

Statement of Congresswoman Jackie Speier (representing California's 14th District)

House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

February 27, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Napolitano and Ranking Member Westerman, for providing us this opportunity to share our district's needs and priorities for the upcoming Water Resources Development Act of 2020. I am here today to request that authorizations for studies be included for multiple areas along the bay coastline and ocean coastline of San Mateo County. It is my understanding that local authorities or FEMA have identified fourteen sites within San Mateo County that are vulnerable to severe flooding in the coming decades.

The San Mateo County Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment completed in March 2018 found that in the event of a mid-level 2100 sea level rise scenario, property with an assessed value of \$34 billion would be flooded on the Bayshore and on the Coastside north of Half Moon Bay. In addition, the Vulnerability Assessment found that \$932 million in assessed property value could be at risk from erosion on the Coastside north of Half Moon Bay. Nationally, the nonprofit Climate Central's 2014 study identified San Mateo County as the number 1 county in California at risk for flooding due to climate change. Major employers and almost all wastewater treatment facilities sit along either the bay shore or the ocean's coastline.

This is why a comprehensive study of the county's two coasts—bay and ocean—in conjunction with studies of the coastlines of San Francisco and Marin Counties, are recommended by the district Corps office. I respectfully ask that the study of San Mateo County, as well as any requested for San Francisco and Marin, be included in this year's WRDA legislation.

There are certain sites that merit additional attention from the Army Corps. First, the damaged seawall in Pacifica is estimated to cost \$26 million to repair after a basic analysis, but a more detailed estimate awaits a thorough study. The levee at Redwood Shores is threatened with de-accreditation by FEMA and is likely to cost millions to upgrade.

Finally, I wanted to call the Committee's attention to the overall lack of federal funding for restoration efforts for the San Francisco Bay. Rising tides threaten to drown the Bay's wetlands and will cause irreversible damage by 2030 unless we act.

Restoration efforts also include protecting the Bay from shoreline landfill pollution. Much of the shoreline in San Mateo County is built on landfill, including San Francisco International Airport. An example is the Oyster Point Landfill in South San Francisco which operated between 1959-1970, primarily for disposal of municipal solid waste. After it closed in 1970, many layers of soil and bay mud were used as cover with rip rap along the Bay side. As the soil naturally settles coupled with the increasing threat of sea level rise and king tides, there is a high probability that these mitigation measures will eventually fail, allowing landfill and associated toxins to seep into the Bay, contaminating our water and hurting our marine life.

I would urge the Committee to consider authorizing \$100 million to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) San Francisco geographic program, which would provide crucial funding for habitat restoration, endangered species recovery, and adaptation to climate change. This approach is provided for in my bill, H.R. 1132, which passed the House by voice vote on February 5, 2020. I am requesting the Committee include H.R. 1132 into the final WRDA, but with a higher annual authorization level of \$100 million per year to address the immediate threat of climate change as we see occurring right now around the Bay.

It has been proven time and time again that we cannot address our environmental issues without federal funding. Chairwoman Napolitano and Ranking Member Westerman, I thank you again for convening this hearing and I urge you to please take action to help save the San Francisco Bay.