

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

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California State Senate

SENATOR
STEPHEN C. PADILLA
EIGHTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #4 ON
STATE ADMINISTRATION AND
GENERAL GOVERNMENT
CHAIR
MEMBER
AGRICULTURE
BUDGET
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
HOUSING
NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

February 7, 2023

Douglas Bosco, Chair Board of Directors
California State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: SUPPORT: Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program (TETRP) II Phase I – Implementation

Dear Chair Bosco,

As the State Senator representing the Tijuana River Valley, I am pleased to support Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association's (SWIA) California State Coastal Conservancy grant application for the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program (TETRP) II, Phase I: Implementation. This grant consists of restoring 85 acres of wetlands and associated habitats, and enhance public access at the Tijuana River estuary in San Diego County.

The proposed project implementation will improve tidal prism and restore 85 acres of tidal wetlands by converting degraded upland to intertidal wetlands and tidal channels. Enhancement of the beach / dune system adjacent to the marsh will be accomplished by placing appropriate excavated material on the beach, and by building upon recent pilot projects facilitating natural dune-building processes. The proposed project will also enhance the visitor experience and involve the public by improving public access features and installing interpretation opportunities. The Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR), through monitoring and evaluation of TETRP, will be using the restoration as an opportunity to learn in both the biophysical and social science of restoration and wetlands management. This project will continue to serve as a "living laboratory" that engages academic and community science and include opportunities for internships, student projects, and public engagement in tracking restoration progress.

I appreciate the important role the California Coastal Conservancy has played in the protection and restoration of the Tijuana Estuary, and look forward to SWIA implementing the significant 85-acre salt marsh restoration. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen C. Padilla".

Senator Stephen C. Padilla
18th Senate District



Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve

California Department of Parks and Recreation
301 Caspian Way • Imperial Beach • CA • 91932
(619) 575-3613 • Fax (619) 575-6913 • www.TRNERR.org



7 February 2024

Douglas Bosco, Chair
Board of Directors
California State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-1401

Chairman Bosco and Grant Review Committee,

I would like to express my strong support for the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association's (SWIA) habitat restoration grant application to fund the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II Phase I (TETRP II Phase I); the request includes \$30million for the restoration 85 acres of wetlands and associated habitats and enhancing public access at the Tijuana River estuary in San Diego County.

The Tijuana Estuary – Friendship Marsh Restoration Feasibility and Design Study (Feasibility Study), completed in 2008, identified for restoration 250 acres of habitat in the southern arm of the estuary that have been subjected to sediment deposition. In spring of 2023, the project team completed CEQA and NEPA requirements for the Project, and since that point, has continued progress toward obtaining regulatory permits and final design. This area has been heavily impacted by past influences, however significant accomplishments toward site protection and restoration have been achieved, and the time is right to move forward with this significant next step.

The project is located in Border Field State Park (BFSP), a unit of the California State Park system. BFSP, along with Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge, and the U.S. Navy Outlying Landing Field comprise the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, an umbrella management program funded by NOAA. These agencies work closely with SWIA for implementation of programs and projects focused on long-term ecological conservation of the Tijuana Estuary. CA State Parks is committed to this effort, not only as an active participant in the project team, but also as the long-term project site manager.

The recommended grant will implement Phase I of TETRP II, including several elements such as, 1) Improve tidal prism and restore 85 acres of tidal wetlands; 2) Enhancement of the beach / dune system adjacent to the marsh; 3) Enhance the visitor experience and involve the public; and 4) Monitor and evaluate TETRP, using the restoration as an opportunity to learn lessons in both the biophysical and social science of restoration and wetlands management

We greatly appreciate the significant role the CA Coastal Conservancy has played in the protection and restoration of the Tijuana Estuary and are very excited to continue with this partnership through implementation. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any further questions or comments regarding the role of CA State Parks and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Sincerely,

Chris Peregrin
Manager, Border Field State Park; Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve
Chris.peregrin@parks.ca.gov
619-204-0097



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive
Chula Vista, California 91910



February 5, 2024

Mr. Douglas Bosco, Chair
Board of Directors
California State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-1401

Re: Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II, Phase I Project

Dear Mr. Bosco:

Thank you for the California State Coastal Conservancy's (Conservancy) significant investment in the restoration of the Tijuana Estuary, and the \$3,192,500 grant to the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association (SWIA) to complete the final design, secure permits, and provide pre-construction monitoring of the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II, Phase I Project (TETRP II Phase I). The substantial progress on TETRP II Phase I is the result of robust support from, and partnership with, the Conservancy, California Wildlife Conservation Board, California Department of Parks and Recreation, SWIA, Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service).

On behalf of the Service, I am writing to express my support for large-scale projects that restore coastal salt marshes, such as TETRP II Phase I. The construction of the TETRP II Phase I will: improve the tidal prism of the estuary and restore 85 acres of tidal wetlands by converting degraded upland habitat into intertidal wetlands and tidal channels; enhance the beach/dune system adjacent to the marsh; improve the visitor experience and engage the public; and monitor and evaluate the biological, physical, and human dimension elements of the restoration project. The construction of TETRP II Phase I will lead to the significant restoration of coastal salt marsh, expansion of the estuary's tidal prism, and reestablishment of associated native upland habitat within portions of both Border Field State Park and Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge. The restoration project will also increase the capacity of these public lands to adapt to changing sea levels and watershed conditions.

The Service acknowledges and greatly appreciates the vital role the Conservancy has played in the protection of our coastal wetlands, and we look forward to continuing our partnership in the current collaborative effort to significantly improve the function and habitat value of the Tijuana Estuary.

Sincerely,

**ANDREW
YUEN**

Andrew Yuen
Project Leader

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ANDREW YUEN
Date: 2024.02.05
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San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

February 8, 2024

Douglas Bosco, Chair
Board of Directors
California State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-1401

Dear Chair Bosco,

As Executive Officer of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 9 San Diego (San Diego Water Board) and Chair of the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team, I am pleased to share with you and the Board of Directors of the California Coastal Commission my strong support for the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Associations (SWIA) **Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II, Phase I**, consisting of restoring 85 acres of wetlands and associated habitats and enhancing public access at the Tijuana River estuary in San Diego County. This is the first phase of TETRP II, a multi-phase restoration of 250-300 acres of current and former tidal wetlands impacted by excessive sediment deposition and uncontrolled flows of sewage and trash from the Tijuana River watershed in Mexico.

This project is critical for restoration of damaged estuarine habitat in the Tijuana River Estuary and is a component of the Climate Understanding & Resilience in the River Valley (CURRV): Resilience & Adaptation Strategies and implements Project G.23 of the *Tijuana River Valley Recovery Strategy: Living with the Waters*. My direct experience with SWIA has instilled great confidence on the part of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board for their work in the Tijuana River Valley.

The recommended grant will implement Phase I of TETRP II. The project consists of:

- 1) Improve tidal prism and restore 85 acres of tidal wetlands by converting degraded upland to intertidal wetlands and tidal channels. The improved tidal circulation and restoration of 85 acres of coastal habitat at the Tijuana Estuary will increase resilience and enhance the capacity of the system to adapt to changing sea-levels and watershed inputs.
- 2) Enhancement of the beach / dune system adjacent to the marsh. This will be accomplished by placing appropriate excavated material on the beach and, by building upon recent pilot projects, facilitating natural dune-building

CELESTE CANTÚ, CHAIR | DAVID GIBSON, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

processes.

- 3) **Enhance the visitor experience and involve the public.** This aspect of the project will include improving public access features and installing interpretation opportunities, such as upgrading an existing trail to the beach from more inland areas, including the new County of San Diego campground in Tijuana River Valley Regional Park.
- 4) **Monitor and evaluate TETRP,** using the restoration as an opportunity to learn lessons in both the biophysical and social science of restoration and wetlands management. This project will continue to serve as a "living laboratory" that engages academic and community science, including opportunities for internships, student projects, and public engagement in tracking restoration progress.

The San Diego Water Board has identified as one of its top priorities the meaningful net creation and restoration of wetlands including in key areas like the Tijuana River Valley and Estuary (Resolution No. R9-2015-0041) and the San Diego Water Board Practical Vision (strategic plan). The TETRP II Phase I project is a priority for the San Diego Water Board in its Key Beneficial Uses approach in which Wetlands and Recreation are two of the four Key Beneficial Uses. As mentioned above, the proposed project implements part G, Project 23 of the *Tijuana River Valley Recovery Strategy: Living with the Water*, endorsed by the San Diego Water Board in Resolution No. R9-2015-0035. Finally, the project team has a proven track record of project management and stakeholder participation success, and I am pleased to extend my full support to this ambitious funding request.

Sincerely,

David W. Gibson Digitally signed by
David W. Gibson
Date: 2024.02.08
09:48:57 -08'00'

David W. Gibson
Executive Officer



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDING OFFICER
NAVAL BASE CORONADO
BOX 357033
SAN DIEGO, CA 92135-7033

5216
Ser N00/036
February 2, 2024

Douglas Bosco, Chair
Board of Directors
California State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-1401

Dear Mr. Bosco,

I am writing to acknowledge the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association's funding request to implement the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II Phase I, which consists of the restoration of 85 acres of wetlands and associated habitats and enhancement of public access in the Tijuana River estuary, and explain the benefits this funding would have for the U.S. Navy.

Naval Outlying Field Imperial Beach (NOLF IB), a vital part of Naval Base Coronado, includes a portion of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) and the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge (TSNWR). The U.S. Navy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manage the TRNERR/TSNWR through a Memorandum of Understanding for natural resource protection. NOLF IB is a critical part of an integrated training range and is the only naval helicopter training center for the West Coast. NOLF IB tenants include the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The U.S. Navy is a key stakeholder within the Tijuana River Valley due to our landholdings, our natural resource management responsibilities, and our goals to sustain mission readiness. The proposed project complements and supports U.S. Navy natural resource management goals to ensure mission sustainment at Naval Base Coronado.

I acknowledge the hard work of all parties involved in this project. The point of contact is Mr. Charles Bradshaw, Community Plans and Liaison Officer at Naval Base Coronado. He may be reached by phone at (619) 545-4134 or by email at NBCCPLO@us.navy.mil.


L. R. MONTERO