



To: BARC Governing Board
From: Allison Brooks, BARC Executive Director
Date: July 12, 2021
Re: *BARC's Role in Regional Climate Adaptation*

The Bay Area Regional Collaborative's (BARC's) primary purpose continues to be to deliver outcomes for the people of the Bay Area by maximizing the expertise of our member agencies in collaborative efforts, leveraging resources for greatest impact, and strengthening the partnerships needed to address climate change with the sense of urgency it deserves.

As we will hear at today's Governing Board meeting, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission-led Bay Adapt process, which outlines a set of actions Bay Area stakeholders can implement to manage our risk to sea level rise, is reaching a critical juncture as it makes the pivot from being a multi-stakeholder planning process to being a strategic effort that delivers on its promise. At the same time, Plan Bay Area 2050, led by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), is developing an implementation plan to address sea level rise, which is a key component of its environmental portfolio of strategies. This implementation plan is intended to align with the actions identified in Bay Adapt.

This memo makes recommendations for how BARC can help its member agencies carry out the aligned actions identified in the Bay Adapt Joint Platform and Play Bay Area 2050 in a coordinated fashion, while building upon our growing regional capacity to address multi-hazard climate adaptation through a structured, action-oriented framework. A key component of this effort is focused on building robust partnerships with local jurisdictions to support advanced local adaptation planning and project implementation.

Strategic Collaboration Has Never Been More Important

Climate change continues to leave its alarming mark on California communities through extreme heat events, fires, drought, and the steadily increasing threat of sea level rise. As BARC has long acknowledged, there is no one agency, organization or jurisdiction that can solve these issues on its own. Mitigating and adapting to climate change requires a level of collaboration and strategic coordination among the BARC member agencies that is unprecedented. As the threats of climate change overlap and amplify each other, our member agencies' authorities and areas of expertise pertaining to these threats must be aligned in a way that allows us to function and respond as seamlessly as one agency, ultimately helping to deliver the resources, technical assistance and coordinated advocacy to support local jurisdictions, frontline communities, special districts, transit agencies and other entities confronting climate impacts. "Divide and conquer" will not be a sufficient approach for us to keep pace with the increasingly complex and costly climate adaptation challenges that the region will face.

Both the Bay Adapt platform and Plan Bay Area 2050 implementation plan arrive at an opportune moment with active state legislation (Assembly Bill 897) encouraging the formation of multi-hazard regional climate adaptation networks, and the recently-adopted California state budget including an unprecedented \$3.7 billion commitment to climate adaptation and resilience. Regions with high-capacity climate adaptation networks will be well-positioned to receive further adaptation funds from the state as specific program budgets are resolved in the months ahead. Given BARC's membership and substantive focus on climate change, BARC is well-positioned to serve as a regional adaptation network as outlined in AB 897, with specific roles and responsibilities taken on by BARC member agencies, and others, in a highly coordinated, outcome-oriented approach.

As a regional adaptation network, BARC can continue to advance a highly collaborative and structured approach to regional climate adaptation. Some specific ways in which BARC can do this include:

- Facilitating joint work plans and resource commitments among BARC member agencies to implement multi-stakeholder initiatives such as Bay Adapt and Plan Bay Area 2050's implementation plan.
- Leveraging and maximizing the expertise, capacity and resources of each member agency to achieve specific outcomes.
- Utilizing BARC Governing Board meetings as the venue to report regularly on progress, establish and track shared metrics of success, and maintain shared accountability.
- Helping to advance a coordinated and coherent regional approach to secure new funds at the state and federal level for climate adaptation to support local action.

As the region's climate adaptation network, BARC would be building on and codifying a role that it is largely already performing: serving as a central coordinating body for climate adaptation work across its member agencies, and working to accelerate regional adaptation projects through legislative advocacy, staff and resource coordination, targeted project management, and tracking and accountability. In addition, as a regional climate network, BARC could spearhead an effort to strengthen essential partnerships between regional agencies and local jurisdictions to channel resources to needed local adaptation planning. Such a program could build off of the example set by the recent Regional Early Action Planning Grants Program (REAP/LEAP) through which ABAG is assisting local jurisdictions in developing housing elements that meet the requirements outlined in the State-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) program. Similarly, the State of California can provide financial resources to regional and local governments to support climate adaptation planning, helping to strengthen the roles played by staff and other stakeholders at different levels of government.

To position itself to be a state-designated regional climate network, the BARC Governing Board and its member agencies could, as a first step, adopt a resolution establishing high-level shared principles and metrics for regional climate adaptation, including a shared priority commitment to support the needs of frontline communities. To ensure progress, such a resolution could include the commitment to develop and execute a Joint Work Plan, the scope of which will be determined by BARC Member Agencies, that would codify roles, responsibilities and processes that would enable BARC member agencies to tackle challenges head-on and in a coordinated fashion.

Recommendation

BARC staff recommends the BARC member agencies work together to develop a resolution in support of Multi-Hazard Regional Climate Adaptation that will be brought forward to the BARC Governing Board at the September 17, 2021 meeting. This resolution would outline how each agency will help implement key climate adaptation strategies identified in Bay Adapt and the Plan Bay Area 2050 Implementation Plan, as well as establishing a framework for implementing future joint planning efforts pertaining to climate change as they arise.