

Citizens for East Shore Parks



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Nov. 14, 2024

Chair Douglas Bosco
Members of the Board
Calif. State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Agenda Item 18, Point Molate. Coastal Conservancy Meeting Nov. 21, 2024

Dear Chair Bosco and Members of the Board,

Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP) is writing with strongest support of the East Bay Regional Park District's grant request to the California State Coastal Conservancy for the acquisition of Point Molate.

Creating a park at Point Molate has been a community goal for four decades and has been a major project by community groups and park advocacy groups alike. Fulfilling this dream will be the culmination of thousands of hours of work and effort. Having this park managed by the East Bay Regional Park District is the ideal way to accomplish the goal. Citizens for East Shore Parks encourages the Coastal Conservancy to move forward in funding this acquisition using the \$36 million allocated in the State Budget for that purpose.

Point Molate is a unique 410-acre bayfront site, with spectacular views and recreational opportunities. Its ecological significance cannot be overstated. Point Molate hosts the healthiest eelgrass in San Francisco Bay. As you likely know, eelgrass serves multiple purposes in sustaining the Bay ecosystem. Eelgrass serves as habitat and spawning grounds for the bay's herring run, its Dungeness crab, sea hare, leopard sharks and even habitat for river otters.

The eelgrass itself, due to its robust health, is a donor site for efforts to reintroduce eelgrass throughout California and is itself a subject of multiple studies both domestic and international. In addition to eelgrass, Point Molate provides a home to osprey, owls, and multiple other aviary species including regular sighting of soaring bald eagles, not to mention all the native plants and trees.

This all provides an amazing visiting experience for the surrounding community and fits within the 30 by 30 goals for the state and nation.

Point Molate's location in Richmond addresses the goals at the state, regional and national level to provide nature, parks and open space to under-resourced communities such as Richmond. Moreover, this land is traditional Ohlone land, and is home to multiple sacred sites and is treasured by the descendants of the Ohlone and their community.

Point Molate contains other cultural and historical values including one of the few remaining presences of an early Chinese shrimp camp dating back to the 1800's and a nearby whaling station - the last active whaling station on the West Coast. The site hosts the Winehaven Castle, an homage to the great castles of Europe, which housed the world's largest wine shipping facility before Prohibition. Plus, Point Molate served as a major refueling depot and landing craft facility for the U.S. Navy from before World War II until its closure in the 1990's.

This spectacular location provides a wealth of opportunities to educate visiting groups of students and community members, and for them to experience and learn about nature, our collective history and our stunning natural spaces.

In sum, Point Molate is a spectacular natural experience for the community to have on its doorstep and it meets our societal goal of environmental justice and equity. CESP joins with the East Bay Regional Park District, the multiple community organizations and the millions of Bay Area residents this park will serve, in urging the Coastal Conservancy to move forward, without delay, in funding this magnificent acquisition.

Sincerely,



Shirley Dean
Board President, Citizens for East Shore Parks



Robert Cheasty
Executive Director, Citizens for East Shore Parks