



Staff Report

1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of May 18, 2022 Executive Committee (EC) minutes (see attached)
5. **ACTION:** Recommend Approval of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding Workplan for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 and 2023 (see attached)

BIL funding is being allocated to each National Estuary Program (NEP), and we recently received final guidance from EPA headquarters. We anticipate \$909,800 in supplemental funding every year for FY22 through FY26. Funding will support projects that further the Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) and meet guidance criteria. The guidance specifies prioritizing projects that focus on climate and equity. Due to delays in release of the funding guidance, our program as well as many others are opting to develop a combined Workplan for FY22 and FY23. Funding will require an annual BIL Workplan and budget with additional reporting requirements. A long-term plan for the funding and equity strategy are due June 1, 2023. The match requirement is waived for FY22 and FY23. Programs completing an equity strategy will have the match requirement waived for the remainder of the BIL funding.

As with our 320 grant, we develop a Workplan outlining the tasks to be conducted along with budgets. A grant application is under development to be submitted before the start of FY23. As per previous discussions with the Bay Foundation and EC, staff reached out to partners to develop projects. Individual contacts were made, and staff hosted three office hours to provide opportunities for partners to discuss project ideas. Based on this input and the funding guidance, the Workplan was developed.

Staff recommends EC approval of the BIL FY22 and FY23 Workplan and budget.

6. **DISCUSSION:** Program Evaluation (PE) Letter update (see attached)

Every five years, each of the NEPs undergoes a Program Evaluation process with EPA to review how the program is doing. Continued participation in the program is contingent upon passing this process. The process culminates in a PE letter, which lays out the noteworthy program accomplishments as well as areas for improvement. Twice a year, Estuary Program staff provides an update on the status of activities to address the challenges identified by EPA in the PE letter. The attached summary describes activities underway or planned to address these challenges. Challenges for us to address include reporting measurable outcomes from projects, completing our CCMP update, expanding outreach to a more diverse audience, and addressing water reuse and hazard mitigation.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Program Highlights

- **Community Project Updates:** Dr. Nikki Adams' Microplastics Monitoring Project wrapped up their monthly monitoring. Analysis and outreach events will be completed by the end of September. The Harbor Department's spill response project is ongoing, with staff distributing oil absorbent pads to local boaters along with our program's Clean Boating educational materials. The Camp KEEP watershed education project has been delayed because of uncertainties over the future of the facility due to COVID concerns.
- **Monitoring Updates:** We are now settled in our new bacteria lab space in Cuesta's Biology Department. We've recruited four student volunteers who will support our monitoring effort for the upcoming academic year. Analysis is nearing completion for the 2023 State of the Bay environmental report card, which is due out in early 2023.
- **Restoration Project Updates:** The 2021 eelgrass map is near completion and results indicate a substantial increase in eelgrass extent. We expect to have a map and baywide acreage number by early fall. A smaller than planned restoration effort took place due to the eelgrass abundance. A baywide lidar survey was conducted in June, with the data set expected in October. The data will support Cal Poly research efforts and Estuary Program's eelgrass work. The Lazy LS Ranch easement closing is imminent, with the support of \$148,500 of Restoration Funding.
- **Administrative Updates:** A nonprofit group called Save Cuesta Inlet is developing fundraising efforts and working with the property owner to facilitate a purchase of two parcels encompassing seven acres in the Cuesta Inlet area. The group is also working to determine who would take over the property after the purchase. The CCMP update is under final review by EPA, with approval pending shortly.

8. Adjourn to next meeting of November 16, 2022 at 4:00 p.m., to be held remotely via Zoom.

Attachments:

- Minutes from May 18, 2022 EC meeting
- FY22 and FY23 BIL Workplan
- PE status update