

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

STAFF REPORT

For the meeting of: June 8, 2023

To: RBRA Board of Directors

From: Brad Gross, Executive Director

Subject: Notification of Notice of Award and approval of Resolution 23-11 accepting an award from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF) in the amount of \$2,782,586.00, for purposes of restoring at least 15 acres of eelgrass in Richardson Bay, and associated outreach, education, and habitat monitoring activities.

Motion: Adopt Resolution 23-11 and, effective July 1, 2023, approve budget amendment number 1, in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget in the amount of \$2,782,586 million in additional revenue and \$2,782,586 in total expenditures over four years.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Resolution No. 23-11.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

RBRA's 2020 Transition Plan calls on the RBRA to "seek grant funding and other support to conduct proposed eelgrass research, protection, and restoration work in Richardson Bay." That direction is consistent with the 2021 agreement between the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and RBRA, which states that RBRA will, "develop a ten-year adaptive management plan for eelgrass restoration in Richardson Bay."

Accordingly, RBRA applied for and was awarded grant funding from the US EPA SFBWQIF for the project "Collaboratively Restoring Eelgrass in Richardson Bay to Improve Water Quality and Climate Resilience," with the goal of restoring at least 15 acres of eelgrass in Richardson Bay over four years. The project, designed as an innovative public-private partnership, includes funds for contractors to conduct on-the-ground restoration, adaptive management, and monitoring of eelgrass habitat, as well as funds to provide training for early career conservationists from severely disadvantaged communities, develop shareable, scalable best-practices for eelgrass restoration in areas of anchor scour, and support RBRA staff time on the project.

Ongoing implementation of RBRA's No Anchor Area/Eelgrass Protection Zone in Richardson Bay has created this opportunity for restoration, which is particularly urgent

in the face of sea level rise, increasing ocean temperatures, and other threats from a changing climate. Eelgrass is a nature-based solution to these threats – eelgrass beds improve water quality, reduce coastal erosion, sequester carbon, reduce ocean acidification, and provide nursery habitat for commercially, recreationally, and ecologically important marine life (e.g., Pacific herring and Dungeness crab).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The grant award is in the amount of \$2,782,586.00 over four years, with \$3,418,000 expected in state and local match. These match funds come from RBRA’s existing CA Ocean Protection Council grant, the one-time state budget allocation to RBRA for housing and other supportive services, commitments from project partners (including Audubon California and San Francisco State University), and in-kind contribution of existing RBRA staff and volunteer hours and each are included in current budget projections. The EPA grant award will increase revenue and expenditures in RBRA’s Fund 8050, project 40RBRAEPA, by \$2,782,586, which will allow RBRA to fully utilize the EPA grant across fiscal years. At the end of each fiscal year, staff will request authorization from this Board to carry forward any unrealized revenue or unspent expenditure budget to the next fiscal year until all funds for this project are expended.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff will prepare and publish a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking an experienced and qualified Project Manager for this project and expect to return to this Board in the fall for approval. Staff will also continue work with project partners to execute subawards and move forward with general project execution.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: EPA Notice of Award
- Attachment 2: DRAFT Resolution No. 23-11