



CITY/COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

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Date: October 13, 2021

Subject: Testimony provided by Marie Chuang, C/CAG Chair, at the October 13, 2021 San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board Hearing on the Tentative Order of the reissued Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit (MRP “3.0”)

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Good morning, Chair McGrath and members of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, my name is Marie Chuang, Chair of the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) and Council Member of the Town of Hillsborough. Though C/CAG is primarily the congestion management agency of San Mateo County, it has also supported the 21 municipalities in the county comply with NPDES stormwater permit requirements since the early 1990s.

I want to take this opportunity to share with you the significant accomplishments C/CAG and its member agencies have made in partnership with Water Board staff and regional partners to advance water quality, especially in recent years, and to urge continued collaboration with your staff to ensure the next iteration of the Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit is supportive of our collective goals and strengths. C/CAG has supported regional water quality mandates with a lens towards innovation and progressive policies. In the past several years we’ve made significant strides with the help and coordination of your staff: we have completed the San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Resource Plan to position our agencies for access to voter-approved bond funds; we facilitated the establishment of the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District to address sea level rise, coastal erosion, flooding and regional scale stormwater management; we completed the San Mateo Countywide Sustainable Streets Master Plan, which focuses on integrating green stormwater infrastructure with transportation investments; we’ve advanced several regional-scale multi-benefit stormwater capture projects and a business case for collaboration with \$3 million in state grant funds; and we’ve helped our communities manage tens of thousands of acres of trash loading areas to keep our waterways clean.

There is much to celebrate in working together to achieve this progress. Yet significant challenges remain. As a result of the pandemic, our towns and cities are faced with increased funding constraints with respect to core revenue and services, which unfortunately can even further jeopardize already underfunded programming, like stormwater. Among municipalities in San Mateo County, there is an estimated \$500 million funding need to address existing storm drain issues. In 2014, C/CAG conducted a fee initiative study, which showed at the outset of MRP 2.0 an annual gap of \$37 million in funds needed to address current and future water quality regulations. As we have heard, this gap has grown significantly in the proposed Tentative Order. We have been successful in pursuing state and foundation grants to advance sustainable streets, regional projects and schoolyard greening. But our program cannot depend on uncertain funding and increasing mandates with significant costs.

Keeping in mind the good work that we’ve accomplished and the challenges of a broadened stormwater permit, I urge you to work with your staff to focus on the most meaningful priorities for the next permit term. There is value in working steadily and incrementally down a path that has the most water quality and community benefit, in the spirit of completing what we’ve set out to accomplish in the most cost-effective manner. I ask that you direct staff to continue to engage with regional multi-benefit funding and planning efforts, including Plan Bay Area 2050 and state and federal funding programs managed through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, to ensure that permit requirements align with these efforts. Lastly, I respectfully ask that you consider phasing permit requirements to better align with the realities of local government funding constraints.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf our member agencies.