified potential adaptation measures; developed a decision-making matrix for their use; and identified differences in governance with respect to adaptation between the Netherlands and the Bay Area. A well-attended and well received symposium was held in San Francisco on September 21, 2009, to publicly present and discuss the results of the collaboration and to present a final report entitled, *San Francisco Bay: Preparing for the next level*.

The Commission's Adapting to Rising Tides (ART) pilot project intends to refine and apply to a subregion of the Bay shoreline some of the concepts and approaches discussed in *Preparing for the next level*.



Making San Francisco Bay Better

Delta Alliance. BCDC's partnership with the Dutch is continuing through BCDC's participation in the Delta Alliance, an international organization with the mission of improving the resilience of the world's deltas. Members of the Delta Alliance agree to develop and share knowledge to:

- Envision resilient deltas;
- Measure, monitor and report resilience in deltas; and
- Provide inspiration and support for improved resilience in deltas.

In pursuing these goals, members will strive to:

- Share knowledge, expertise and best practices between deltas worldwide;
- Co-create and integrate knowledge across deltas, sectors and disciplines;
- Connect expertise and parties from throughout the watershed;
- Incorporate local knowledge in research and other knowledge-building activities; and
- Provide knowledge and insight to support any use, including education, policy development, investments and disaster response.

Knowledge for Climate, a Dutch government-funded research program, is funding the launch of Delta Alliance. Knowledge for Climate also funded the Dutch involvement in the partnership with BCDC. The organizational structure of Delta Alliance is currently being revised to establish it as a foundation. This foundation will include a governing board and an Advisory Committee; the latter will consist of coordinators of participating deltas and representatives of organizations that contribute to the objectives of Delta Alliance.

The Delta Alliance has ten network "wings" where activities are focused: The San Francisco Bay and Delta (USA), Ciliwung and Mahakam (Indonesia), Mekong (Vietnam), Rhine-Meuse (the Netherlands), Nile (Egypt), Pantanal (Brazil), Ganges-Brahmaputra (Bangladesh), Mississippi (USA), Yangtze (China) and Parana (Argentina). Additional network wings will soon be included in Delta Alliance so that members may benefit from the wealth of information available in these deltas.

BCDC's staff has proposed that the Delta Alliance engage in the Commission's ART project to apply the approach that was documented in the *Preparing for the next level* by analyzing shoreline types along a subregion of the Bay shoreline in Alameda County, and developing a suite of adaptation strategies that are appropriate to those shoreline types and local conditions. Thus, the ART project provides an opportunity to jointly test the ideas and tools that were co-developed by BCDC and the Dutch, and BCDC would benefit greatly from the technical expertise and unique perspective of the Dutch partners.

Sea Level Rise Roundtable. The Dutch Consulate in San Francisco has proposed that BCDC participate in a Bay Area roundtable on adaptation to sea level rise. The roundtable would include both public agencies and Bay Area businesses and focus on the potential for public/private partnerships. The roundtable would be a constructive method to engage the business community to discuss common interests and potential initiatives to address sea level rise.