

# PAT EKLUND

Mayor, City of Novato and ABAG Executive  
Board Member for 11 Cities in Marin County  
STATEMENT – July 18, 2013

A year and half ago, I was elected by the 11 cities in Marin County as their representative on the ABAG Executive Board. After meeting with the ABAG delegates from each city in Marin County, I have no choice, but to abstain on the approval of FEIR and on the selection of the preferred alternative for the Plan Bay Area. Let me explain.

First, we recognize that the preferred scenario does in fact focus growth where jobs are anticipated to grow and it respects Marin County's decision made over 3 decades ago, to focus growth along the Highway 101 corridor.

Of the 400 **individuals** who submitted comments by letter or email on the Plan Bay Area/DEIR, 171 live in Marin County. The county with the next most comments was Alameda County with 84. Comments were also submitted by six of our 11 municipalities, the Board of Supervisors and many 'stakeholder' organizations including the Sierra Club Marin Group and the Marin Conservation League.

Of the 171 **individual** comments from Marin County, about 90% objected to the Potential PDAs in the unincorporated areas of Marin – Tam Valley and Marinwood -- which the Board of Supervisors recently withdrew in response to those public comments which demonstrates, there is local control. But, those same individuals along with other community members throughout Marin dug deeper into the Plan Bay Area, the alternatives and DEIR. They raised additional issues and challenged the population and jobs growth projections, the assumption of GHG reductions for the Plan, and, proposals to streamline CEQA in PDAs that is being perceived as 'gutting' CEQA. But, most importantly, the public expressed, loud and clear, they want to maintain local control.

Of the 11 cities in Marin, 3 (Novato, Sausalito, Mill Valley) indicated their support for the Preferred Scenario, one city (Corte Madera) voted for the No Project Alternative and 7 cities (Belvedere, Tiburon, Larkspur, Ross, San Anselmo, Fairfax and San Rafael) took 'No Position'. 'No Position' is just that -- they chose not to take a position for or against any of the alternatives.

Given that the majority of our cities in Marin County took 'No Position', I have no choice but to abstain. **We simply did not have enough time to work with our community members, 'stakeholder' organizations and municipalities to resolve the issues; and, some of those issues couldn't be resolved by their very nature.** For example, six Marin Cities, the Board of Supervisors and Congestion Management Agency along with community members requested more time to submit comments -- which could not be accommodated due to the statutory deadline for adoption of the RHNA that needs to reflect our Sustainable Community Strategy pursuant to SB 375.

As we go forward, I hope we will have an open dialogue on what worked well and what areas need to be improved so we don't repeat our mistakes. We need to find a way to involve the communities at the local level as we start planning for our update on the Plan Bay Area that is due in 4 years. We need to start now – albeit in August or September after a well-deserved break – by working backwards from 2017 to ensure there is adequate time for a bottom up effort where the public, stakeholder organizations and elected officials are brought into the process early on. We need to allow enough time so each city, town and county can vote, so the public can engage with their elected officials on what type of a community they want reflected in the update to the Plan Bay Area.

We, the elected officials on our respective Boards of ABAG and MTC, need to look at options and select the best approach going forward on how we project the population and jobs growth, on whether locating housing near transit/transportation does in fact reduce GHG emissions as we have projected, and on how our other infrastructure needs (e.g. schools, parks and recreation, public safety, resource availability, etc.) can be addressed with the anticipated growth.

We look forward to working with all of you on the update; and, hope that by changing the process and making improvements, that we will be able to in 2017, support a Plan for our future that satisfies our individual community values while contributing to the Region's values of preserving our environment while having a prosperous economy where everyone has a place to call home.