



City of Morro Bay

HARBOR DEPARTMENT
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October 30, 2014

Jean-Pierre Wolff, Chair
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA. 93401-7906

Subject: Item #13 Morro Bay National Estuary Program Consent Decree Funds Spending Plan

Dear Chairman Wolff and Board Members:

I am writing you today to express our support for the Morro Bay National Estuary Program's (MBNEP) spending proposal for the future of the Consent Decree funds under their guardianship. Since 1997, these funds have helped support important estuarine and watershed conservation work within the Morro Bay area. As a result, the Estuary Program has leveraged \$9.35 million for water quality and habitat protection. There is a continued need for these funds to implement the Estuary Program's management plan and worthy projects identified for future spending.

The MBNEP is an important and valuable partner with the City of Morro Bay and larger Estero Bay communities as we all strive to meet common goals of balancing mixed recreational, commercial and municipal uses with watershed and ecosystem health. Since its inception the City has supported the MBNEP and has a long history of mutual collaboration and partnership.

Via the Bay Foundation and their granting programs, the MBNEP has augmented City programs aimed at reducing water pollution and other threats to the Morro Bay Estuary. Examples include:

- Funding assistance for the Harbor Department's used boater oil and oil filter recycling center.
- Removal of several derelict commercial fishing vessels that were a threat to sink and pollute, vessels that otherwise may have remained a threat due to limited available City funds.
- Funding for fuel/oil spill containment and cleanup supplies and materials, and vessel firefighting foam to minimize pollution risk to the bay in the event of a large vessel sinking, fuel/oil spill or fire.

In addition, the MBNEP is a critical City partner for outreach to the public for the Dockwalker and Clean Marina programs. MBNEP has brought the concept closer to home with local maps and useful items in a re-useable bag provided to boaters in this area.

There are several important projects from the proposed spending plan of particular interest to the City of Morro Bay:

Eelgrass Recovery
Stormwater Management
Water Conservation
Water Quality Monitoring

Of particular concern and interest to the City of Morro Bay is the health and vitality of our essential habitat eelgrass beds. Without the MBNEP and their programs, outreach, testing and other projects aimed at understanding our eelgrass beds and how best manage and ensure their vitality, a "trickle-down" of negative effects would occur including loss of critical habitat, ecosystem deterioration, loss of local and eco-tourism and effects on recreational and commercial fisheries that are all tied in one way or another to these beds.

The City of Morro Bay urges your support of the Morro Bay National Estuary Program's spending plan and to support their continued custody of these funds.

Thank you.

Faithfully,



Eric Endersby
Harbor Director

C: Morro Bay Mayor and City Council