

JACKIE SPEIER
14TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

2465 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0514
(202) 225-3531
FAX: (202) 226-4183

155 BOVET ROAD, SUITE 780
SAN MATEO, CA 94402
(650) 342-0300
FAX: (650) 375-8270

WWW.SPEIER.HOUSE.GOV
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/JACKIESPEIER
WWW.TWITTER.COM/REPSPEIER

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0514

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Senior Whip

February 10, 2016

The Honorable Commissioners of the Bay Conservation and
Development Commission
Mr. Larry Goldzband, Executive Director
Bay Conservation and Development Commission
455 Golden Gate Ave., Ste. 10600
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Commissioners and Mr. Goldzband:

A project along San Francisquito Creek is currently before the commission. I do not generally write letters offering an opinion on such matters, but in this instance I am making an exception due to the life, health and safety concerns that will persist if this project is not approved.

As your staff analysis no doubt mentions, the creek project before the commission basically impacts heavily populated East Palo Alto and largely uninhabited portions of Palo Alto. The San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and its partners have done extraordinary work to create a project that meets the requirements of multiple permitting agencies, including several federal government agencies. I, along with Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, and our respective staffs, have worked many hours to assist the JPA in coordinating with federal and state agencies regarding this project. The imperative of all parties is to identify compliant project parameters while also implementing a project that will substantially reduce the life, health and safety threats created by the current situation.

In a nutshell, when other communities see rain on the horizon they celebrate. When the residents of East Palo Alto see rain they are compelled by current circumstances to wonder whether this is simply another sign that the drought is over or a foreshadowing of a life-threatening flood. Hundreds of households rest below the top of the existing levee. Substantial rains cause damage to the levee and also overflow into homes and businesses. It is unacceptable that this wonderful community should have to continue to endure this uncertainty regarding the lives and property of its residents. I respectfully suggest that the JPA has taken all reasonable and appropriate steps to earn the support of all agencies reviewing this project.

Thank you for your careful analysis and for your consideration, within all applicable laws and regulations, of the special circumstances that make this project along the San Francisquito Creek an urgent public priority within our region.

All the best,


Jackie Speier

cc: City Council, City of East Palo Alto
Joint Powers Authority

KJS/bp

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& DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION