

YES on AA

CLEAN AND HEALTHY BAY

Vote YES on Measure AA
For a Clean and Healthy San Francisco Bay

THE DAILY JOURNAL

EDITORIAL: VOTE YES ON MEASURE AA

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In 2003, 15,100 acres of salt ponds were purchased from Cargill Inc. with an aim to eventually restore them to tidal wetlands. For decades, those lands that were taken from the Bay were used for salt production and the purchase was part of a larger effort to restore that land back to its natural state.

The project has several goals, to bring back habitat that would allow for dwindling wildlife to flourish again and to also provide ways for the area's water quality to improve while also creating better flood control.

While the purchase was enabled by federal and state agencies, along with private donations, there was never a revenue source for the actual restoration of the land. Now, a nine-county ballot measure seeks to change that. By asking for a \$12 annual tax on every parcel, the San Francisco Bay Area Restoration Authority is seeking a total of \$500 million, or \$25 million a year, for restoration projects and real ecological benefits.

Though the San Francisco Bay is the defining characteristic of this region, it historically receives disproportionately less federal funding compared to other significant national bodies of water. Puget Sound, the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay receive between five and 60 times more federal support than the Bay. There has been some effort by local federal legislators to correct that, but so far there has been little to show. This measure would be able to produce the money needed to begin many of the projects and could be used to leverage additional state and federal funds.

While many of those projects are in the South Bay, they would help in assuring the entire Bay stays healthy and also ensure that decades of development, diking and fill would be rectified. There are also opportunities in San Mateo County for projects, including the restoration of marshland near San Francisquito Creek and even some improvements at Coyote Point.

Restoring Bay marshland is key to preventing flooding, reducing pollution and creating new recreation areas for all to enjoy. The purchase in 2003 was a tremendous step toward the potential for this land, and other areas, to be restored. This nine-county proposal, Measure AA, now provides the much-needed funding for its restoration. This has been a long thought-out process with tremendous benefits for everyone in the Bay Area with just a small amount of revenue provided by each and every property owner in nine counties. It deserves your support.

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