



Date: July 8, 2013

To: Governing Board
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

From: Melanie Denninger
Project Specialist, State Coastal Conservancy

Subject: **Appointment of Chris Elias of the Santa Clara Valley Water District to the Advisory Committee**

This memo is to present another candidate recommended for appointment by the Governing Board to the Restoration Authority's Advisory Committee. The candidate, Christian Elias, is the Deputy Operating Officer for Watersheds for the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD).

The recommendation that Mr. Elias be appointed to the Advisory Committee is the result of an expression of interest by the SCVWD in participating more in the Restoration Authority, the concern voiced by members of the Alviso Collaborative that the SCVWD was not represented on the Advisory Committee, and agreement by Councilmember Foust and Supervisor Gioia—the Governing Board's Committee on the Advisory Committee—that Mr. Elias be considered for appointment.

The following is a brief biography for Mr. Elias:

Chris Elias has more than 20 years experience working both in private and public sectors. Chris joined the Santa Clara Valley Water District in 2000 and has served in various capacities since then. Chris is currently serving as the Deputy Operating Officer for Watersheds where he is managing an inter-disciplinary team of 54 employees overseeing engineering and field operations activities. For two years prior, Chris was Assistant Operating Officer where he oversaw the work of 41 employees in the Office of Technical Support in Water Utility Enterprise and Operations with a budget of \$12 million. In that capacity, he managed multi-disciplinary teams in the Dam Safety Program, Utility Electrical and Control Systems Engineering, Operations Program Support Unit and Environmental Planning and Compliance Program.

In 2011, Chris served as the Acting Chief Operating Officer for Watersheds at the District where he reported directly to the CEO and was responsible for all watershed activities, projects, programs and personnel and served as a key member of the executive leadership team. As the

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Chief Operating Officer, he directed a multi-disciplinary staff of 223 with an operating budget of \$69.8 million and a capital budget for approximately \$86.4 million.

Prior to that role, he served as Assistant Operating Officer in the District's Water Utility Operations Division managing more than 50 employees with an annual operating budget of \$15 million and oversaw asset management program, utility maintenance, water measurement and raw water operations. He successfully managed the Office of CEO/Board Support before transitioning into Water Utility Enterprise.

Before joining the District, Chris was the Director of Environmental and Energy Programs for the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, a public policy trade association, where he represented more than 195 large high-tech firms and their 275,000 employees. Previously, Chris spent about 10 years working at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District and the California Environmental Protection Agency.

Active in the community, Chris serves as Treasurer of the Santa Clara County League of Conservation Voters, member of VTA Citizens Advisory Committee. For 10 years, Chris also served as Vice President of Advocacy and Public Policy for the San Jose/Silicon Valley NAACP.

These vast technical and public policy backgrounds, among others, helped Chris over the years in playing a leadership role in the successful campaign to reduce flows from Santa Clara Valley into the San Francisco Bay in late 1990s; co-leading a statewide effort to pass Propositions 12 and 13 in 2000; assisting with development of a collaborative approach to Adobe flood protection project for the communities of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills; development of a successful and productive relationship with the State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards; and deploying asset management program to improve system reliability in Water Utility Operations Division and Watersheds Division.

Chris holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Metropolitan State College of Denver, Colorado and a Master of Science degree in Project and Systems Management from Golden Gate University, San Francisco, California. Chris is also a graduate of the Executive Leadership Institute, a leading program of the *National Forum for Black Public Administrators*.