

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES
CONCERNING FISCAL YEAR 2022 APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE
UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
APRIL 16, 2021**

SUBMITTED BY:

JUSTIN BODELL, PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF THE SAN PABLO BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Chairwoman Pingree, Ranking Member Joyce, and Members of the Subcommittee:

We request that this subcommittee allocate \$600 million in funding for the Refuge System Operations and Maintenance fund for FY 2022.

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of the Friends of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, which was formed in 2003 to support three refuges: the San Pablo Bay, Marin Islands, and Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuges. We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on the FY 2022 Interior Appropriations bill.

The Friends of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge is an independent, non-profit, 501(c) (3) organization dedicated to promoting the conservation of the natural resources of the refuges, fostering public understanding and appreciation of the refuge, and engaging in activities that will assist the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to meet its mandates. We support the three refuges and the USFWS in their mission to restore, enhance, protect and preserve the wildlife and its environment while providing educational opportunities, increasing public awareness, involvement, appreciation and enjoyment of the Refuges.

Centrally located within the San Francisco Bay Area, home to over 7.5 million people, the San Pablo Bay, Antioch Dunes, and Marin Islands NWRs provide recreational and volunteer opportunities for birders and duck hunters, hikers and anglers, kayakers and bikers. The refuges also protect critical habitat for the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse, Lange's metalmark butterfly, and Central California Coast coho Salmon. Finally, these North Bay salt marshes sequester carbon and provide protection to our coastal communities as the climate warms and sea level rises.

Our refuges need money; they have been underfunded and understaffed for years. Our refuge manager, responsible for three refuges totaling over 13,000 acres, retired 18 months ago and has not been replaced. The burden of managing and maintaining these three critical refuges falls to the four remaining USFWS employees. They are dedicated and effective, but they need help now.

Overall, the National Wildlife Refuge System requires at least \$900 million in Operations and Maintenance Funding to be considered “full funding”, with all refuges staffed, with adequate maintenance, biological, hunting, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation programs. We ask that you work towards that overall goal of \$900 million in annual funding.

This request of \$600 million, an increase of \$112 million over FY 2011 appropriations, would greatly impact our refuge. The San Pablo Bay, Antioch Dunes, and Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuges would be able to fill long-vacant staff positions, protect more critical habitat, and connect with local schools in nearby disadvantaged communities.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me, Justin Bodell, President of the Friends of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge at 707-480-5137 or bodelljustin@gmail.com.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bodell', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the left.

Justin Bodell
Friends of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge