

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 1, 2022

MEDIA CONTACT:

will@lh-pa.com

415-420-0905

**FIRST FOUR PAYMENTS DELIVERED TO BOAT OWNERS AS PART
OF RICHARDSON BAY REGIONAL AGENCY'S VESSEL
BUYBACK PROGRAM**

*Initiative incentivizes boat owners to transition aging vessels out of
environmentally sensitive waters*

Sausalito, CA—The [Richardson Bay Regional Agency](#) (RBRA) has delivered the first four checks to boat owners as part of the agency's Vessel Buyback program, which incentivizes removing anchored vessels from environmentally sensitive waters.

Adopted in June by the RBRA Board of Directors, the Vessel Buyback program offers eligible participants money based on the length of their boat (\$150 per foot) to move their vessels off an established [Eelgrass Protection Zone](#) (EPZ) and other parts of Richardson Bay. The program also conforms with an [Agreement](#) reached between the RBRA and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), which calls for removal of all illegally anchored vessels from Richardson Bay by October 2026.

“The checks delivered today are proof that we can work collaboratively with boat owners on a solution that benefits of all Richardson Bay,” said RBRA Interim Executive Director Steve McGrath. “By reducing the number of boats anchored out on the water, this program will improve the health and safety of the Bay habitat, while providing greater opportunities for public recreation and increased access to the Bay for all residents. And we are offering often times better than fair value to boat owners as a way of recognizing their connection with these vessels.”

Under the terms of the Vessel Buyback program, the three boat owners received 80 percent of their total payout today. The remaining 20 percent will distributed to the participants within 60 days provided they have complied with all of the guidelines of the program. The four vessels turned in measured 37, 30, 24 and 22 feet in length, meaning the owners are due to receive a total of \$5,040, \$4,650, \$3,600 and \$3,240 respectively. Additionally, a 47-foot sailboat was purchased by the RBRA via the Vessel Buyback Program which will merit a future payout of \$7,050. That check is slated to go out next week.

Rather than relying on enforcement to remove vessels, the Vessel Buyback program incentivizes vessel or floating homeowners to transfer their property to the RBRA. The RBRA will then dispose of the vessels at no cost to the owner.

There are approximately 66 vessels and floating homes anchored in Richardson Bay, in violation of RBRA regulations, which stipulates all boats have a maximum allowable stay of 72 hours. The overwhelming majority of the vessels are in the EPZ, which was established to protect the eelgrass ecosystem.

Eelgrass is a foundational element of Richardson Bay. It protects the Bay from the impacts of climate change, reduces erosion, stabilizes the shoreline and acts as a critical support function for local fisheries, waterbirds, harbor porpoises, sea lions and other marine creatures.

Anchors, chains, and other ground tackle scrape along the bay bottom, acting like a lawn mower for all plants living there. This creates “crop circles,” or barren areas where no eelgrass can grow. There is a large area of Richardson Bay without eelgrass cover that has been designated for boat anchorage.

In addition to protecting the eelgrass environment, the Vessel Buyback program will help RBRA meet the terms of its Agreement with BCDC. Under that pact between the two agencies overseeing Richardson Bay in southern Marin County, only seaworthy vessels will be allowed to anchor on a temporary basis in the Bay after October 2026.

###

The Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) is a local government agency serving Belvedere, Mill Valley, Tiburon, and unincorporated Southern Marin. RBRA is dedicated to maintaining and improving the navigational waterways, open waters, and shoreline of Richardson Bay.