

DRAFT 2023 message

MESSAGE *from the* CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

I am pleased to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. It is hard to believe that a half a decade has passed since this unique funding source was established. I continue to be grateful to the voters in the nine Bay Area counties who passed the Measure AA parcel tax measure with 70% support. As a successful environmental /climate change tax measure passed across nine counties, it set an example for the rest of the nation. Over the last five years, the Authority has granted over \$125 million and leveraged another \$175 million for multiple projects, from pilot programs to large-scale tidal wetland restorations.

LOOKING BACK

Over the past year, the Authority funded eight new projects including two equity focused community grants, allocated funding to expand previously authorized projects, and saw its existing projects make major headway. The Authority has now funded 36 projects in total. Current projects are also helping fund the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program and environmental education programs, which help communities understand the value of the projects to the environment and to local communities. As the recent storms and flooding have shown, it is important to recognize the value these projects have provided for our Bay wetlands and the surrounding communities. At least 21 of the funded projects included integrated flood protection as part of their project.

ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Authority has prioritized the integration of environmental equity and environmental justice principles in evaluating potential projects. To that end, the Authority has continued to implement the Advisory Committee's equity recommendations to expand community participation and support partnerships with community-based organizations. The Authority is proactive in its engagement with grassroots organizations and community leaders in underserved communities. These efforts will continue to improve the grants programs in the years ahead.

LOOKING AHEAD

Measure AA remains an inspiring example of how the local community can invest in the future of its own environment, especially when state and federal governments have not provided a reliable source of funding. It also demonstrated that, under the right circumstances, Bay Area voters are willing to support climate measures. The future of the San Francisco Bay continues to look bright as we move into the next 15 years of Measure AA funding and related projects. The investments we make now in restoration, flood protection and expanded recreational opportunities will pay off for decades into the future. In the next year we look forward to another round of grants for critical projects and strengthening our connection to the communities around the San Francisco Bay.