



Protecting Marin Since 1934

July 26, 2017

Marin County Board of Supervisors
Marin Flood District Board of Directors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: Novato Zone 1 Flood Control Ballot Measure

Dear President Arnold and Supervisors:

The Marin Conservation League encourages you to place the proposed Novato Zone 1 flood control parcel tax measure on the November ballot. The measure would raise funds to create and implement a plan for the Novato Creek watershed which would reduce flooding, improve water quality, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and adapt the Novato bayshore to sea level rise.

The need for improvements in Novato Creek and its vast flood plain was well demonstrated when State Route 37 was closed for 27 days in early 2017, and many homes in Novato had water up to their front doors last winter. Flood protection levees suffered \$1.7 million in damages from this past winter's storms. In the past, some relief was provided by breaking out a segment of the Novato Creek levee downstream from the railroad tracks and allowing flood waters to flow into the flood plain. However, it costs a million dollars each time the levee needs to be repaired, which is not a long term solution. The proposed ballot measure would provide long- term solutions, not just for flooding, but for restoration of the flood plain which would improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. In the long term, a creek with a functional flood plain would provide the community the capacity to withstand increases in sea level and higher tides.

The funds generated by the parcel tax could be used to create modeling of the creek and flood plains to better assess a variety of potential improvements and determine the most effective and efficient ones to pursue. Beginning the process now will enable the County to have resiliency when it is needed.

This measure will provide matching funds to attract state and federal grants. These monies will only be available to be spent in the Novato Creek Watershed, with some funds available for City of Novato stormwater management. Low-income seniors will be exempt from the parcel tax.

Other benefits of this comprehensive flood control and watershed improvement plan include improved water management in the Simmons Slough area where Marin Audubon has restored the freshwater marsh. Additional scouring at the mouth of Novato Creek will reduce the need for dredging there.

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Since the County concluded the Novato Creek Watershed Study, its recommendations should be put to good use to protect our streets, highways, and critical water and sewage infrastructure. Please provide the community the opportunity to vote on this measure.

Thank you,



*Kate Powers
President*