

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Josh Sonnenfeld, (510) 338-7929, josh@joshsonnenfeld.com
High-quality images and video available for immediate use. See bottom of release for descriptions.

Activists Redouble Efforts to Protect At-Risk San Francisco Bay Wetlands

Climate experts, conservation organizations push-back against proposed luxury housing development, call protection of South Bay site critical for resilience of the Bay

Newark, CA - Citing the urgent need to protect San Francisco Bay wetlands in the face of climate change and sea level rise, today the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, with the support of over a dozen conservation and climate organizations, launched the "Save Newark Wetlands" campaign (SaveNewarkWetlands.org), calling on government officials to halt development plans on the 500-acre South Bay site, "Newark Area 4," and instead permanently protect these lands as part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

As part of the effort, advocates released a [compelling new video](#), featuring stunning aerial imagery and interviews with leading SF Bay scientists Letitia Grenier and Ellen Plane (SF Estuary Institute), along with climate resilience leader Violet Saena (Climate Resilient Communities), who describe the Bay's wetlands as one of the most important ecosystems on the planet, and Newark Area 4 as a valuable shoreline site that both supports Bay wildlife and can act as a crucial flood buffer for the community as sea levels rise.

"Tidal wetlands are essential to the health of the Bay and the climate resilience of shoreline communities," **said Carin High, co-chair with Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge**, "To protect our Bay and prepare for sea level rise, we need to act now to protect Newark Area 4 -- before these valuable baylands are lost forever to development."

Newark resident Jana Sokale added, "During the pandemic we have all learned how important it is to have access to nature. Yet in Newark, we have been deprived of access to our Bay shoreline for far too long. By saving Newark's wetlands and adding them to the SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge, we have an opportunity to not just restore wildlife habitat, but also reconnect our community to the Bay."

The campaign comes in response to a proposed development that would import over 1.67 million cubic yards of fill (over 100,000 truckloads) to build 469 "executive" housing units atop the undeveloped 500-acre shoreline site, one of the few remaining unprotected wetland areas in San Francisco Bay. The "Sanctuary West" development project was approved by the City of Newark in November 2019, but is currently held up by a lawsuit and vocal opposition and concern by environmentalists, climate experts, and regulatory agencies.

The campaign is led by Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, and supported by over a dozen conservation and climate resilience organizations, including San Francisco Baykeeper, Save The Bay, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Center for Biological Diversity, and Greenbelt Alliance.

For more information, visit www.SaveNewarkWetlands.org

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Aerial Photo of Newark Area 4 (Photo by Derell Licht).

Images and Video Available:

- **Video:**
 - 4 minute, 12 second video, raw footage available, including stunning aerial drone shots of the Bay and the at-risk site in Newark, commentary from SF Bay scientists and climate experts
- **Photos:**
 - Aerial photos of the at-risk site in Newark, showing intersection of the wetlands and the community (above), intersection of the site with the SF Bay, and numerous panoramic views
 - Photos of wildlife that utilize the site and surrounding areas, including egrets, harbor seals, salt marsh harvest mouse, and numerous shorebirds and waterfowl

About Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge:

The Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge is an all-volunteer organization that for over 50 years has championed the creation, expansion and protection of San Francisco Bay's National Wildlife Refuge - the first urban national wildlife refuge in the country. Since leading successful efforts to create the Refuge in 1972, and expand it in 1988, the organization has tirelessly fought to protect the Refuge and potential Refuge lands and promote the recovery of the diverse ecosystems that make San Francisco Bay the ecological heart of our region. www.bayrefuge.org