



NORTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY GROUP
Alameda Albany Berkeley Emeryville
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Berkeley, California 94702
510-848-0800

July 1, 2019

Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft
Members of the Alameda City Council
Santa Clara Ave.
Alameda, CA 94501

RE: Storm Water Ballot Measure

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Members of the Alameda City Council:

On July 16, you will decide whether to seek raising the city's storm water fee at the ballot box and, if so, whether to move for a property-owner ballot or a ballot of registered voters. **The Sierra Club urges you to move forward with a routine property-owner ballot**, in order to meet current operating and capital needs and regulatory requirements.

The city's Public Works Department cannot afford to maintain and upgrade its storm water drains without raising fees. The Urban Runoff Fund, also known as the storm water fund, is running a \$1 million annual deficit due to inflation and new requirements like installing and maintaining trash capture devices throughout the city. Because an escalator clause was not included in the original fee authorization, the fund could run out of money by fiscal year 2020-2021.

The island is vulnerable to flooding right now. Thus, we need to prepare now for storm surges.

The Public Works Department has an extensive system of trash capture filters throughout the city, and another 70 devices were installed this spring at considerable expense. These filters prevent everything from plastic packaging and food wrappers to disintegrated cigarette filters from entering and polluting the bay, and they require regular servicing. The fee increase will also provide continuing funding for handling basic storm water demands, which will intensify with climate change.

We support authorizing a mail-in ballot sent to property owners because the threshold for passing the measure requires a simple majority, and it is the standard practice for gaining approval of property owners for raising municipal property fees.

Unlike a bond measure for major civil engineering climate adaptation measures that would require an extensive campaign to achieve a two-thirds majority, this storm water fee increase should be considered routine in nature and not require a two-thirds majority at a

regular election. Big-ticket climate adaptation projects will be coming onto the horizon very shortly, and funding these projects could be undermined by creating voter or taxpayer fatigue through an unwarranted general election measure for a relatively small fee increase for basic services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Sophie Hahn". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Sophie" and "Hahn" being capitalized and prominent.

Sophie Hahn

Chair, Sierra Club Bay Chapter Northern Alameda County Group