



**Staff Recommendation**

September 10, 2024

Item 6

**Action Item:**

**Consideration and Approval of Disbursement of Funds for Senate Bill 1  
Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program**

Megan Williams, Coastal Adaptation Program Manager

**Recommended Action:** Authorization to disburse up to \$5,421,250 to various grantees who submitted successful applications to the Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program (SB 1 Grant Program) for sea level rise adaptation planning or implementation projects, as follows:

- 6.1 Up to \$1,500,000 to the City of Richmond for “Addressing Sea Level Rise Vulnerability: A Framework for Richmond and its Neighbors”
- 6.2 Up to \$965,000 to the City of Mill Valley for the “Coastal Flooding Adaptation Plan for Richardson Bay, Mill Valley”
- 6.3 Up to \$2,956,250 to the San Mateo County Harbor District for the “Surfers Beach Pilot Restoration Project”

**Location:** Statewide

**Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives:** Goal 1: Safeguard Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Communities in the Face of Climate Change; Objective 1.1: Build Resiliency to Sea-Level Rise, Coastal Storms, Erosion and Flooding

**Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:**

The SB 1 Grant Program meets many of the strategies and actions outlined in Goal 1 of OPC’s [Equity Plan](#), which is to establish and implement more equitable and sustainable community engagement and funding methods to expand and enhance opportunities for ocean and coastal projects, policies, and research. According to the [SLR Adaptation Criteria](#), each project, regardless of phase, must have outreach, education, and community engagement, especially to

environmental justice (EJ) communities and tribes, as part of the project’s scope. Equity and EJ benefits include community engagement, locally driven adaptation priorities, improved coastal habitat, and safer coastal access.

### **Findings and Resolution:**

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibit(s), OPC hereby finds that:

1. The proposed projects are consistent with the purposes of Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, the California Ocean Protection Act;
2. The proposed projects are consistent with the Budget Act of 2022 which included a \$37.5 million Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund appropriation for implementation of Chapter 236 of the Statutes of 2021 (SB 1); and
3. The proposed projects are not ‘legal projects’ that trigger the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code section, section 15378, except for 6.3 “Surfers Beach Pilot Restoration Project.”

Staff further recommends that OPC adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“OPC hereby approves the authorization to disburse up to \$5,421,250 to various grantees who submitted successful applications to the Senate Bill 1 Sea-Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program for sea level rise adaptation planning or implementation projects, as follows:

- Up to \$1,500,000 to the City of Richmond
- Up to \$965,000 to the City of Mill Valley
- Up to \$2,956,250 to the San Mateo County Harbor District

This authorization is subject to the condition that prior to disbursement of funds, each grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Director of the OPC detailed work plans, schedules, staff requirements, budgets, and the names of any contractors intended to be used to complete the projects, as well as discrete deliverables that can be produced in intervals to ensure the projects are on target for successful completion. All projects will be developed under a shared understanding of process, management, and delivery.”

### **Executive Summary:**

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council approve the disbursement of up to \$5,421,250 to fund three projects submitted by local and regional governments that successfully

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met the requirements of the Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program (SB 1 Grant Program) and will result in sea level rise (SLR) adaptation planning or implementation projects. In August of 2023, [OPC approved](#) the disbursement of up to \$95.9 million for the SB 1 Grant Program to fund SLR adaptation planning or implementation projects.

The overall goal of the SB 1 Grant Program is to provide funding for coastal communities to develop consistent SLR adaptation plans and projects to build resilience to SLR along the entire coast of California and San Francisco Bay. To achieve this goal, the SB 1 Grant Program offers two tracks of funding: one for pre-planning and planning phases (Track One), and one for the project and implementation phase (Track Two). Track One (projects in the Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning Phases) officially opened for proposal submission in December of 2023, and accepts proposals on a non-competitive, rolling, quarterly basis, provided the proposals satisfy the program requirements. Track Two proposals (Implementation Project Phase) will be accepted through a competitive process starting in mid-2025, subject to availability of funding. This delay from the originally planned mid-late 2024 opening is due to adjustments in the SB 1 Grant Program’s funding allocation, with \$36.8 million delayed until 2026, reducing the immediate funds available for Track Two. However, recognizing the importance of funding timely implementation projects, OPC is accepting the submission of Track Two Letters of Intent (LOI) before the acceptance of Track Two proposals to advance urgent projects that address near-term SLR threats.

The total amount requested across all three projects is \$5,421,250. These projects cover a variety of critical areas, including pre-planning, data collection, detailed adaptation planning, and an urgent implementation project that addresses near-term SLR threats. All proposals and LOIs were reviewed by OPC staff, in collaboration with either California Coastal Commission (CCC) or San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) staff, depending on the project area location. Proposals were reviewed for their adherence to the [SLR Adaptation Criteria](#) and the evaluation criteria set forth within the solicitation. This resulted in the second set of projects recommended for funding under this program to meet the foundational purpose of equipping California’s coastal communities with robust, consistent, and comprehensive SLR adaptation plans to build resilience against the impacts of SLR and ensure that both local and regional efforts are well-coordinated and uniformly advanced statewide.

## **Track 1 (Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning) Project Summaries:**

### ***6.1 Addressing SLR Vulnerability: A Framework for Richmond and its Neighbors***

#### **Project Summary:**

The City of Richmond, California, in northwest Contra Costa County, contains 32 miles of San Francisco Bay shoreline. Richmond is home to a wide range of industries, natural areas, and

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diverse communities, many of which are EJ communities that have long suffered from racial and economic inequity, and are highly vulnerable to SLR. The City is navigating ongoing ecological and public health challenges due to soil and groundwater contamination. SLR will increase the risk of flooding in marginalized communities, erode valued habitats and recreational areas, and create new risks of exposure to legacy groundwater contaminants. The City proposes to use SB 1 grant funds to conduct a community-based collaborative planning process and to develop a Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Resiliency Plan (SLR-ARP), reflecting Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the SB 1 planning process. This process aims to establish a shared understanding of vulnerabilities, bring together a broad range of interested parties, including residents, local businesses, landowners, community organizations, and other government agencies, identify priorities for shoreline adaptation, guide the City's updates of land use policies and permitting, and establish partnerships to implement adaptation projects in the coming years.

### **Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:**

The City of Richmond, with approximately 115,000 residents, faces significant EJ challenges, particularly in its shoreline areas, which also impact neighboring cities. The City's industrial landscape, including major freeways and refineries, contributes to a disproportionate pollution burden, especially in communities near these facilities. In 2022, [Richmond mapped](#) disadvantaged communities identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency pursuant SB 535 (Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012) and cumulative pollution burdens identified in the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) as part of its EJ Element update to the General Plan. According to the City's analysis using CalEnviroScreen 4.0 data, multiple census tracts in Richmond rank in the highest 25 percentile pollution burden statewide, with one tract falling within the top 4 percentile.

This project builds on these efforts, addressing concerns about soil contamination due to rising sea levels, a focus of a July 2023 measure to inventory toxic sites along the shoreline. The project emphasizes expanding community capacity-building in climate resilience through multilingual engagement, workforce development, and consultation with local Native American Tribal members. By prioritizing racial equity and justice, the project aims to create a community-centered vision for SLR adaptation, ensuring Richmond's shoreline protection efforts are inclusive and sustainable.

### **About the Grantee:**

The City of Richmond, situated along the San Francisco Bay in Contra Costa County, oversees a diverse urban area with over 32 miles of shoreline. The City has extensive experience in environmental planning and managing coastal resilience projects. Richmond has been proactive in addressing the challenges posed by SLR. With its strong track record in coordinating regional and

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local initiatives, Richmond is well-positioned to lead the development of a robust SLR Adaptation Plan that protects its shoreline and enhances community resilience. This effort is in alignment with the requirements of Senate Bill 272 (Laird, 2023), which requires coastal local governments to develop comprehensive SLR plans.

**Project Timeline:**

This project will be completed over two years.

**Project Financing:**

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$1,500,000 to the City of Richmond for Addressing SLR Vulnerability: A Framework for Richmond and its Neighbors. This project includes leveraged non-state funds of \$100,000 for a project total of \$1,600,000.

**6.2 Coastal Flooding Adaptation Plan for Richardson Bay, Mill Valley**

**Project Summary:**

The City of Mill Valley is currently vulnerable to high tide flooding with impacts seen today. Sections of the City and Greater Mill Valley currently flood during King Tides, about 10 – 20 days per year, and the number of high tide flooding days will triple in the future with rising seas. Rising groundwater tables from extreme precipitation also exacerbates flood hazards, especially during high and King tides. This, again, will only increase in the future with rising seas' impact on groundwater tables and with the projected increased intensity of short and long-term duration extreme precipitation. Some of the City's most important community resources and the well-used Bay Trail's multi-use path are currently located in the floodplain and are vulnerable to flooding. Building on ongoing County of Marin-led studies that assess the entire County's flood exposure, the City of Mill Valley seeks to collate existing coastal flood hazard exposure and risk information along its shoreline, develop a robust community engagement and outreach effort to bring the community voice into shoreline planning, develop an adaptation plan, and identify prospective adaptation strategies with 30% design completed under this project.

**Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:**

The City of Mill Valley, though not designated as an EJ community, faces significant and growing flood risks, particularly during King Tides, which are expected to worsen with rising sea levels. One of the city's two primary evacuation routes, Miller Avenue, repeatedly floods during these events, leading to road closures and dangerous detours. This area is home to critical infrastructure, including the City's only middle school, senior assisted living and memory care facility, community center, and the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin. These facilities, built on a FEMA Special

Hazard Area floodplain, are at high risk of flooding, posing severe threats to the community’s safety. A critical aspect of this project is addressing these risks in the context of the Superfund status along portions of the City’s shoreline. In response to these concerns, the City is committed to developing a comprehensive and inclusive Community Engagement Plan as part of this project. The project will involve a series of focus group meetings and interactive community workshops designed to build understanding of current and future flood risks. The workshops are intended to empower community members to actively participate in shaping the City’s adaptation strategies, ensuring the community plays a vital role in selecting and designing 1-3 adaptation strategies to be advanced to 30% design.

**About the Grantee:**

The City of Mill Valley, located along Richardson Bay in Marin County, has already experienced the impacts of SLR, with frequent flooding affecting key infrastructure and daily life. The City has participated in regional adaptation planning through its involvement with One Tam – a partnership between California State Parks, Marin County Parks, and other regional entities. Additionally, the City is building on extensive work done by Marin County and recent studies conducted by the Transportation Authority of Marin, which have highlighted key vulnerabilities in the area. The City is now focused on developing its own comprehensive SLR Adaptation Plan, in compliance with the requirements of SB 272. By leveraging its experience in regional collaborations and its proactive approach to local resilience planning, the City of Mill Valley is well positioned to lead this critical project and enhance the long-term resilience of its shoreline.

**Project Timeline:**

This project will be completed over two years.

**Project Financing:**

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$965,000 to the City of Mill Valley for the Coastal Flooding Adaptation Plan for Richardson Bay, Mill Valley. This project includes leveraged non-state funds of \$200,000 for a project total of \$1,165,000.

**Track 2 (Urgent Implementation) Project Summary:**

**6.3 Surfers Beach Pilot Restoration Project**

**Project Summary:**

San Mateo County Harbor District (SMCHD) is requesting support under OPC’s SB 1 Grant Program, Track 2 Implementation Project category to assist with construction costs to complete the

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proposed Surfers Beach Pilot Restoration Project. This multijurisdictional project has been in the planning phase since 2017 and is being led by SMCHD. The project area is located inside the breakwaters of, and adjacent to, Pillar Point Harbor in San Mateo County. The goal is to address and reduce the accelerated and extreme coastal erosion rates that have occurred on the beaches adjacent to the Harbor due to effects created by the construction of the outer breakwaters, and eliminate the excessive shoaling caused by sand being trapped inside the Harbor. By reducing coastal erosion, the project is also expected to enhance the resilience of Highway 1, which has been previously threatened by the encroaching shoreline. The project involves 1) dredging and recovery of up to 100,000-cubic yards of clean sand within the Harbor along the East Breakwater and near the Boat Launch Ramp area and 2) using the recovered sand to restore a previously existing beach through construction of an elevated berm along approximately 1,400-foot-long section of shoreline at Surfers Beach. The overarching project will also mitigate current and future damages to eelgrass by creating new eelgrass habitat and relocating threatened eelgrass within the harbor to improve conditions for fish and wildlife species.

### **Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:**

For decades, Surfers Beach has been a vital site for low-cost recreational activities such as surfing, fishing, and beachgoing. The project aims to restore safe and accessible beach areas, enhancing these recreational opportunities while addressing SLR and coastal erosion. Throughout the project's development, community engagement and inclusivity were prioritized, ensuring that local residents, including those from EJ communities, had a voice in the project's design. SMCHD has facilitated extensive public participation through regular meetings, workshops, and consultations, allowing for diverse input.

As the project advances, SMCHD will continue to prioritize outreach, education, and community engagement, with a focus on EJ communities. This will include targeted efforts to engage those who are currently involved in local planning efforts and identify additional EJ communities within the planning area. SMCHD also plans to conduct meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes, ensuring that the project respects and integrates their cultural values and traditional knowledge. Through these efforts, SMCHD aims to create a project that not only restores the natural environment but also fosters inclusivity, accessibility, and community involvement.

### **About the Grantee:**

The San Mateo County Harbor District manages Pillar Point Harbor and Oyster Point Marina on the San Mateo County coast. Established in 1933, SMCHD's mission is to provide fiscally and environmentally responsible stewardship of its maritime resources, emergency response, and public access. Since 2017, SMCHD has been leading the planning and development of the Surfers

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Beach Pilot Restoration Project. To support this effort, SMCHD has engaged experienced coastal management professionals, including Brad Damitz, who has over 25 years of expertise in coastal resilience and nature-based solutions. The project has involved extensive coordination with federal, state, and local agencies, reflecting SMCHD’s commitment to collaborative, environmentally responsible management of coastal resources.

**Project Timeline:**

This project will be completed over one year.

**Project Financing:**

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$2,956,250 to the San Mateo County Harbor District for the Surfers Beach Pilot Restoration Project. This project includes leveraged non-state funds of \$4,700,000 for a project total of \$6,500,000.

**Project Financing:**

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council authorize encumbrance of up to \$5,421,250 to the following:

<b>Recommended SB 1 Grant Program Projects</b>	<b>OPC</b>	<b>Non-OPC</b>
<b>Track 1 (Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning) Projects</b>		
6.1 City of Richmond	\$1,500,000	\$100,000
6.2 City of Mill Valley	\$965,000	\$200,000
<b>Track 2 (Urgent Implementation) Projects</b>		
6.3 San Mateo County Harbor District	\$2,956,250	\$4,700,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,421,250</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>

The anticipated source of funds will be from the Budget Act of 2022, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund appropriation (Fiscal Year 2022/2023) to OPC for implementation of Chapter 236 of Statutes of 2021 (SB 1, Atkins). Pursuant to SB 1, funding is designated “for the purpose of making grants to



local and regional governments to update local and regional land use plans to take into account sea level rise and for directly related investments to implement those plans.” Consequently, all projects under the SB 1 Grant Program will focus on SLR Adaptation and fall within the pre-planning, planning, or implementation project phases. These projects will follow the SLR Adaptation Criteria, developed in accordance with SB 1 and in consultation with the SLR Collaborative.

### **Consistency with California Ocean Protection Act:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Ocean Protection Act, Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, because it is consistent with trust-fund allowable projects, defined in Public Resources Code Section 35650(b)(2) as projects which:

- Eliminate or reduce threats to coastal and ocean ecosystems, habitats, and species.
- Allow for increased public access to, and enjoyment of, ocean and coastal resources, consistent with sustainable, long-term protection and conservation of those resources.
- Improve management, conservation, and protection of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems.
- Provide funding for adaptive management, planning coordination, monitoring, research, and other necessary activities to minimize the adverse impacts of climate change on California's ocean ecosystem.

### **Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):**

The various proposed projects under Track 1 (Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning) are not ‘legal projects’ that trigger the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21068 and Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, section 15378. If a project were determined to be a ‘legal project’ under CEQA, the proposed projects are statutorily exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations section 15262 as feasibility and planning studies.

For Project 6.3 under Track 2 (Urgent Implementation), the San Mateo County Harbor District, serving as the lead agency for CEQA compliance, prepared and certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Surfers Beach Pilot Restoration Project in December 2022 ([SCH Number 2022100439](#)).