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MARIN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVES FINAL ELEMENT OF RICHARDSON BAY TEMPORARY HOUSING PROGRAM

Contract awarded to county's Health and Human Services Department to oversee administration of initiative to relocate individuals off Richardson Bay and into safe, secure housing

San Rafael, CA—At its meeting on Tuesday, the Marin County Board of Supervisors approved a grant for the County's Department of Health and Human Services to help administer the Richardson Bay Regional Agency's (RBRA) Temporary Housing Support Program. The authorization provided the final framework for an initiative to relocate residents off environmentally sensitive waters and into safe and stable secure housing on the mainland.

With the organizational structure for the program now fully approved and the \$3 million in state funding—secured by State Senator Mike McGuire—officially transferred to the RBRA, the program is set to kick off on May 1. The initiative will provide a local subsidized housing program for individuals living on the water at the time of the RBRA point in time survey.

“We are eager to begin the work on finding new homes for individuals looking to restart their lives on the land,” said Marin County Supervisor Stephanie Moulton-Peters. “This program will provide critical financial support for residents while helping to protect and restore the ecosystem of Richardson Bay.”

The \$344,680 grant agreement approved on Tuesday will enable the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) to provide short-term case management support to the people of the anchor out community who access the housing vouchers. The HHS will work with RBRA to aid in identifying and prioritizing individuals in need of housing assistance.

As part of the agreement, the Marin Housing Authority (MHA) will provide a local subsidized housing program with a scattered site component for individuals living on the water. MHA will also administer housing assistance payments to local landlords to create new affordable housing opportunities for up to 17 households per year under this three-year contract. Additionally, MHA will provide housing navigation services to support families and individuals in locating housing utilizing the local housing voucher.

To help complement the Temporary Housing Support Program, the RBRA recently restarted its Vessel Buyback Program. That 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.

Rather than relying on enforcement to remove vessels, the Vessel Buyback Program incentivizes vessel and floating-home owners to transfer their property to the RBRA. The RBRA will then dispose of the vessels at no cost to the owner.

There are now 52 remaining vessels and floating homes anchored in Richardson Bay, a significant reduction attributed in large part to the buyback program. Still, the overwhelming majority of remaining vessels are located in the EPZ, which was established to protect the eelgrass ecosystem.

The vessels are currently residing in Richardson Bay in violation of RBRA rules, and are critically damaging the eelgrass ecosystem, which supports fisheries, provides protection from climate change, reduces erosion and stabilizes the shoreline, among other benefits.

As part of an agreement with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the RBRA has a mandate to relocate all those vessels off the anchorage by October 15, 2026.

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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.