

RICHARDSON BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

STAFF REPORT

For the meeting of June 23, 2022

To: Board of Directors
From: Steve McGrath, Interim Executive Director
Subject: Vessel Incentive Program (Buyback)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Receive report, and after discussion and public comment, approve the Vessel Incentive/Buyback Program, approve the proposed Agreement and adopt Resolution 12-22. (Note that Procedures are administrative and developed and implemented by the Executive Director).

Motion: Approve the Vessel Buyback Program and Agreement (as may be amended from time to time) and adopt Resolution 12-22.

SUMMARY:

As of this writing, there are 69 vessels and floating homes anchored in Richardson Bay, in violation of Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) regulations. Of these, 55 are located within the Eelgrass Protection Zone (EPZ). This is a significant reduction from the almost 200 vessels in 2019.

It is the goal of the RBRA in this Program to reduce the number of long-term vessels and floating homes anchored in the EPZ and elsewhere in Richardson Bay. This reduction will improve health, safety, and bay habitat, provide greater opportunity for public recreation and use of the waters of the Bay by all members of the public, and assist in realizing targets towards no residential use of the public waters of the Bay. This also conforms with the Agreement reached between the RBRA and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), executed in August 0f 2021, which calls for removal of all illegally anchored vessels by October 2026.

Rather than relying on enforcement to remove vessels, this Program incentivizes vessel or floating home owners to transfer their property to the RBRA. RBRA will then dispose of the vessels at no cost to the owner. It should be emphasized however that all vessels and floating homes will be removed by the deadlines within the BCDC agreement; this Program will allow for the advancement of this goal and may facilitate meeting the internal deadlines of the BCDC Agreement earlier than otherwise specified.

This Program can offer financial assistance and recognition of the emotional and/or actual value of the vessel and facilitate the achievement of RBRA and BCDC goals.

The Program contains criteria for eligibility, the basis of which is inclusion in an accurate vessel census, dated June 1, 2022.

Funds for this Program are limited and will be awarded based on a 'first come first served' approach, with priorities established should there be competition for the funds.

Should there arise a need for prioritization, staff has developed five levels of priority, beginning with occupied vessels in the Eelgrass Protection Zone (EPZ), with owners/responsible parties who can demonstrate alternative housing options, and concluding with unoccupied vessels outside of the EPZ. These priorities in no way impact the internal deadlines in the BCDC Agreement.

Staff has developed the attached Procedures to implement the Program, and RBRA Counsel has developed the attached Agreement for execution by applicants for participation in the Program. As each situation will be unique, staff proposes that the Agreement may be amended by RBRA Counsel as needed, as long as there are no material changes to the Program terms.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Limited funds are available in the 2022-23 annual budget. These funds (\$100,000) are available from the County as 'one-time funds' over and above the County's annual member contribution (See related Final Budget staff report).

At \$150 per lineal foot, a typical 35' vessel would receive a payment of \$5,250. Funds currently available would allow for the potential abatement of 19 vessels.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Vessel Buyback – Program
- Attachment 2: Vessel Buyback – Procedures
- Attachment 3: Vessel Buyback – Agreement
- Attachment 4: Vessel Buyback DRAFT Resolution 12-22