

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

STAFF REPORT

For the meeting of: September 10, 2026

To: RBRA Board of Directors

From: Brad Gross, Executive Director

Subject: Notification of Notice of Award and approval of Resolution No. 26-16 accepting an award from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF) in the amount of \$3,051,000 for purposes of removing marine debris from Richardson Bay, and restoring eelgrass beds in the bay, and associated outreach, education, and habitat monitoring activities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution No. 26-16

Motion: Adopt Resolution 26-16 accepting the grant award of \$3,051,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund, and approving Budget Amendment No. 2 in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget of an additional \$3,051,000 in revenue, and \$3,051,000 in authorized expenditures.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

It has been a strategic planning goal of RBRA to restore eelgrass beds in Richardson Bay through grant funding, partnerships, and pursuant to its eelgrass Restoration and Adaptive Management Plan. This goal is consistent with provisions in RBRA's 2021 agreement with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission for developing and implementing a restoration management plan. Among other benefits, eelgrass beds provide nursery habitat for fisheries and ecologically important marine life.

RBRA applied for and was awarded grant funding in 2023 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, included 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, develop shareable, scalable best-practices for eelgrass restoration in areas of anchor scour, and support RBRA staff time on the project.

RBRA has achieved the 2023 EPA grant goal of restoring at least 15 acres of habitat and

has additional planting and related restoration work underway with the remaining 2023 grant funds.

In Spring 2025, with project partner Markel & Associates and EPA grant funding, 4,200 pounds of debris was removed from one acre of the bay's 300-acre Eelgrass Protection Zone, in an area targeted for Summer 2025 eelgrass restoration.

DISCUSSION:

Additional debris removal is critical to the success of eelgrass planting and related restoration work planned for the bay. Debris removal is also beneficial to improving water quality, which RBRA supports alongside eelgrass restoration in its 2026 Strategic Plan.

To enhance the viability and quantity of eelgrass planting and related restoration, and improve water quality, RBRA - with project partner support, applied for an additional EPA-SFBWQIF grant to fund removal of marine debris alongside funding for additional acreage of eelgrass restoration. The grant request was for \$3.95 million. RBRA has been informed that the grant award will be \$3.051 million to continue to remove marine debris and perform other eelgrass restoration work.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The grant award is in the amount of \$3,051,000, which is expected to be expended over 36 months. The funds in the grant will be received from EPA on a reimbursement basis. The proposed budget amendment for fiscal year 2026-27 increases revenue and authorized expenditures in RBRA's Fund 8050, project # 40RBRAEPA, in the amount of the grant. At the end of each fiscal year until the project is completed, staff will recommend that the Board take action to authorize the carry forward of any unrealized revenue and unspent expenditure budget in the grant project fund to enable RBRA to utilize all available grant funds.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: EPA Notice of Award
- Attachment 2: Grant Agreement
- Attachment 3: DRAFT Resolution No. 26-16