

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority
Media Talking Points
February 18, 2014

Will there be a nine-county parcel tax placed on the ballot in 2014?

- The Restoration Authority is currently exploring a ballot measure for fall 2014. The Governing Board plans to decide by May or early June whether November 2014 is the right time to move forward.

What is the Bay Restoration Authority?

- The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority is a Bay Area regional entity charged with raising and allocating resources for the restoration of wetlands and wildlife habitat on the San Francisco Bay shoreline. Funds it raises would be granted to projects that restore, protect, and enhance these areas, along with flood protection and public access connected to such projects. You can learn more online at sfbayrestore.org

What is the process for getting the measure on the ballot?

- The Restoration Authority has been working for the past year to collect input from the public, municipalities and stakeholders throughout the Bay Area, and researching how new funding for restoration would be allocated. The Authority Governing Board will likely vote in summer 2014 on whether to place a measure on the November 4, 2014 ballot.

Why is this measure needed?

- The Bay is the cornerstone of our economy and quality of life. Scientists agree that our Bay needs 100,000 acres of tidal marsh habitat for the health of fish, birds, wildlife, and people. Unfortunately, over the last century most of this habitat was destroyed by unchecked filling of the Bay, leaving about 45,000 acres today. Fortunately, more than 31,000 acres of salt ponds and other shoreline sites have been acquired for marsh restoration. This measure will provide funding needed to accelerate marsh restoration on those sites and help reverse damage to the Bay.
- *Flood Protection* – Dozens of communities along the Bay shoreline, and billions of dollars in infrastructure are protected from flooding by outdated and seismically unsafe levees. Wetland restoration provides both an opportunity to update these critical flood protection systems, as well as a natural buffer to reduce the impact of storm surges and sea level rise.
- *Clean Water* – We've long known that fish caught in the Bay are often unsafe to eat. Wetlands provide a natural filter for the Bay, keeping both trash and noxious pollutants out of Bay waters.
- *Public Access* – As recently as the 1960's, less than 3 miles of Bay shoreline was open and accessible to the public. Today, the Bay Trail has been extended to more than 300 miles, but many communities remain disconnected from the fragmented system. Restoration provides an opportunity to connect existing trails to new shoreline, improve existing bicycle and walking paths, and keep these open spaces safe for all residents to enjoy.

What types of projects will this measure fund?

- This measure will fund projects that
 - Reduce trash and pollution in the Bay
 - Improve water quality
 - Restore habitat for fish, birds, and wildlife
 - Protect communities from floods
 - Increase shoreline public access

How will this measure benefit the entire region?

- A healthy San Francisco Bay is vital to our region's quality of life and economy. Well-planned funding to accelerate wetland restoration is one of the best ways to make the Bay healthier, expand public access and help protect shoreline communities.

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- Even if you don't live close to the Bay, the benefits of Bay restoration will have lasting impacts for our region. Restoration will improve water quality, reduce harmful toxins and trash, and expand habitat for wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. Public access improvements will mean more Bay Area residents can visit the shoreline. And flood control efforts will help protect billions of dollars worth of highways, small businesses, and residential communities.

Who is supporting/sponsoring the measure?

- Regional leaders from business, environment, and local communities are strongly supporting the Restoration Authority plan to help restore San Francisco Bay. Leaders from across the region agree that funding to restore habitat, reduce shoreline flooding and improve access to the Bay is a high priority. A list of those supporting the work of the Restoration Authority is online at sfbayrestore.org

How large will this measure be?

- The Restoration Authority is currently considering a modest annual assessment of \$9-14 per Bay Area parcel.

How much revenue will this generate?

- Details are still being ironed out by the Authority. A modest \$10 per parcel measure would generate roughly \$15 million annually, and leverage additional state and federal resources, significantly increasing the public funds available to accelerate Bay marsh restoration.

Who votes on this measure?

- The Restoration Authority covers each of the nine Bay Area counties, and all registered voters would have an opportunity to cast a vote on the proposal.

Does the measure have to reach 2/3 in each county?

- No. The combined votes from all participating counties would be tabulated, and the measure would pass if 2/3 of all voters casting ballots vote "yes."

Who will decide how the funds are spent?

- The Restoration Authority's Governing Board, comprised of local elected officials, would administer a grant program to qualifying projects. By law, funds raised by the measure can only be spent on wetland restoration and associated flood control and public access projects.

Who provides oversight to ensure funds are being spent as planned?

- The Restoration Authority has developed an Expenditure Plan that requires an independent annual audit of revenue and expenditures, an annual report on past and upcoming activities, and publishing of an annual financial statement. A community Advisory Committee has also been created to review and make recommendations on expenditures through an ongoing public, transparent process.

Who is part of the Advisory Committee? How are they chosen?

- Individuals from a broad cross-section of community interests have been appointed by the Governing Board. This Committee includes over 30 individuals from every one of the nine Bay Area counties. Individuals interested in serving can apply for appointment by contacting the Restoration Authority.

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Is the Restoration Authority part of ABAG or state government?

- No. The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority is an independent regional entity, not part of any other government or agency.
- The Restoration Authority is planning to utilize existing staffing resources from the San Francisco Estuary Partnership and the California Coastal Conservancy through a joint powers agreement. This will allow the Restoration Authority to fulfill its mission at a bare minimum of cost to taxpayers.

How will the money be divided among counties?

- Geographic diversity is one of the factors the Authority will consider in allocating resources to projects.

Can existing agencies do this work?

- The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority was created with this mandate and because there was no agency empowered to propose to Bay voters new funding for Bay restoration, and to oversee that funding.

What is the role for local cities and counties?

- This is a regional effort, which will require support from communities throughout the Bay Area. More than 30,000 acres of shoreline marsh restoration opportunities are waiting – the missing ingredient is funding. This measure would significantly increase funds for that purpose and accelerate marsh restoration that benefits the Bay and local communities.

Does the Authority currently have any funding?

- The Authority does not have an existing revenue stream to complete its mission of restoring San Francisco Bay. That's why such a broad coalition of supporters is coming together to support this proposed ballot measure. With funding, we can help accelerate restoration that makes the Bay clean and healthy for the next generation.

Why has this taken so long?

- As a new regional special district, the Authority has been working methodically to research the best proposal and timing for voters to consider. After four years of planning and deliberate outreach to key stakeholders across the region, the Authority is preparing to propose a measure to Bay Area voters.