



COMMITTEE FOR
GREEN FOOTHILLS



April 6, 2018

The Honorable State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South
Sacramento, CA 95825
Via e-mail

Re: Public Trust Needs Assessment for State Sovereign Land at 410 Airport Boulevard,
Burlingame

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

Thank you for initiating a Public Trust Needs Assessment for the property at 410 Airport Boulevard, Burlingame. Special thanks also to the SLC staff and the City of Burlingame for hosting the public input meeting on March 22 regarding Public Trust Needs for this site.

The Committee for Green Foothills is a regional organization that advocates for the protection of open space, farmlands, and natural resources in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club is the regional branch of Sierra Club that represents thousands of residents in the Bay Area who support open space. San Francisco Baykeeper and the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge both work to keep the San Francisco Bay ecologically sound, sustainable and vibrant with many members. Together we all recognize the importance of keeping the San Francisco Bay accessible for all as mandated by the California Constitution.

On behalf of our members, we write concerning 410 Airport Boulevard, Burlingame, as the parcel has unique environmental potential due to its proximity to the San Francisco Bay. Accordingly, we believe that the best uses for this site that fit the Public Trust Doctrine include improved public access to the water, shoreline restoration, and recreational opportunities along the Bay. Furthermore, we believe that such improvements will offer environmental justice opportunities by increasing access for all.

As you know, the California Constitution, Sec. 4, Article X states, “access to the navigable waters of this State shall be always attainable for the people...” The sustenance of public spaces celebrates the expressions and the rights of its citizenry; increasing access would not only uphold Californians’ rights, but would provide access to all residents – not just those who can afford a

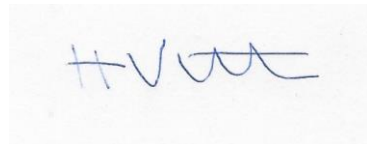
night at a Bayfront hotel. A hotel at this site would be enjoyed by a much smaller, more privileged constituency than an open space area would.

As for what makes sense at the site, we strongly support removing the sea wall, and excavating part of the site to enable creation of a new, natural “living levee” that would include transition-zone native habitats. This “living levee” would provide greater resilience in the face of sea level rise, restore habitat for multiple types of wildlife, and create the basis for an improved and attractive segment of the Bay Trail. A small non-motorized boat launch area could also provide increased public access for sea kayakers, kite boarders, and windsurfers using the Bay Water Trail.

Restoration of shoreline habitat on this 8.8 acre parcel could be a signature project for Burlingame and the SLC. As 90% of the Bay’s historic wetlands have been lost to development, this is a remarkable opportunity to reclaim shoreline. We do hope that the SLC recognizes this chance to create a long term difference along the Bay that counters development pressures as there is not enough quality, natural open space in this part of the Bay waterfront; it is essential that we preserve this site as open space for generations to come.

Thank you for the public input meeting, for the opportunity to further comment, and for your consideration of these possibilities. We look forward to the next steps in this exciting project.

Sincerely,



Helen Wolter
Legislative Advocate, Committee for Green Foothills



Ian Wren
Staff Scientist, San Francisco Baykeeper



Katja Irvin
Co-Chair, Conservation Committee
Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club



Gail Raabe
Co-Chair
Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge