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TITLE 7.25. SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION AUTHORITY ACT [66700 - 66706] (Title 7.25 added by Stats. 2008, Ch. 690, Sec. 1.)

CHAPTER 1. Findings and Declarations [66700 - 66700.5] (Chapter 1 added by Stats. 2008, Ch. 690, Sec. 1.)

66700. This title shall be known and may be cited as the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act.

(Added by Stats. 2008, Ch. 690, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2009. Repealed as of January 1, 2049, pursuant to Section 66706.)

66700.5. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The nine counties surrounding the San Francisco Bay constitute a region with unique natural resource and outdoor recreational needs. The San Francisco Bay is the region's greatest natural resource and its central feature and contributes greatly to California's economic health and vitality. The bay is a hub of an interconnected open-space system of watersheds, natural habitats, scenic areas, agricultural lands, and regional trails.

(b) As the largest estuary on the West Coast of the United States, the San Francisco Bay is home to hundreds of fish and wildlife species and provides many outdoor recreational opportunities. The San Francisco Bay is home to 105 threatened species and 23 endangered species of wildlife. The San Francisco Bay and its tidal and seasonal wetlands and other natural shoreline habitats are a significant part of the state's coastal resources and a healthy bay is necessary to support the state's human and wildlife populations.

(c) The Legislature has declared, in the California Ocean Protection Act, that California's coastal and ocean resources are critical to the state's environmental and economic security and integral to the state's quality of life.

(d) A healthy San Francisco Bay is essential to a healthy ocean ecosystem. Forty percent of the land in the state drains to the San Francisco Bay. Pollution from cars, homes, and neighborhoods around the bay, as well as from communities as far away as Fresno, Redding, and Sacramento, drains into creeks, streams, and rivers that flow to the bay before entering the Pacific Ocean.

(e) The San Francisco Bay is an estuary that is a critical nursery for many ocean species, and the bay's wetlands, which are sheltered from high winds, big waves, and fast-moving water, provide plentiful food and protection from ocean predators. The bay's fertile mixing zone of fresh and salty water also generates the ocean's food chain base.

(f) The restoration, preservation, and maintenance of vital wetlands and San Francisco Bay habitat, improvement of bay water quality, provision of public access to the bay shoreline, and enhancement of shoreline recreational amenities for the growing population of the San Francisco Bay Area are immediate state and regional priorities that are necessary to address continuing serious threats posed by pollution and sprawl and to improve the region's quality of life.

(g) Wetland restoration in the San Francisco Bay is necessary to address the growing danger that global warming and rises in sea level pose to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and environment of California. Tidal wetlands can both assist with tidal and fluvial flood management and adapt to rises in sea level by accreting additional sediment and rising in elevation. Leading scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United States government have found that the restoration of lost wetlands represents an immediate and large opportunity for enhancing terrestrial carbon sequestration.

(h) The importance of protecting and restoring the San Francisco Bay's tidal wetlands and other natural habitat was underscored by the 2007 Cosco Busan oil spill, and the critical importance of restoration projects and the long-term health of the bay are well-documented in regional plans and reports, including the San Francisco Estuary Project's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's San Francisco Bay Plan, the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report, the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture's "Restoring the Estuary" Implementation Strategy, the Resources Agency report, "California's Ocean Economy," and the Save The Bay's "Greening the Bay" report.

(i) The protection and restoration of the San Francisco Bay require efficient and effective use of public funds, leveraging of local funds with state and federal resources, and investment of significant resources over a sustained period for habitat restoration on shoreline parcels, parks, and recreational facilities, and public access to natural areas.

(j) The protection and restoration of the San Francisco Bay and the enhancement of its shoreline confer special benefits on property proximate to the bay. Properties proximate to the bay receive special benefits from the contribution of a healthy and vibrant bay to the region's economy and quality of life, including improved access to the bay's shoreline, enhanced recreational amenities in the area, and protection from flooding.

(k) The San Francisco Bay Area needs to develop regional mechanisms to generate and allocate additional resources to address threats to the San Francisco Bay and to secure opportunities for the improvement of the bay and its shoreline, natural areas, and recreational facilities.

(l) It is in the public interest to create the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority as a regional entity to generate and allocate resources for the protection and enhancement of tidal wetlands and other wildlife habitat in and surrounding the San Francisco Bay.

(Added by Stats. 2008, Ch. 690, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2009. Repealed as of January 1, 2049, pursuant to Section 66706.)