

March 16, 2016

Management Partners
2107 N. First Street, Ste 470
San Jose, CA 95131

Re: MTC/ABAG Merger Study

Dear Management Partners:

We are writing to you as the Chair and Vice Chair of the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) Implementation Committee regarding the potential merger of MTC and ABAG. We want to make sure you are aware of the critical role of ABAG in the SFEP and the associated opportunities and challenges that should be evaluated in your merger study.

As you may know, the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary was designated an estuary of national significance in 1988 under the Clean Water Act (Section 320) National Estuary Program. Subsequently, the SFEP, a federal-state-local partnership, was formed to promote effective management of the Estuary and to restore and maintain its water quality and natural resources. The SFEP Implementation Committee is a coalition of federal, state, and local agencies and private and community groups that oversees and engages in the implementation of the SFEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), our master plan for improving the health of the Estuary. The CCMP offers a working blueprint that leads to clean waters, enhanced habitats, healthy fish and wildlife, and more resilient communities throughout the Estuary.

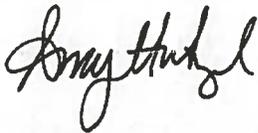
ABAG plays a key role in the current and future success of the SFEP. ABAG serves as the SFEP fiscal and administrative agent. The SFEP director and staff of 12 are ABAG employees. They work collaboratively with local and regional governments, non-profit organizations, scientists, watershed groups and many other stakeholders to leverage funding sources and implement projects. On behalf of the SFEP, ABAG currently manages approximately 30 contracts covering about 70 projects around the Estuary, for a total amount of just over \$100 million. This includes management of state-bond funded Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWMP) projects, and we anticipate managing more IRWMP projects as Prop 1 grant funds are distributed in the next couple of years. Maintaining, and preferably enhancing, ABAG's current roll is critical to the ongoing success of the SFEP.

The proposal to merge ABAG and MTC provides an opportunity for the region to integrate planning for the critical regional issues of our time. Challenges such as population growth and climate change require collaborative and integrated responses that cross sectors and agencies. Our decisions about land use and transportation should inform, and be informed by, our decisions about stormwater management and riparian protection. Our decisions about wetland restoration should be integrated with our decisions about water quality and flood risk management and protection of our regional assets. The

CCMP reflects the understanding of the region that the health of our natural environment and the sustainability of our built environments are interconnected. A fully merged regional planning agency that includes transportation and land use that is coordinated with water and habitat management provided by the SFEP would facilitate the more holistic, systematic approach that is needed to address our current and future challenges and to sustain and enhance the economic and environmental health of the region.

We ask that as merger alternatives are developed, the role of SFEP is clearly articulated and prominent and that the CCMP is recognized as part of the Bay Area's regional planning work. If you have any questions, please contact Caitlin Sweeney, Executive Director of SFEP, at 510 622-2362 or caitlin.sweeney@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Amy Hutzel
Implementation Committee Chair



Thomas Mumley
Implementation Committee Vice Chair

cc: Ezra Rapport, ABAG
Steve Heminger, MTC