Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 16, 2005

Mr. Mike Chrisman
Secretary for Resources
State of California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

Environmental restoration of San Francisco Bay lands is a major goal of the Bay Area congressional delegation with a several large projects either in the planning or implementation stage. In particular there is the potential for restoration of about 25,000 acres of diked wetlands in the North Bay. Central to this long-term effort is the restoration of the 3,300-acre former Navy Communications Facility at Skaggs Island.

Members of the Bay Area congressional delegation – as well as the public-private consortium, the San Francisco Joint Venture - have long supported the inclusion of Skaggs Island into the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Unfortunately, the transfer stalled in 2004.

Currently, as the General Service Administration is preparing a public benefit screening of the property, a military cleanup of Skaggs Island is near completion and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission is holding $8.5 million in state mitigation funds to demolish structures on 60 acres of the site. Those funds have been held past two deadlines and could be lost if the property is not transferred to a public entity soon.

Over the past year, discussions with federal and state officials have resulted in a plan where Skaggs Island would be transferred to State Department of Fish and Game (DFG), but be maintained and operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as part of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The state would not have the liability if CERCLA listed toxics were found in the future and part of FWS responsibility would be for annual pumping and levee maintenance costs to protect an adjacent property. We support a successful conclusion to current negotiations between DFG and FWS so that the plan can be implemented.

In the past, the Bay Area delegation has strongly supported funding for San Francisco Bay wetlands restoration and operation and maintenance of our National Wildlife Refuges. Our support will only grow when Skaggs Island is added to our National Wildlife Refuge System. We urge you to take the steps necessary to have the property transferred to state ownership to begin this important federal-state partnership.

Sincerely,

Lynn C. Woolsey, M.C.

Nancy Pelosi, M.C.

Mike Thompson, M.C.

George Miller, M.C.

Tom Lantos, M.C.

Forthey Pete Stark, M.C.

Ellen O. Tauscher, M.C.

Barbara Lee, M.C.

Anna G. Eshoo, M.C.

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