San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
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Agenda Item #8

May 21, 2026

Application Summary

Trans Bay Cable Maintenance Project

(For Commission consideration on May 21, 2026)

Permit Application Number:	2006.0005.04md
Applicant:	Department of Water Resources
Project Description:	Place protective covering materials to exposed segments of an existing submarine electric cable, over 0.5 acres.
Location:	In the Bay, along a 3,000-foot-long segment of cable in East San Pablo Bay and a 1,000-foot-long segment of cable in Carquinez Strait.
Application Filed Complete:	May 15, 2026[1]
Deadline for Commission Action:	August 13, 2026
Staff Contact:	Sam Fielding (415-352-3665; sam.fielding@bcdc.ca.gov)

Project Overview

Project Description

With the Commission's Bay jurisdiction, Trans Bay Cable, LLC. (Trans Bay Cable), will conduct the following activities.

The Trans Bay Cable Maintenance Project involves the placement of protective covering materials to segments of an existing submarine High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cable. In East San Pablo Bay, Trans Bay Cable will place approximately 300 linear feet of polyurethane covering and 0.4 acre (up to 2,200 cubic yards) of concrete mattresses along a 3,000-foot-long segment of cable; in the Carquinez Strait, north of Martinez, Trans Bay Cable will install approximately 1,000 linear feet of polyurethane covering and place 0.1 acre (up to 500 cubic yards) of concrete mattresses along a 1,000-foot-long segment of cable (figure 1).

[1] The water quality certification for this project from the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, an application filing requirement, is expected to be issued prior to this date. Staff have been in communication regarding the expected contents of this approval.

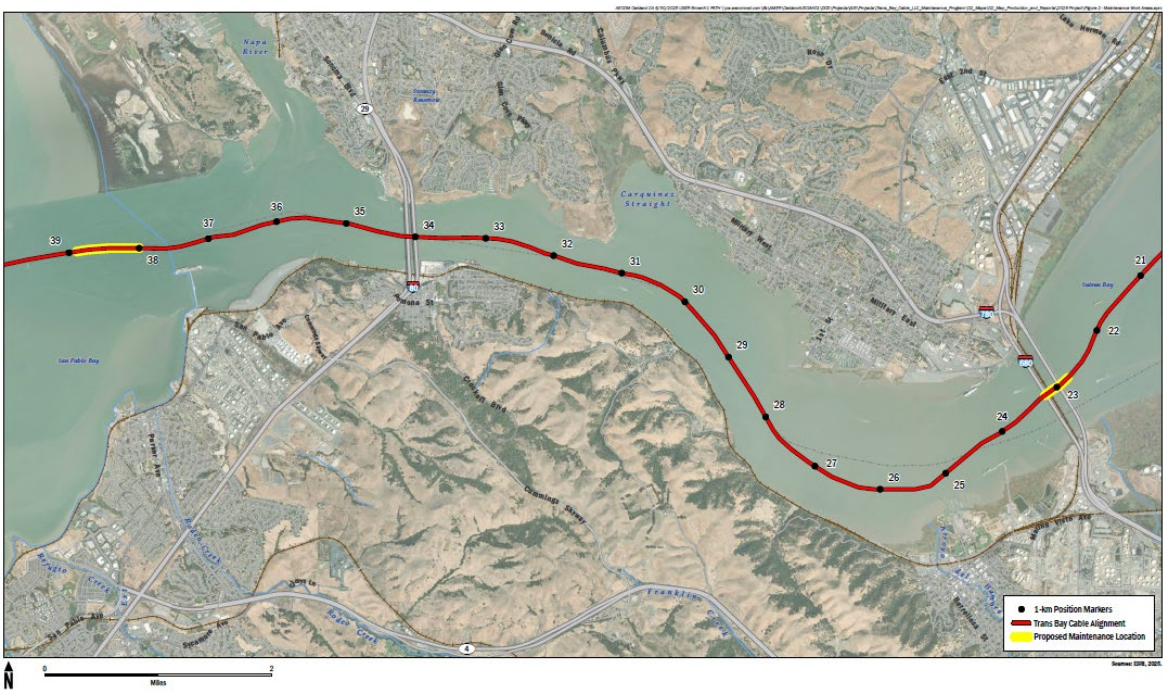

Figure 1. The proposed project site is on or under the Bay floor in East San Pablo Bay and Carquinez Strait.

The proposed project's purpose is to provide protection to segments of the existing cable identified in a 2024 inspection as being exposed due to erosion and at risk of damage. Reburial of the cable was deemed infeasible as these lengths of cable were found to be at high tension and lacking the "slack" necessary for reburial. The polyurethane protective covering ("Uraduct", or similar) is a cable protection system consisting of a <1-inch-thick "sleeve" which functions as additional protection for the cable from external impacts and acts to stiffen the system, providing additional protection to the cable. Installation of this covering would be conducted by divers in 2-meter segments. The protective mattresses are made of blocks of concrete connected with high-tensile polypropylene fiber rope, and are either 8 feet by 20 feet and 9 inches thick (with a volume of 2.86 cubic yards) or, depending on site conditions, 11 feet by 20 feet and 1 foot thick (with a volume of approximately 5 cubic yards) (figure 2). The concrete mattresses would be installed from a barge and positioned by divers.

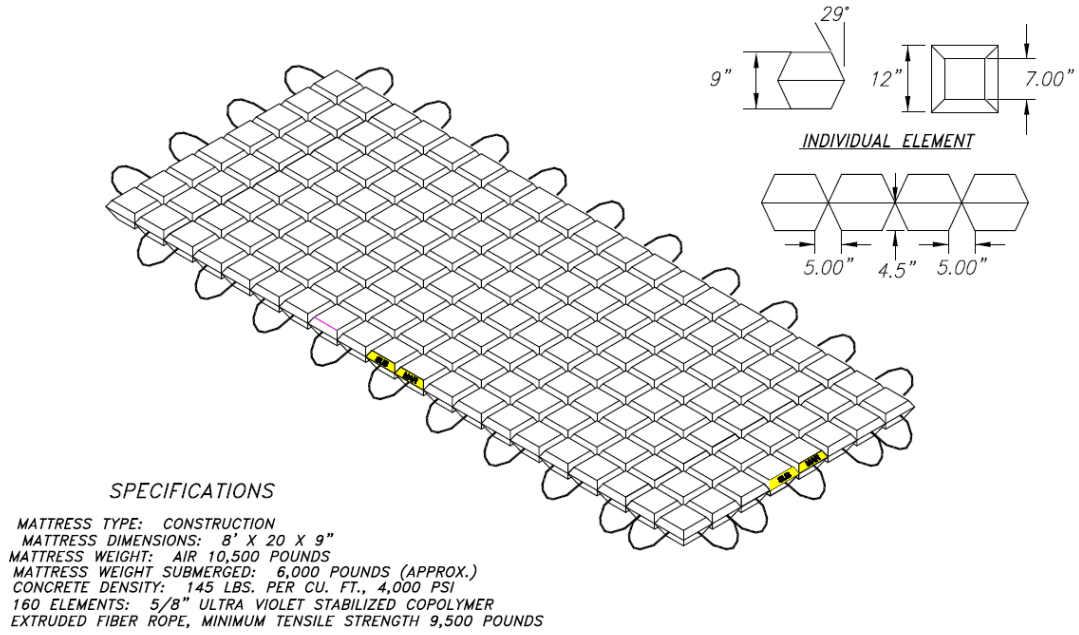

Figure 2. Representative Concrete Mattress Specifications.

The project includes bathymetric monitoring of the placed fill for three years to evaluate performance over time in relation to its stated goals.

Bay Fill

The proposed project would result in the placement of approximately 2,700 cubic yards of new fill over approximately 0.5 acres of subtidal Bay (with approximately 0.1 acres in the San Pablo Bay potentially placed on top of existing mattresses installed in 2024), along approximately 4,000 linear feet of existing submarine cable.

Mitigation

To offset the permanent bathymetric and benthic substrate changes and water volume displacement from the placement of 0.5 acres of solid fill in the Bay, the permittee is required to provide mitigation to offset these unavoidable impacts. A fee-based mitigation option was agreed upon by Trans Bay Cable, BCDC, and the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, in which the permittee committed to purchase 0.5 Estuarine Wetland Mitigation Advance Credits from the San Francisco Bay In-Lieu Fee Program, representing mitigation at a 1:1 ratio. The availability of these 0.50 credits, at a price of $764,507.00, was confirmed by Ducks Unlimited. Upon completion of the credit purchase, Trans Bay Cable will provide documentation to BCDC that the transaction is complete.

Public Access

Public access improvements will not be required as a condition of this permit. Although the project involves significant quantities of new Bay fill, that fill is to repair an existing submarine electric cable, and is not a new development. Additionally, the project does not result in an increase or change of use of the permitted cable, or result in any impact on existing or future

Bay public access. Further, given the location and scope of the project activities, it will not generate any new or increased demand for public access.

Schedule and Cost

Construction would be conducted in a single season, during a planned outage of the cable from June 1, 2026, through August 31, 2026. If the work has not been completed during this outage period, mattress placement would continue through November 30 during the remainder of the 2026 in-water work window, or during the 2027 in-water work windows. The estimated total project cost is approximately $10 million.

Issues Raised

The staff believes the primary issues raised by the proposed project are:

(1) Whether it is consistent with the McAteer-Petris Act and relevant San Francisco Bay Plan policies related to fill, natural resources, water quality, and water surface area and volume; and,

(2) Whether the proposed mitigation fee is adequate to compensate for the Bay fill and adverse environmental impacts of the project.

Staff Notes

The staff notes the following considerations for the Commission:

Review Boards. The proposed project was not reviewed by the Design Review Board or the Engineering Criteria Review Board, as the project did not raise significant public access design issues and the project did not involve significant fill or safety of fills concerns.

Applicable Policies

The following laws and policies are applicable in the Commission's review of the proposed project:

- McAteer-Petris Act: Sections 66602 (Water-Oriented Land Uses and Public Access) and 66605 (Allowable Bay Fill);
- San Francisco Bay Plan policies on: Fish, Other Aquatic Organisms, and Wildlife; Water Quality; Water Surface Area and Volume; Subtidal Areas; Public Access; Fills in Accord with the Bay Plan; and Mitigation