Coastal Conservancy

April 4, 2023

Zack Wasserman, Chair
San Francisco Bay Conservation
and Development Commission
375 Beale St., Suite 510
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Support for Strategic Aquatic Sediment Placement Pilot Project

Dear Chair Wasserman:

The California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) supports the "Strategic Aquatic Sediment Placement Pilot Project" to analyze placing 100,000 cubic yards (cy) of dredged sediment from Redwood City Federal Navigation Channel in subtidal waters adjacent to Whale's Tail Marsh to understand the efficacy of the tides, wind waves, and currents to move sediment onto the adjacent mudflat and tidal marsh habitats. There is broad recognition across San Francisco Bay that sediment is a highly valuable and needed resource for tidal wetland restoration in the face of climate change. Wetland resource managers require a range of tools at various scales to ensure shoreline resilience and the proposed project will rest one potential strategy that has never been analyzed or utilized in SF Bay.

The proposed project will place up to 100,000 cy of clean dredged sediment at a 138-acre subtidal location in approximately 9-12 feet deep Bay tidal waters adjacent to Whale's Tail Marsh and analyze how the local tidal hydrology moves the placed dredged sediment. The project includes a robust pre-, concurrent, and post-implementation monitoring program to understand the benefits and/or impacts of such a placement strategy. As part of the monitoring program, the project will disperse a sediment tracer medium and up to 40 magnetized sediment monitors to study sediment transport mechanisms and pathways. The project will also monitor bathymetry, sediment grain size, sediment deposition, eelgrass habitat, and benthic communities using a before-after-control-impact design.

The information generated from this pilot project is critically needed to determine the efficacy, barriers, and benefits of this technique to aid in adaptative management of marshes in the face of rising seas in the future. SCC will be a partner and end-user of the project information with the intention of building upon the results and expanding the technique elsewhere if successful.

Sincerely,

Amy Hutzel

Amy Hutzel
Executive Officer

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