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EPA Investing Over \$43 Million in New Funding to Protect and Restore San Francisco Bay and Its Watersheds

EPA will also open a new San Francisco Bay program office later this year

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SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced \$43.5 million to fund projects that will help protect and restore San Francisco Bay and local watersheds and wetlands. EPA also announced today that the Agency will be launching a new program office later this year that will focus solely on advancing the Agency’s work in the San Francisco Bay watershed.

The \$43.5 million in funding announced today comprises \$38 million in congressionally-appropriated funds for EPA’s San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF) that will be awarded as grants later this year, over \$5 million in SFBWQIF grants from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that are in the process of being awarded and a \$500,000 wetlands program development grant to San Francisco Estuary Partnership.

“San Francisco Bay is one of the most iconic natural places in the country and EPA is committed to ensuring it is protected and restored so that its ecosystems and local communities can thrive for generations to come,” **said EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Martha Guzman.** “This new

funding – along with our San Francisco Bay program office – will play a major role to improve water quality and restore wetlands across the Bay and its watersheds and build climate resilience in underserved communities.”

Organizations receiving grants from the \$5 million in BIL funds:

California State University, East Bay (\$915,786) – Funds will support building a native plant garden to promote and sustain Indigenous food sovereignty for the Miwok and Chochenyo Ohlone Tribes. The garden will include a tool shed for rainwater harvesting and a community gathering space for Tribal meetings and educational workshops. The grant will also support workdays to build the garden and restoration work for the Galindo Creek. This work is part of a larger effort to improve the creek and garden spaces to restore traditional land stewardship.

California State University, Sacramento (\$742,240) – Funds will be used to reduce trash inputs to San Francisco Bay through on-land, community-based trash monitoring, cleanup, and career training in underserved communities. This grant will also support a network of community volunteers, high school and college interns, university-based technical experts, and two nonprofits in Pinole, San Pablo, Richmond, unincorporated areas in North Richmond and Tara Hills, and Berkeley.

Friends of Sausal Creek (\$200,673) – Funds will be used to restore William D. Wood Park, a public park located in lower Sausal Creek in one of the few public green spaces within urbanized Oakland. This project aims to improve water quality and overall health of the watershed and will produce a feasibility study for daylighting portions of Sausal Creek in the park. The project will also develop a dedicated community of creekside environmental stewards, increase access to public urban green space, and build climate resiliency by addressing impacts of invasive plants and the channelized creek.

Grassroots Ecology (\$770,823) – Funds will be used to restore 37,000 square feet of urban riparian habitat along the Cordilleras and Redwood Creeks to benefit underserved communities in Redwood City and North Fair Oaks. Restoration work will include the removal of invasive trees and planting 1,400 native plants and trees. Project funds will also support workforce development with eight environmental internships and eight California Climate Action Corps fellows that will work with high-risk youth and low-income families. Creek restoration efforts will decrease fire risks, improve water quality, reduce erosion and increase habitat biodiversity in a community in need of increased access to green space.

Greenbelt Alliance (\$324,908) – Funds will support the creation of a climate learning exchange and training program, a 14-month course that will prepare approximately 25 local residents from underserved communities in Suisun City and Fairfield with the tools, experiences, and resources they need to be climate champions in their own communities.

La Luz Center (\$967,914) – Funds will be used for a three-year project that will create a partnership between a Latino-serving community-based nonprofit, a watershed environmental nonprofit, and a community college to train a local, underserved, predominantly Latino workforce. The program aims to connect graduates to jobs that will meet the need for watershed climate resilience work across the North Bay. This project will help create a more climate-resilient community in the underserved, unincorporated, densely populated Springs area of Sonoma Valley.

Nuestra Casa de East Palo Alto (\$125,560) – Funds will be used to engage 400 residents from East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, North Fair Oaks, and Redwood City in 16 shoreline clean-up days. The clean-ups focus on four sites: Cooley Landing, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, and Baylands Nature Preserve. These events will serve as a platform to engage residents who live on the shoreline to be active participants in the restoration of San Francisco Bay.

The Watershed Project (\$1,000,748) – Funds will support the creation of two community-based groups that will plan, design, and implement a new watershed action plan for the Wildcat Creek watershed in the underserved community of Richmond. Community meetings and workshops will be held to recruit and train a community advisory board and a “friends of Wildcat Creek” group. The two groups will continue to engage the community as the plan is implemented and forge relationships with other agency-led restoration actions happening in the larger watershed. This grant will also support workforce development in riparian restoration and green infrastructure.

Additionally, the **San Francisco Estuary Partnership and the Association of Bay Area Governments have been selected to receive an EPA wetlands program development grant for \$498,762** to advance the San Francisco Estuary Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program’s work that examines important management questions for wetland restoration projects through coordinated monitoring.

San Francisco Bay is a designated "estuary of national significance" under the Clean Water Act. The Bay and its tributary streams, situated in an urban area with more than seven million people, provide crucial fish and wildlife habitat at the heart of the larger Bay-Delta Estuary. In partnership with numerous non-profit organizations, watershed groups, land trusts, government agencies, and resource conservation districts, the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund has made significant progress in restoring water quality, ‘greening’ development, and building resilience to climate change impacts across San Francisco Bay and its watersheds.

For more information about EPA’s San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/sfbay-delta/sf-bay-water-quality-improvement-fund>.

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