

SAVE THE BERKELEY PIER
2301 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94705
March 31, 2023

Coastal Conservancy Board
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-1401
Via e-mail

SUBJECT: April 6, 2023, Board meeting, **item 7**, Consideration and Possible authorization to disburse up to \$3,049,000 to the City of Berkeley to design, obtain permits for, and construct Berkeley Waterfront improvements in Alameda County consisting of 1) renovating the existing South Cove West parking lot, and 2) repairing the existing Cesar Chavez Park perimeter trail; and adoption of findings pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act

Dear Members of the Coastal Conservancy Board,

We write as members of an ad hoc group, Save the Berkeley Pier. Our mission is to restore access to the water via the Berkeley pier, which has now been closed nearly eight years. We write in support of the two grant proposals; like the pier, those facilities provide coastal access to a regional population, not merely to those who live in the City of Berkeley. We deeply appreciate the efforts of State Senator Nancy Skinner in this effort.

We do recognize that the trailer bill authored by State Senator Skinner provided these funds for the pier and the marina without detailed direction. We would like to have seen a more robust public process which included discussion of what measures are most needed to sustain and increase public recreation. Although Berkeley has been engaged in a multi-year effort to develop a new plan for the marina, the background documents that provided information about the most urgent needs at the marina were not released until after these permit applications were filed. The guidance body for the city, the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission therefore did not have an opportunity to review the infrastructure needs, solicit public participation, and provide their recommendation to the City Council and to you.

While we agree with these particular grants, we think it is important that the Conservancy devote the remaining funds to infrastructure needed to sustain or increase recreation at the marina. We are concerned that the City Council has directed their staff to apply for grant funds to develop an EIR for a new ferry terminal and commuter terminal in the middle of an area that is designated a waterfront park priority area by your sister agency, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Under the existing agreement between the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) and the City of Berkeley, WETA is responsible for preparation of an EIR. Further, with organizations like WETA facing a well-publicized “fiscal cliff” simply to keep operating in the face of fewer passengers, it appears that a proposal for a new ferry terminal is premature, if not overly speculative. Funding an EIR for a plan whose details and viability remain obscure, particularly since funding that EIR has been identified as the responsibility of WETA, seems to be a poor choice for limited funds. Berkeley faces a need for over \$100 million

in funding simply to keep the marina and its spacious parks running. We would ask you to give some direction to the City of Berkeley to focus the remaining funds on existing needs, not on future projects with uncertain funding.

Very truly yours

Carla Woodworth, Andrew Sullivan, Kelly Hammargren, David Fielder, Paul Kamen, Gordon Stout, Brad Smith, Doug Yamamoto, Jim McGrath