



August 19, 2009

Mr. David Behar, Vice President  
Marin Municipal Water District  
220 Nellen Avenue  
Corte Madera, CA 94925

Dear Mr. Behar and Board Members:

I am not able to attend the public meeting this evening, but wish to provide comment on the proposed desalination facility in the vicinity of the Marin Rod and Gun Club. I have two eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) restoration projects just offshore of the Club on their property. The first is a project in which my research lab seeded eelgrass in 2006, after which a new eelgrass bed established in a half-acre area during 2007. Plants in this bed have spread clonally and are flowering and releasing seeds that are further helping to maintain the bed. I do not have the 2009 data worked up yet, but approximately 5000 new shoots had established at the site as of July 2008, and the plants are now supporting numerous invertebrates and fishes, including the bay pipefish. The second project, initiated in 2008, involved planting eelgrass alone and in combination with oyster reef structures, in an effort to determine use by out-migrating salmon smolts. Acoustic monitoring devices indicate that salmon are stopping and spending time in this area, probably due to the increased habitat structure and food resources provided by the restoration project. In addition, I have established "test plots", small transplants used to test the suitability of a site for eelgrass restoration, north of this location along the San Rafael shoreline, and have had very high success rates that have led me to recommend this shoreline as a major future restoration area for eelgrass.

I am concerned that the proposed desalination plant could produce impacts that would lead to a reduction in habitat quality for eelgrass and associated organisms, and that would limit our ability to utilize this shoreline for future restoration projects. I highly recommend further analysis of the impacts of the desalination plant before closing the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katharyn E. Boyer".

Dr. Katharyn E. Boyer  
Associate Professor of Biology  
Romberg Tiburon Center  
San Francisco State University  
415-338-3751, katboyer@sfsu.edu