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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0514

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEES:
RANKING MEMBER, MILITARY PERSONNEL
EMERGING THREATS
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ON INTELLIGENCE
SUBCOMMITTEES:
EMERGING THREATS
NSA AND CYBERSECURITY

Senior Whip

The Honorable Dave Pine
Supervisor
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
400 County Center, 1st Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Supervisor Pine:

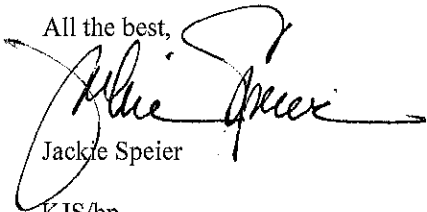
I write to strongly endorse the creation of a San Mateo County Flood Control and Sea Level Resiliency Agency. It is essential to obtain the enormous federal funding that will be needed in the years ahead to deal with sea level rise and flooding. San Mateo County is one of the most vulnerable counties in America and we should position ourselves to obtain as much federal funding as possible, for decades to come.

As you know, we began this trek towards the creation of a new agency many years ago. At the time, we agreed that the 20 cities and San Mateo County could work together to present a unified plan of action for purposes of federal funding. The US Army Corps of Engineers does not want to deal with 20 cities and one county. It wants a unified vision of the opportunities to use federal funding in our area. The agency that you propose is ideal for this purpose and should greatly enhance our competitive standing in future rounds of federal funding. FEMA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other federal agencies that have funds to contribute towards wetlands restoration, hazard mitigation and associated activities also wish to deal with one central organization that speaks on behalf of its willing participants. The agency will suit this purpose well.

Lost amidst the dialogue about this agency is the reality that construction projects cost a lot of money and economies of scale are possible as the agency gains expertise in environmental permitting. This core requirement of most projects merits a seasoned body of expertise that can form strong relationships with local, state and federal regulatory agencies. We see the benefits of such expertise when we look at the success of both San Francisco and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. These agencies have enormous agendas of future work—quite expensive and detailed. It's time for the various cities and San Mateo County to enjoy the benefits of this wealth of seasoned organizational knowledge so that we may more confidently make proposals that garner the federal, state and regional environmental approvals that will be needed for the work ahead.

Congratulations on a job well done, and for working for years to make this possible. I know that the years ahead will demonstrate what we have often said: We are far stronger together than we are with any one city or the county on its own. The public's interest in meeting the challenges of our time and decades to come begins with having an instrument of public policy that is capable of taking on those challenges. The San Mateo County Flood Control and Sea Level Resilience Agency is that instrument. I hope that we will soon be able to put it to use on behalf of all present and future residents of San Mateo County.

All the best,


Jackie Speier

KJS/bp