

Item 6d - Exhibit 6d3: Letters of Support



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Office for Coastal Management**

February 22, 2018

Deborah Halberstadt
Executive Director
California Ocean Protection Council
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Deborah

Dear Ms. Halberstadt:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management supports the proposal by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation to restore tidal marsh and connected uplands in Elkhorn Slough. As the federal partner to the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) under the Coastal Zone Management Act, NOAA supports the work Elkhorn Slough NERR and the Foundation are doing in this important area and is funding staff to support monitoring and design for the restoration of tidal marsh and connected uplands in Elkhorn Slough, which began in 2017.

Elkhorn Slough has the largest tract of tidal salt marsh in California south of San Francisco Bay. The estuary provides habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals and is a destination for many visitors to the area. Many of the values of the estuary, however, are being compromised by ongoing erosion and marsh loss. Fifty percent of the tidal salt marsh in Elkhorn Slough has been lost in the past 70 years, as a result of diking and draining, increased tidal flooding that "drowns" the vegetation, and bank erosion that causes the marsh to collapse into the channel.

The proposed project aims to implement the next phase of restoration, an additional 30 acres, of severely impaired areas of Elkhorn Slough to their historic, ecologically rich tidal marsh conditions, and to create an additional five-acre native perennial vegetated buffer between agricultural fields and the wetland. The Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Elkhorn Slough NERR are uniquely positioned to implement their proposal, drawing on an established network of expert decision makers and the experience derived from the adjacent 61-acre wetland restoration. This project represents a good opportunity to improve the resilience of a high value native habitat with actions that will benefit federally listed and managed species that call Elkhorn Slough home.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my and NOAA Office for Coastal Management's support for this important project.

Sincerely,

Rebecca A. Smyth
West Coast Director

COMMITTEES
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BUDGET
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 5 ON
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HUMAN SERVICES
NATURAL RESOURCES
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ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES
CO-CHAIR: ENVIRONMENTAL CAUCUS



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SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 425-1503 OR
(408) 782-0647
FAX (831) 425-2570

99 PACIFIC STREET, SUITE 575G
MONTEREY, CA 93940
(831) 649-2832
FAX (831) 649-2935

February 22, 2018

John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Elkhorn Slough Marsh Enhancement and Restoration Project

Dear Secretary Laird:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Elkhorn Slough Foundation and Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve's application for funding to complete the Marsh Enhancement and Restoration Project.

Tidal marshes help maintain healthy coastal ecosystems and are an essential element in longterm carbon sequestration. Marshland at the Elkhorn Slough has been diked, drained, and dried for agricultural uses, severely damaging its natural ability to adapt to rising ocean levels. Today, the area has sunk between three and five feet below the level of healthy tidal marsh due to human interference. The reduction in soil level has drowned critical native plant species and rendered the land vulnerable to further erosion.

The Marsh Enhancement and Restoration Project presents a unique opportunity to improve the resilience of a high value native habitat and benefit federally listed and managed species. Work is currently underway to restore 61 acres of the 91-acre parcel. Funding will allow for the completion of the remaining 30 acres, reestablishing historic ecologically rich tidal marsh conditions, raising the marsh plain, and recreating the native vegetated buffer between agricultural fields and the wetland. Benefits also include increased coastal resilience, decreased greenhouse gases, expansion of nursery habitat for sea otters, and improvement of water quality through nutrient absorption.

Thank you for your consideration of this very worthy proposal. I look forward to the positive benefits that will follow. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (831) 649-2832.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Stone", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mark Stone
Assemblymember
29th Assembly District

CC: Deborah Halberstadt, California Ocean Protection Council, California Natural Resources Agency



State of California – The Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
www.wildlife.ca.gov

EDMUND G. BROWN, Jr., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



February 20, 2018

Ocean Protection Council Ocean Protection Council,
National Coastal Wetlands Conservation -USFW,
NOAA Coastal Resiliency Grant Committee

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve would like to express support for the proposal by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation for restoration of tidal marsh and connected uplands in Elkhorn Slough. This project aligns closely with our mission to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.

Elkhorn Slough has the largest tract of tidal salt marsh in California south of San Francisco Bay. Species diversity of the Elkhorn Slough area is unmatched in the State of California. The estuary provides habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals and is a destination for many human visitors as well. The Reserve has become a true asset to the community, providing education and professional development opportunities, an ongoing research program and a place to walk and enjoy the variety of habitats found at the Elkhorn Slough.

Many of the values of the estuary are being compromised by ongoing erosion and continued marsh loss. Fifty percent of the tidal salt marsh in Elkhorn Slough has been lost in the past 70 years. Scientists are predicting that the dramatic rates of tidal wetland loss and degradation in Elkhorn Slough will continue in the near future if no management actions are taken.

This project builds on the tidal marsh restoration efforts started in 2017 with the addition of sediment to the marsh plain, bringing these areas to an elevation that will sustain salt marsh. The proposed project aims to implement the next phase of restoration. An additional 30 acres, of severely impaired salt marsh will be restored to their historic, ecologically rich conditions, and an additional five-acre native perennial upland will be restored.

The Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve are uniquely positioned to implement their proposal, drawing on an established network of expert decision makers and the experience derived from the adjacent 61-acre wetland restoration. This project represents a good opportunity to improve the resilience of a high value native habitat with actions that will benefit federally listed and managed species that call Elkhorn Slough home.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support.

Sincerely,

David Feliz
Elkhorn Slough Reserve Manager



John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Big Sur

Executive Director
Mark Silberstein

Mailing Address
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California 95039

Tel: (831) 728-5939
Fax: (831) 728-7031

www.elkhornslough.org

February 20, 2018

Dear Secretary Laird:

The Elkhorn Slough Foundation is pleased to submit this proposal for the Elkhorn Slough Reserve's Tidal Wetland Program for restoration of tidal marsh and connected uplands in Elkhorn Slough.

The Elkhorn Slough Foundation has partnered with the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for thirty-six years. This restoration is one of the most environmentally significant projects we've collaborated on and will help transform Slough wetlands.

This proposed work will build on the successful initiative begun over a decade ago that has tackled the protection, restoration and enhancement of this extraordinary place.

The Tidal Wetlands Program will expand the area of restoration of key marshes along the slough shore by 50%. This work will rebuild lost marshes adjoining an area that has become the most important pupping and nursery area for Sea otters in the entire slough.

The proposed project aims to implement the next phase of restoration, an additional 30 acres, of severely impaired areas of Elkhorn Slough to their historic, ecologically rich tidal marsh conditions, and to create an additional five-acre native perennial vegetated buffer between agricultural fields and the wetland. The Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve are uniquely positioned to implement this proposal, drawing on an established network of expert decision makers and the experience derived from the adjacent 61-acre wetland restoration. This project represents a rare opportunity to improve the resilience of a high value native habitat with actions that will benefit federally listed and managed species that call Elkhorn Slough home.

Sincerely,

Mark Silberstein



Cc: Deborah Halberstadt, California Ocean Protection Council

The following letters of support were submitted when applicant started the first 61-acres of marsh restoration under construction now, adjacent to the site included in the proposal.



State of California – The Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
www.wildlife.ca.gov

EDMUND G. BROWN, Jr., Governor
CHARLTON H. BOWHAM, Director

February 12, 2013

Melanie Gange
NOAA Restoration Center
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Subject: Landowner Support for Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration: Building Resilience through the Beneficial Re-use of Sediment

Dear Ms. Gange,

This letter is being written in support of the proposal by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, "Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration: Building Resilience through the Beneficial Re-use of Sediment" that is being submitted to NOAA for consideration for the NOAA Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Project Grants.

Some of the activities proposed by this project are planned for land owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department). The Department owns and operates the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve in partnership with NOAA, and under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Elkhorn Slough Foundation. This long-standing partnership has resulted in advanced scientific understanding of Elkhorn Slough and a robust capacity to respond to its needs for management and restoration.

The Department will assume responsibility for post-project operation, and maintenance. Funds for this purpose are received in the form of an annual award from NOAA, operations funds from the Department, and other sources.

The Department has played a lead role in planning for the restoration work in this proposal. This project is perfectly timed to provide funding for the implementation of project elements that have been researched and vetted by a diverse team of stakeholders and decision makers.

We fully and enthusiastically support the proposed project and look forward to the opportunity this project presents to collaborate further with the Elkhorn Slough Foundation to create jobs and restore estuarine habitats.

Sincerely,

Dave Feliz
Manager, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

STAFF FARM
11300 Washington Ave., Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93720
(559) 232-5800
www.wildlife.ca.gov

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0517
June 21, 2012

Mr. Douglas Boreo
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1310 Broadway, Suite 1300
Oakland, California 94612-2330

RE: Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Enhancement Project on the Millstone Ranch

Dear Chairman Boreo:

I am writing to express my support of to the Elkhorn Slough Foundation's proposal to the California Coastal Conservancy for funding to be used for the preparation of design, environmental impact statement, and application documents for restoration of tidal marsh and connected uplands in Elkhorn Slough.

The Elkhorn Slough estuary, containing California's second largest tract of salt marsh, is facing unprecedented rates of tidal wetland loss and degradation. Fifty percent of the tidal salt marsh in Elkhorn Slough has been lost in the past 70 years. This habitat loss is a result of draining and drilling, increased sedimentation, and other human activities. The loss of tidal marsh is a significant threat to the health of the estuary and the birds and wildlife that depend on it. Scientists are predicting that the dramatic rate of tidal wetland loss and degradation in Elkhorn Slough will continue in the near future if no management actions are taken.

The proposed project aims to demonstrate the beneficial reuse of sediment as a strategy to create and restore tidal wetland habitat. The project will involve the construction of a sediment bypass system to divert sediment from the Elkhorn Slough estuary and deposit it in a designated area. This sediment will be used to create new tidal wetland habitat. The project will also involve the construction of a sediment bypass system to divert sediment from the Elkhorn Slough estuary and deposit it in a designated area. This sediment will be used to create new tidal wetland habitat. The project will also involve the construction of a sediment bypass system to divert sediment from the Elkhorn Slough estuary and deposit it in a designated area. This sediment will be used to create new tidal wetland habitat.

This is an innovative project and will serve as a pilot for the Central Coast to demonstrate the beneficial reuse of sediment as a strategy to create and restore tidal wetland habitat. The project is not dependent on any specific source of sediment, and is a model for other estuaries.

Consolidating with Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties flood management agencies to utilize the river sediments. The project will occur in the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, which fulfills over 40,000 visitors each year. We believe the lessons learned through this project will increase public awareness about the need for collaboration to solve complex environmental issues, as well as the ecological benefits of wetland restoration.

I strongly support this proposal from the Elkhorn Slough Foundation to be California Coastal Conservancy, and ask that it be given all the consideration.

Member of Congress

SB76v



Melanie Gange
NOAA Restoration Center
1315 East- West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Proposal

Dear Melanie Gange:

I am writing to express support for the proposal by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, "Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration: Building resilience through the beneficial re-use of sediment" that is being submitted to NOAA for the Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Project Grants.

Elkhorn Slough is an ecological treasure at the center of the Monterey Bay and provides habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals and a destination point for many residents and visitors to the area seeking educational and recreational opportunities. It is also the site of critical transportation corridors, an important harbor, a major power plant and other infrastructure, which may be compromised by the ongoing erosion of the slough.

The proposed project aims to demonstrate the beneficial reuse of sediment as a strategy to correct imbalanced physical processes caused by historic wetland diking and draining affecting much of the Elkhorn Slough estuary. A particularly appealing aspect of the proposal is to use sediment that is going to be removed from the bench lands of the nearby Pajaro River in 2013 as part of a flood control project. The convergence of interests between the County's need for channel management and the beneficial use of the sediments for restoring marshes in the slough will increase public awareness about the need for collaboration to solve complex environmental issues, as well as the ecological benefits of wetland restoration.

The Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve are uniquely positioned to quickly implement their proposal, drawing on an established network of expert decision makers already focused on the slough. This project represents a good opportunity to improve the resilience of a high value ecosystem with a project that will benefit the federally listed and managed species that call Elkhorn Slough home.

Sincerely,


Trish Chapman
Central Coast Program Manager

1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, California 94612-2512
510-286-1015 Fax: 510-286-0470

C a l i f o r n i a S t a t e C o a s t a l C o n s e r v a n c y



CALIFORNIA SEA GRANT EXTENSION PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

January 31, 2013

Melanie Gange
NOAA Restoration Center
1315 East- West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Support for the Elkhorn Slough Foundation's proposal for the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration: Building Resilience Through The Beneficial Re-use of Sediment.

I am writing to support of the proposal by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, "Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration: Building resilience through the beneficial re-use of sediment" that is being submitted to NOAA for the Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Project Grants. Elkhorn Slough harbors the largest tract of tidal salt marsh in California south of San Francisco Bay. This estuary provides habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals and is a destination point for many residents and visitors to the area seeking educational and recreational opportunities. It is also the site of critical transportation corridors, an important harbor, a major power plant and other infrastructure, which may be compromised by the ongoing erosion of the slough.

The Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve are uniquely positioned to quickly implement their proposal, drawing on an established network of expert decision makers already focused on the slough. The proposed project aims to demonstrate the beneficial reuse of sediment as a strategy to correct imbalanced physical processes caused by historic wetland diking and draining affecting much of the Elkhorn Slough estuary. A particularly appealing aspect of the proposal is to use sediment that is going to be removed from the bench lands of the nearby Pajaro River in 2013 as part of a flood control project. The convergence of interests between the County's need for channel management and the beneficial use of the sediments for restoring marshes in the slough will increase public awareness about the need for collaboration to solve complex environmental issues, as well as the ecological benefits of wetland restoration. This project represents a good opportunity to improve the resilience of a high value ecosystem with a project that will benefit the federally listed and managed species that call Elkhorn Slough home.

Sincerely,



Dr. Richard M. Starr

Dr. Richard M. Starr, Director, 8272 Moss Landing Drive, Moss Landing, CA 95039
phone: 831-771-4442 • FAX: 832-632-4403 • email: RickStarr@ucsd.edu

MONTEREY COUNTY

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
LOUIS R. CALCAGNO, SUPERVISOR - SECOND DISTRICT



January 31, 2013

Ms. Melanie Gange
NOAA Restoration Center
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Support for the Elkhorn Slough Foundation's proposal for the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration:
Building Resilience through the Beneficial Re-use of Sediment.

Dear Ms. Gange,

This letter is being written in support of the proposal by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, "Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration: Building resilience through the beneficial re-use of sediment" that is being submitted to NOAA for the Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Project Grants.

Elkhorn Slough harbors the largest tract of tidal salt marsh in California south of San Francisco Bay. This ecological treasure at the center of the Monterey Bay coastline provides habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals and is a destination point for many residents and visitors to the area seeking educational and recreational opportunities. It is also the site of critical transportation corridors, an important harbor, a major power plant and other infrastructure, which may be compromised by the ongoing erosion of the slough.

The Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve are at the forefront of conservation science and management. They are uniquely positioned to quickly implement their proposal, drawing on an established network of expert decision makers already focused on the slough.

The proposed project aims to demonstrate the beneficial reuse of sediment as a strategy to correct imbalanced physical processes caused by historic wetland diking and draining affecting much of the Elkhorn Slough estuary. A particularly appealing aspect of the proposal is to use sediment that is going to be removed from the bench lands of the nearby Pajaro River in 2013 as part of a flood control project. The convergence of interests between the County's need for channel management and the beneficial use of the sediments for restoring marshes in the slough will increase public awareness about the need for collaboration to solve complex environmental issues, as well as the ecological benefits of wetland restoration.

This project represents a good opportunity to improve the resilience of a high value ecosystem with a project that will benefit the federally listed and managed species that call Elkhorn Slough home.

This work has my enthusiastic support.

Sincerely yours,


Louis R. Calcagno

Supervisor, 2nd District
County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors

LR.C: hg

P.O. BOX 787, 11140 SPEEGLE STREET, CASTROVILLE, CA 95012
TELEPHONES: (831) 755-5022; (831) 647-7722; (831) 724-8228, EXT. 5022; FAX: (831) 633-0201; EMAIL: dsdrc2@co.monterey.ca.us



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2401 Ponderosa Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93005



IN REPLY REFER TO:
08EVEN00-2013-B-0075

Melanie Gange
NOAA Restoration Center
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Subject: Support for the Minhoto Ranch Unit Wetland Restoration Project, Monterey County, California

Dear Ms. Gange:

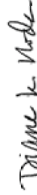
I am writing to express our strong support for the Elkhorn Slough Foundation's (ESF) proposed restoration project for the Minhoto Ranch unit of the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR). The project will restore up to 15 acres of tidal marsh and 31 acres of salt marsh habitat. The project will be implemented by the ESF in partnership with the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office (VFWO). The project specifically aims to restore sediment to the Minhoto Ranch unit of the ESNERR to address the loss of sediment and to associate the increased sediment input with the loss of sediment and diking and draining at this site. The Elkhorn Slough estuary is facing accelerated rates of tidal wetland loss and degradation due to erosion and soil subsidence. Fifty percent of the tidal salt marsh in Elkhorn Slough has been lost in the past 70 years. Historic diking and draining has led to soil subsidence and increased tidal flooding, essentially "drowning" the vegetation and saltmarsh habitats that would have naturally formed at sites like the Minhoto Ranch unit. Research has indicated that the dramatic rates of tidal wetland loss and degradation in Elkhorn Slough will continue if no management actions are taken. The proposed project at the Minhoto Ranch unit is an important step toward curbing the loss and degradation of tidal wetland habitats within the Elkhorn Slough system.

The Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office's (VFWO) Endangered Species and Coastal Programs (Programs) recognize the coastal habitats of the Central Coast region as a priority for conservation and restoration, particularly those in the Monterey Bay region. Elkhorn Slough specifically provides important habitat for many of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) trust resources including the federally threatened Southern sea otter (*Enhydra laris neris*) and endangered tidewater goby (*Eleotrigobius newberryi*), as well as an array of migratory bird species along the Pacific Flyway, and many other native wildlife and plants. Over the last 2 years, our Programs along with many other partners have provided direct support (through technical assistance) to develop and refine the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Restoration Project under which this proposed Project was developed. Our staff will strive to

provide technical assistance during all phases of the proposed Project as well as the larger Tidal Wetland Restoration Project.

If you have any questions or would like more information about our support of these efforts, please contact Jacob Martin or Shawn Miller, members of my staff who are locally-based in the Monterey Bay region, at (831) 768-6953 and (831) 648-0623, respectively.

Sincerely,



Diane K. Noda
Field Supervisor

February 11, 2013



Jessica Lacy
Research Oceanographer
US Geological Survey
Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center
400 Natural Bridges Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

February 11, 2013

Melanie Gange
NOAA Restoration Center
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Support for the Elkhorn Slough Foundation's proposal for the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh
Restoration: Building Resilience through the Beneficial Re-use of Sediment.

Dear Melanie Gange:

I am writing in support of the proposal "Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration: Building resilience through the beneficial re-use of sediment" submitted to the NOAA Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Project Grants by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation.

Elkhorn Slough harbors the largest tract of tidal salt marsh in California south of San Francisco Bay. This ecological treasure at the center of the Monterey Bay coastline provides habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals and is a destination point for many residents and visitors seeking educational and recreational opportunities. In recent decades, Elkhorn Slough marshes have been degraded by increased inundation and bank erosion. Ongoing erosion of the slough also threatens important infrastructure in the area, including critical transportation corridors, an important harbor, and a major power plant.

The Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research (ESNERR) Reserve are experienced in planning and executing restoration projects. They are uniquely positioned to quickly implement their proposal, drawing on an established network of expert decision makers already focused on the slough. The project was developed in a context of large-scale, long-term planning for habitat restoration and conservation, through the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetlands Project. As a result, I believe the project has a high likelihood of success.

The proposed project aims to demonstrate the beneficial reuse of sediment as a strategy to correct imbalanced physical processes caused by historic wetland diking and draining. A particularly appealing aspect of the proposal is the use of sediment that will be removed from the bench lands of the nearby Pajaro River in 2013 as part of a flood control project, taking advantage of a convergence of interests between the County's need to dispose of sediments, and ESNERR's need for a supply of sediments to restore subsided marshes in the slough.

This project will improve the resilience of a high-value ecosystem with a project that will benefit the federally listed and managed species that inhabit Elkhorn Slough. It has my enthusiastic support.

Sincerely,


Jessica Lacy

COMMITTEES
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ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS,
TOURISM & INTERNET MEDIA
BUDGET
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY
NATURAL RESOURCES

WEBSITE: www.assembly.ca.gov/wmonning

April 23, 2012

Douglas Bosco, Chair
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Chair Bosco:

This letter is to express my support for the Elkhorn Slough Foundation's application for \$595,835 from the California State Coastal Conservancy to fund the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Enhancement Project at Minihoto Ranch.

Elkhorn Slough has lost 50 percent of the historical tidal salt marsh area due to diking and draining, increased tidal flooding, and bank erosion. Funds from the Coastal Conservancy will allow the Elkhorn Slough Foundation to prepare the design, environmental analysis, and complete the permit documents for the restoration of tidal marsh and connected uplands in Elkhorn Slough. The proposed project will also serve as a pilot program for the Central Coast to demonstrate the beneficial reuse of sediment to correct imbalanced physical processes affecting the estuary.

The Elkhorn Slough estuary is an ecological treasure that provides habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals and provides educational and recreational opportunities to both residents and visitors. Unless management actions are taken, Elkhorn Slough will continue to lose its tidal salt marsh, and the Elkhorn Slough Foundation is uniquely positioned to implement this innovative proposal. I respectfully request your favorable consideration of the Elkhorn Slough Foundation's application for funding from the California State Coastal Conservancy to support the Elkhorn Tidal Marsh Enhancement Project at Minihoto Ranch. Should you have any questions regarding my support, please contact me at (831) 649-2832.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM W. MONNING
Assemblymember, 27th District

WWM:nw

Assembly
California Legislature



WILLIAM W. MONNING
ASSEMBLY MEMBER, TWENTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT

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California State Senate

SENATOR
SAM BLAKESLEE, PH.D.
FIFTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



April 20, 2012

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Support for Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Enhancement Project on Minhoto Ranch

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed funding of \$600,000 from the California Coastal Conservancy to the Elkhorn Slough Foundation to restore the tidal marshes on a 35 acre area connected to the Minhoto Ranch.

The Elkhorn Slough estuary, containing California's second largest tract of salt marsh, has decreased by fifty percent over the past 70 years. This loss of habitat is a result of diking and draining, increased tidal flooding that "drowns" the vegetation, and bank erosion that causes the marsh to collapse into the channel. Action is necessary to prevent future losses of this habitat.

The proposed project aims to demonstrate the beneficial reuse of sediment from the Pajaro River as a strategy to correct imbalanced physical processes. Santa Cruz County will be conducting a major project to increase capacity of the Pajaro River channel to reduce the chance of flooding. The convergence of interests between the County's need for channel management and the potential beneficial use of the sediments, those certified as meeting EPA standards, for restoring marshes in the slough is completely in line with the problem-solving approach we believe in. The project will occur on the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, which facilities host 40,000 visitors each year.

Conservation funds will be matched by \$822,000 from the Department of Water Resources and \$850,000 from the Army Corps. The Elkhorn Slough Foundation is working to secure an additional \$350,000 to fully fund their project.

I strongly encourage your board to support this project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sam Blakeslee
Senator, 15th District

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL
605 SANTA ROSA STREET
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
TEL (805) 548-3784
FAX (805) 548-3779

519-A HARTNELL STREET
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Member Agencies:

County of Monterey

County of San Benito

County of Santa Clara

County of Santa Cruz

Monterey County Water
Resources Agency

San Benito County
Water District

Santa Clara Valley
Water District

Santa Cruz County Zone
7 Flood Control District

June 4, 2010

Mr. Bryan Largay
Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
1700 Elkhorn Road
Watsonville, CA 95076

ELKHORN SLOUGH NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE TIDAL WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECT

Dear Mr. Largay:

We are writing to confirm the Flood Prevention Authority's support and commitment to exploring opportunities for collaboration in the planning, permitting, and implementation of the Pajaro River Bench Sediment Excavation Project and the related Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR) Tidal Wetland Restoration Project.

Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties are evaluating prospective locations in the Monterey Bay region that could receive all or some of the approximately 320,000 cubic yards of fluvial sediment material proposed for removal from the upper channel banks (benches) of the lower Pajaro River. Ideally, the bench sediment would be excavated and transported in a way that maximizes loading and hauling efficiencies, improves flood protection, and benefits the environment of the river corridor and the sites receiving material.

This locally available riverine sediment could be a cost-effective solution to the vexing problem of where to find large quantities of suitable material for tidal wetland fill sites. The use of bench sediment for this large-scale environmental restoration effort offers a promising alternative to other disposal options.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact John Doughty at 831-264-5100 or jdoughty@ambag.org

Sincerely,

Donald Gage, Chairman
PRWFPA

cc. Santa Cruz County District 7
Monterey County Water Resources Agency