

**Statement of Congresswoman Jackie Speier (representing California's 14<sup>th</sup> District)**

House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

April 14, 2021

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for providing us this opportunity to share our district's infrastructure needs. I'd like to discuss three main policy priorities today.

First and foremost, I wanted to call the Committee's attention to the overall lack of federal funding for restoration efforts for the San Francisco Bay. A 2018 GAO report cited a lack of federal funding as one of the main impediments to Bay restoration efforts. Rising tides due to climate change threaten to drown the Bay's wetlands and will cause irreversible damage by 2030 unless we act.

The San Francisco Bay is the largest estuary on the West Coast. It provides drinking water to roughly 20 million Californians and irrigation water to four million acres of farmland. It's also home to over 1,000 species of animals, including over 100 endangered and threatened species. Over the past 200 years, 90 percent of the Bay's wetlands have been destroyed by human activity. Despite the impending threats, federal efforts for bay restoration and pollution mitigation have failed to meet the enormous need.

Between 2008 and 2016, EPA geographic programs invested only \$45 million into the San Francisco Bay, while Puget Sound received over \$260 million dollars and Chesapeake Bay \$490 million. That's ten times as much – and the disparity becomes even more pronounced when you consider the populations served. A mere \$6 was spent on the Bay for each resident of the Bay Area, while almost \$30 were spent for each resident living near Chesapeake Bay and almost \$60 for residents near Puget Sound. The House demonstrated its strong support for increased Bay funding last Congress when it passed the San Francisco Bay Restoration Act on a bipartisan basis not once, but twice – both as a standalone, and as part of the Moving Forward Act.

This bill, which I've re-introduced in the current Congress, would help address water quality improvement, wetland and estuary restoration, endangered species recovery, and adaptation to climate change. An investment in the Bay would also provide a much-needed boost to the local economy, which has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recent study, every \$1 spent on restoration efforts returns \$2.10 in economic activity. I would

urge the Committee to once again include the San Francisco Bay Restoration Act in the upcoming infrastructure package with the same authorization level included in HR 2 – \$50 million annually over 5 years.

Second, I believe we must take bold action to supercharge the adoption and production of electric vehicles (EVs) in America. Last Congress, I introduced the Affordable American-Made Automobiles Act to do just that. My bill provided incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, EV manufacturing and domestic battery production – the future of clean transportation. EVs must be affordable for the average American if they are to be ubiquitous. I was thrilled to see policies similar to those in my bill included in the American Jobs Plan. I implore the Committee to prioritize policies that would expand EV production, usage, and affordability in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

Finally, I'd like to discuss airplane noise. My primary request is for Committee to address the 65 day-night average sound level (DNL) noise standard. As you know, the noise standard determines which communities are impacted by airplane noise in the eyes of the federal government, and therefore which communities qualify for federal resources for noise abatement, like home insulation. After hearing from thousands of residents across my district, it's clear to me that the number and location of residents impacted by noise far exceeds the boundary of the 65 DNL. The results of the long-awaited FAA Neighborhood Environmental Survey – also known as the Noise Annoyance Survey – also demonstrate that there's been a substantial increase in the number of Americans who are highly annoyed by aircraft noise. Therefore, I urge the Committee to reassess the 65 DNL boundary and support a noise metric that accurately reflects the magnitude of the problem. Noise is not just a nuisance, it's a serious quality of life and health issue.

Chairwoman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, I thank you again for convening this hearing and I urge you to please take action to address these three major issues.