

November 18th, 2025

San Francisco Recreation and Park Department
McLaren Lodge, Golden Gate Park
501 Stanyan Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Attn: Recreation and Park Commission

Re: Community Support for Maintaining Gashouse Cove Marina, San Francisco's Gas and Diesel Fuel Dock Operations

Dear Commissioners:

We write as members and representatives of San Francisco's maritime and waterfront community—environmental advocates, swimmers, rowers, and youth maritime educators—to express our strong support for maintaining the Gashouse Cove gas and diesel fuel dock as part of the Marina Improvement and Remediation Project. This facility serves as critical infrastructure not only for emergency services, but for recreational access, maritime safety, and the preservation of San Francisco's 175-year maritime heritage.

Critical Maritime Infrastructure

The Gashouse Cove fuel dock is the only public fueling facility remaining on the San Francisco waterfront. It serves a diverse community of users including recreational boaters, commercial vessels, emergency responders, maritime youth programs, and visiting vessels from around the Bay and beyond. This facility includes not only fuel pumps, but also a pump-out station, oil spill response capabilities, and serves as an emergency extraction point for disabled vessels.

The loss of this facility would force all vessel operators—from the U.S. Coast Guard to Sea Scout training vessels—to transit to Sausalito or Emeryville for fuel. This represents not merely an inconvenience, but a fundamental threat to maritime safety and Bay access. During emergencies, when the 1989 earthquake recovery demonstrated the critical value of this facility, or during medical evacuations and search-and-rescue operations, every minute matters.

Example — SFPD Marine Unit: In fiscal year 2024–2025, the SFPD Marine Unit used the SF Marina Gashouse Cove Fuel Dock 86 times—70 gasoline and 16 diesel. Gasoline access is especially critical because roughly 80 percent of marine vessels run on gasoline, and unlike diesel, gasoline cannot be delivered by truck over the water.

Recreational Access and Maritime Community

San Francisco Bay is one of the world's premier sailing destinations, attracting recreational boaters from across Northern California and beyond. The availability of fuel on the San Francisco waterfront is essential to maintaining this vibrant maritime community. Visiting boaters patronize local marinas, restaurants, and businesses—contributing to San Francisco's economy and maritime culture. Eliminating the city's only fuel dock would effectively discourage recreational boating access to San Francisco, diminishing one of the Bay Area's unique recreational resources.

The Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association (PICYA), representing over 100 yacht clubs across Northern California, has emphasized that accessible fuel infrastructure is not just convenient—it is essential for safe navigation of San Francisco Bay's sometimes challenging conditions. Boaters should not be forced to undertake risky crossings to distant fuel docks when conditions deteriorate or fuel runs low.

Youth Maritime Education

For more than a century, Gashouse Cove has served as a training ground for San Francisco's youth maritime programs. The Sea Scouts, including the Makani Maritime Explorers and the SF Vikings (2023 National Champion Sea Scout Club), depend on this facility for their vessels and training operations. These programs teach young people seamanship, water safety, navigation, environmental stewardship, and leadership—skills that have launched countless maritime careers and built generations of Bay stewards.

The elimination of the fuel dock, boat lift, and associated small-craft berths would effectively end these youth programs' ability to operate from this historic location. This represents an unacceptable loss of opportunity for San Francisco's young people, particularly those from underserved communities who gain access to the Bay through these programs.

Environmental Stewardship and Practical Considerations

As environmental advocates, we recognize the importance of remediating the legacy pollution from the historic manufactured gas plant. However, we must also advocate for solutions that maintain public access and avoid creating new environmental or safety hazards.

Critically, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board has confirmed that PG&E's cleanup does not require removal of the fuel dock. The navigational channel to the fuel dock has not been dredged in 35 years, yet maintains a natural depth of 8.5 feet at low tide through regular boat traffic. The State Water Board has confirmed this channel can remain in place and continue to be used without alteration.

We are also deeply concerned about SFRP's proposal to promote swimming and kayaking in waters adjacent to the Laguna Street combined sewer outfall, which occasionally

discharges untreated sewage into the Bay. This outfall has not been adequately disclosed in project materials, and promoting recreation in these waters raises serious public health concerns. The existing maritime uses—which occur on vessels rather than through direct water contact—represent a more appropriate use of waters affected by the sewer outfall.

Support for Local Maritime Industry

The fuel dock also serves San Francisco's remaining commercial fishing fleet, charter operators, marine contractors, and other working waterfront users. The Port of San Francisco's current fuel infrastructure is inadequate and unreliable, with the Maxum diesel facility at Fisherman's Wharf out of service and in disrepair. Eliminating Gashouse Cove's fuel dock without a viable replacement would further diminish San Francisco's working waterfront and the maritime jobs that depend on it.

A Balanced Path Forward

We urge the Recreation and Park Commission to adopt a balanced approach that accomplishes environmental remediation while preserving maritime access and infrastructure. Specifically, we call on the Commission to:

- **Maintain the fuel dock in its current location** during and after the PG&E remediation, as confirmed feasible by the Regional Water Board
- **Preserve the boat lift and small-craft berthing** that supports youth programs and recreational access
- **Fully disclose the Laguna Street sewer outfall** in all project materials and reconsider promoting water-contact recreation in affected areas
- **Conduct an independent review** of the project's financial assumptions and environmental analysis
- **Engage the maritime community** in developing alternatives that meet both cleanup and access goals

The loss of San Francisco's last fuel dock would represent an irreversible diminishment of public access to the Bay and a betrayal of the California Public Trust Doctrine that requires waterfront lands to be preserved for maritime and public purposes. The existing fuel dock infrastructure—upgraded by the State of California and serving the public effectively for over 60 years—should be preserved as the essential maritime infrastructure that it is.

We stand ready to work collaboratively with SFRP, PG&E, the Regional Water Board, and other stakeholders to achieve both environmental protection and maritime access. These goals are not mutually exclusive, and San Francisco's maritime community deserves solutions that honor both values.

Thank you for your consideration of these critical concerns.

Respectfully,

Steven Welch

Chair, Golden Gate Area Council Sea Scout Committee; San Francisco small-business owner

Captain Maggie Hallahan

Sea Scout Leader; Makani Maritime Explorers Leader; California Boating & Waterways Commissioner (*CA DBW Title represents personal position, not that of the Commission*)

David Jackson

Commodore, Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association, representing over 100 yacht clubs across Northern California.

Diane Walton

San Francisco Baykeeper Board Member; Dolphin Swimming Club Board Member

Erika Gliebe

South End Rowing Club Board Member; Open Water Swim Coach

Ian Wren

Staff Scientist, San Francisco Baykeeper

Patti Mangan

Communications Director, South Beach Yacht Club; Producer, Sail Sport Talk; Executive Director, Fillmore Merchants Association; PICYA Staff Commodore

Paul Lanzi

Golden Gate District Commissioner, Scouting America

Christiana Hoffman Inesi

Sea Scout Leader, Makani Maritime Explorers Leader

Captain Kate Thompson, R.N.

USCG 50-Ton Master; Sailboat Captain; Registered Nurse

Captain Kenneth Billiet-Shupe

Skipper, Sea Scout Ship *Sea Fox*; Golden Gate Area Council, Scouting America

Michael Schuck

Parent of Sea Scout and Makani Youth

Sabryna Holloway

Parent of Sea Scout and Makani Youth

Walter Howe

Parent of Makani Youth

Justin Disney

Parent of Sea Scout and Makani Youth

Corrina M. Rice

Parent of Sea Scout Makani Youth

Sam McMillan

Grandparent of two Sea Scout Makani Youth

Pearci "PJ" Bastiany III

Sea Scout Makani Volunteer

Matt Leffers

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

Jeffery Tong

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

Stuart Ganna

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

Chapte Ian

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

James Dilworth

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

John Robel

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

Sharon Wong

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

Janne Corn

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

William Kashner

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member

Ken Corgn

Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club Member