

PRESS RELEASE

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LONG-AWAITED AMERICA'S CUP FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW RELEASED

San Francisco – The Environmental Council – a coalition of more than thirty Bay Area organizations – is now reviewing the final America's Cup Final Environmental Impact Report, released today by the City of San Francisco. While concerns remain that the project may fall short of preventing harm to the city's shoreline and Bay ecosystem, certain areas, such as air quality mitigation have been tremendously improved. The Council was formed to work with the City to achieve a green and sustainable sailing event and shoreline development.

Members of the Environmental Council have worked cooperatively with City staff for the past ten months to identify and address the expected impacts of the event. The Council has met with City staff multiple times and provided 150 pages of technical input from experts in natural resources, bay ecology and habitat, transportation and neighborhood and historic resources.

Several council organizations were pleased with the robust new mitigation package addressing the significant air pollution concerns. If these measures are fully implemented, the city of San Francisco is likely to see some lasting health benefits and improved air quality from this project.

Key concerns in reviewing the document will be:

- Whether it protects sensitive habitat in the Presidio, particularly Crissy Field, from the impact of thousands of spectators;
- How the Port will mitigate the air quality impacts of a 2-year loss of shoreside electric power for visiting cruise ships and air emissions from other marine vessels,
- How the Event Authority and City will keep litter out of the Bay and quickly remove any litter that ends up in the Bay;
- Whether the document will adequately protect marine mammals and rafting birds from increased boat traffic,
- How neighborhoods adjacent to the waterfront will be shielded from the crowds, trash, and noise impacts of the races.

Potential long-term development rights promised to America's Cup backers by the City are another major issue that we will be closely reviewing in the document.

"We're going to take tomorrow to thoroughly review the City's responses to our detailed comments on the draft document," said Jennifer Clary, President of San Francisco Tomorrow. "We plan to provide the Commissioners on the Planning and Port Commissions our expert advice on the adequacy of those responses, and trust that they take our input as seriously as we offer it."

"We want to ensure that the city and the America' Cup make this a truly green event, as promised," added Teri Shore, Program Director of SeaTurtles.org. "The Bay's air and water quality must be protected for the 99 percent of us who are not involved in the racing. The proposed new air quality measures are on the right course."

“We’re still analyzing the water quality plans, but we’re really concerned that the Port is attempting to wiggle out of its own ordinance on green-building requirements,” added Deb Self, Executive Director of San Francisco Baykeeper.

While promising a carbon-neutral, zero-waste event, the City has also recognized publicly that large crowds, thousands of spectator boats, dredging to accommodate super yachts, a cruise terminal and various building projects are likely to cause significant air and water pollution.

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The Environmental Council’s purpose is to ensure that America’s Cup is a benefit for San Francisco Bay and its surrounding neighborhoods and historic resources, in both the short and long term.