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April 7, 2020

Jeff Henderson
Delta Stewardship Council
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Henderson,

Thank you for your comments regarding Plan Bay Area 2050's Draft Blueprint. Please know that we shared your letter with the MTC Commission at their February 26 meeting. As you may be aware, both the ABAG Executive Board and the MTC Commission approved the growth geographies and strategies for study as part of the Draft Blueprint in late February.

The feedback and engagement from the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) is essential to the success of a robust long-range planning process that will lead the Bay Area toward a future that is affordable, connected, diverse, healthy, and vibrant for all by 2050. Thousands of comments from Bay Area residents and stakeholders helped define and refine the 25 proposed Blueprint strategies for transportation, housing, the environment, and the economy. Planned public engagement will provide additional opportunities for the growth geographies and strategies to be revised prior to the Final Blueprint in late 2020.

We sincerely appreciate your detailed assessment of the consistency between Draft Blueprint strategies and Delta Plan policies. Regarding the specific item on the Delta Plan's Priority Habitat Restoration Areas and Plan Bay Area 2050's Priority Conservation Areas (PCA), the suggestion to further align and establish consistency across areas is an important one. As stated in your letter, the selection of PCAs is driven by a local nomination process. Although the PCA nomination process for Plan Bay Area 2050 has wrapped up, there will be an opportunity to work with cities, counties and park/open space districts during future planning processes to ensure critical habitats are nominated for PCA designation. We would encourage the DSC to start a dialogue with Solano County and other relevant jurisdictions with regards to the Suisun Marsh and the potential for a PCA designation as early as next year.

In addition, as noted in your letter, all Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Production Areas (PPAs) are consistent with MTC and ABAG's adopted Regional Growth Framework and designated through local nomination processes. As it relates to impacts on the Suisun Marsh, we commit to working collaboratively with the counties, local jurisdictions, and the DSC to maximize Plan Bay Area 2050's consistency with Delta Plan Policies DP P1 and ER P3, respectively. We will also follow up separately with DSC staff to provide additional information on the Suisun City Eastside PPA.

Finally, we would like to call your attention to the final phase of Plan Bay Area 2050 starting later in 2020 and continuing through much of 2021. Scoping meetings for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) are currently anticipated to be held during summer 2020. These meetings will provide an opportunity to identify significant environmental impacts – including growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project – and propose mitigation measures that can be analyzed in depth within the EIR.

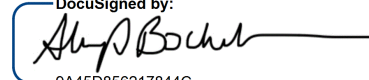
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The development of the Plan Bay Area 2050 Implementation Plan during will further chart out the next four years of implementation actions that MTC and ABAG can pursue in partnership with public, non-profit, and private-sector partners. The Implementation Plan will reinforce the strategies identified in the Plan Bay Area 2050 Blueprint with short-term actions that put the region on the right track, and we feel confident that your involvement on conservation actions would strengthen this component of the Plan.

MTC and ABAG are grateful for your continued collaboration during the Plan Bay Area 2050 process and we look forward to working together now and in the future.

Sincerely,

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Alix Bockelman

Deputy Executive Director, Policy