



February 20, 2024

SENT VIA: EMAIL

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

SUBJECT: Support for Connecting Cloverdale to the Bay – Equitable Transportation Access & Resilience Project Application for FY 2024 RAISE Funding

MEMBER AGENCIES

- City of Cloverdale
- City of Cotati
- City of Healdsburg
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Sebastopol
- City of Ukiah
- County of Mendocino
- County of Sonoma
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Town of Windsor

ANDY RODGERS
Executive Director

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Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 508-3670
info@rrwatershed.org
www.rrwatershed.org

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Russian River Watershed Association, I am writing to express our strong support for the collaborative partnership led by the County of Sonoma requesting Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) 2024 funds for the **Connecting Cloverdale to the Bay – Equitable Transportation Access and Resilience Project**. The County of Sonoma, in partnership with Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District (SMART) and the City of Cloverdale, seek rural planning funds to advance three critical projects to ensure the north of Sonoma County and adjacent areas are economically and environmentally resilient and prepared for the unfortunate reality of future climate related catastrophes.

The Russian River watershed is a rich and diverse region of nearly 1,500 square miles of forests, agricultural lands and urban lands in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties. The mainstem of the Russian River flows 110 miles from its headwaters near Redwood Valley and Potter Valley to the Pacific Ocean near Jenner. The watershed is home to approximately 360,000 people, 238 streams and creeks, and 63 species of fish – three of which are listed as threatened or endangered: Chinook salmon, Coho salmon and Steelhead trout.

The Russian River Watershed Association (RRWA) is a coalition of ten cities, counties, and special districts in the Russian River watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for clean water, habitat restoration, and watershed enhancement. RRWA was formed in 2003 to create opportunities for our member agencies to expand their stewardship role in the watershed and encourage regional collaboration.

The Asti Permanent Bridge over the Russian River is Sonoma County's top environmental improvement and emergency preparedness transportation project and, when combined with the completion of the SMART rail and pathway/Great Redwood Trail system, will provide true environmental benefits to northern Sonoma County and the Russian River by encouraging alternative transportation, providing recreation opportunities, and enhancing the health of the Russian River.

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Page 2

We thank you for your consideration of this RAISE request to match our community's commitment to a transportation system that is healthier, resilient and more prepared for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, flowing line that starts with a small loop and ends with a long, sweeping tail.

Andy Rodgers, RRWA Executive Director