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February 16, 2026

US EPA Region 9 (WTR-2-2)

Attn: Luisa Valiela

75 Hawthorne Street

San Francisco, CA 94105

Attn: FY 2026 San Francisco Bay Geographic Program Office Proposal Review Committee

Subject: Support for BACWA's Clean Water Together proposal

Dear San Francisco Bay Geographic Program Office Proposal Reviewer:

As a faculty member and Director of the Berkeley Water Center, I am writing to express our strong support of the proposal titled "Clean Water Together – A Coalition Proposal for Regional Nutrient Solutions" submitted by BACWA, with partners at the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Central Contra Costa Sanitation District, East Bay Dischargers Authority, Dublin San Ramon Services District, the City of South San Francisco, Mt. View Sanitary District, Sanitation Agency of Southern Marin, City of Burlingame, in response to the EPA's Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R9-SFBay-26-0. I am an enthusiastic supporter of this project because I recognize that the region is at a critical juncture in its effort to protect the San Francisco Bay from the adverse effects of nutrient discharges and this collaborative effort represents a viable and timely path toward sustainable nutrient management.

Through on-the-ground implementation, targeted research, regional collaboration, and the development of a nutrient trading program, this work will enable publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) to leverage site-specific opportunities while contributing to broader, system-wide nutrient and contaminant management strategies. We believe this collaboration will generate valuable, transferable insights beyond the immediate project areas and inform practical, scalable approaches to wastewater nutrient management across the Bay Area and nationally. We respectfully request your support for this important initiative.

My research team has been involved in two aspects of efforts to achieve the goals articulated in this proposal for over 15 years. The first involves the fostering of regional collaboration on multi-benefit solutions. This efforts of the Bay Area One Water Network, which began with support from the National Science Foundation's Engineering Research Center for Reinventing the Nation's Urban Water Infrastructure (ReNUWIt) started efforts that are continuing through the Transforming Shorelines Collaborative and the continuing efforts of the One Water Network, which is now being led by the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP). The second area involves the use of nature-based treatment systems to improve water quality. This work, which started as a research project on Horizontal Levees funded by ReNUWIt has continued with support from local stakeholders. The first fully functional Horizontal Levee was recently completed by the City of Palo Alto.

This proposal includes requests for funding to advance both efforts that I have been involved with as a researcher. Therefore, I am enthusiastic about continuing to play an active role in the Bay Area One Water Network through participation in planning meetings, workshops and outreach conducted by the network. I also look forward to playing a role in the assessment of the expanded use of Horizontal Levees as multi-benefit solutions for problems related to managing residuals from water recycling projects. As an experienced researcher in this area, I look forward to collecting data needed to inform Horizontal Levee designs for projects like the project that the proposal team is considering in the area near the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center. This work is likely to include measurements of the removal of nutrients and other constituents from pilot-scale systems treating reverse osmosis concentrate and development of approaches for driving down Horizontal Levee construction and operational costs.

Over the past three decades, I have come to appreciate BACWA's support for successful regional coordination, fiscal responsibility and environmental protection. Their collaboration with the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) ensures robust administrative oversight and effective technology transfer across the region. We are confident that this coalition will deliver high-impact results that serve as a national model for watershed-scale nutrient management.

I urge the EPA to fund this proposal and support the regional collaboration necessary for a sustainable San Francisco Bay. If you have any questions, please contact me by e-mail (sedlak@berkeley.edu) or phone (510 643 0256).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Sedlak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being more prominent than the last name "Sedlak".

David L. Sedlak
Plato Malozemoff Distinguished Professor