

1 [Urging the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to Expand Public Access to the  
2 Peninsula Watershed Lands]

3 **Resolution urging the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to provide enhanced**  
4 **public access to existing roads and trails in the Peninsula Watershed Lands consistent**  
5 **with the goals of protecting the water supply and the environmental quality of the area.**  
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7 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission’s (SFPUC) Peninsula  
8 Watershed encompasses approximately 23,000 acres of land in San Mateo County and is a  
9 state-designated Fish and Wildlife Refuge; and

10 WHEREAS, The Peninsula Watershed (Watershed) is a component of the Hetch  
11 Hetchy Regional Water System and home to the highest concentration of native, rare,  
12 threatened, and endangered species in the nine-county Bay Area region; and

13 WHEREAS, As one of the region’s unique natural habitats, the Peninsula Watershed  
14 provides a significant and valued recreational opportunity for the community throughout the  
15 San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California through the use of its public trail system; and

16 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Interior has a 19,000 acre Scenic  
17 Easement on the western portion of the Watershed and a 4,000 acre Scenic and Recreation  
18 easement on the eastern side of the watershed administered by the GGNRA; and

19 WHEREAS, Access to open space for both San Francisco residents and other  
20 residents of the Bay Area has been a longstanding concern of the City; and

21 WHEREAS, The Peninsula Watershed’s two regional trail systems are the Crystal  
22 Springs Regional Trail, operated and maintained by San Mateo County Parks, and the Bay  
23 Area Ridge Trail, operated and maintained by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
24 and connecting the Sweeney Ridge Trail operated by the Golden Gate National Recreation  
25 Area (GGNRA); and

1           WHEREAS, These regional trails, and related connectors, provide 31 miles of existing  
2 trail access to the Peninsula Watershed; and

3           WHEREAS, In 2001, the SFPUC adopted the Peninsula Watershed Management Plan  
4 (PWMP) and the PWMP Final Environmental Impact Report, and this context provides the  
5 policy and environmental compliance framework in which future management actions on the  
6 Peninsula Watershed are considered; and

7           WHEREAS, Other Bay Area water districts, including the Marin Municipal Water District  
8 and the East Bay Municipal Utility District, allow public access to their lands without  
9 compromising water safety or environmental quality and that the public regularly shares  
10 service roads with maintenance vehicles in these and other public lands; and

11           WHEREAS, The SFPUC, San Mateo County Parks, and the GGNRA have all declared  
12 support for opening the existing Whiting Ridge Trail to public access, but no concrete plans  
13 have been developed; and

14           WHEREAS, In its 2015 management plan, the GGNRA, the owner of the Scenic  
15 Easement over the watershed, has encouraged the construction of a new multi-use trail on  
16 watershed lands from Cañada Rd to Skyline Boulevard North of the Phleger Estate unit of the  
17 GGNRA and South of CA-92; and

18           WHEREAS, The SFPUC recognizes that additional educational opportunities can be  
19 increased, consistent with the goals and objectives of the PWMP with the construction of new  
20 recreational trails combined with improvements to existing trails and appropriate staffing and  
21 maintenance of the Watershed Trail System; now, therefore, be it

22           RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors strongly supports increased  
23 recreational access to the Peninsula Watershed for educational use that is compatible with  
24 protecting both drinking water quality and threatened and endangered wildlife, consistent with  
25 the PWMP; and, be it

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors strongly supports the PUC's  
2 current efforts to develop a permit system for unsupervised public access to the Fifield-Cahill  
3 Ridge Trail and urges the SFPUC to expedite implementation of this permit system by the end  
4 of 2016; and, be it

5 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the SFPUC to work in  
6 collaboration with the San Mateo County Parks Department, the GGNRA, and the California  
7 State Parks System to focus on closing gaps on the Bay Area Ridge Trail and other regional  
8 trails on the Peninsula Watershed, which includes the following:

- 9 - opening the 2 mile section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail north of Highway 92  
10 through Skylawn Cemetery to the SFPUC Cemetery Gate on Cahill Ridge;
- 11 - the operation of the entire 16 miles of the Bay Area Ridge Trail on SFPUC  
12 property, and the design and construction of the North San Andreas Trail Connector;
- 13 - constructing the Bay Area Ridge Trail south of CA-92 to the GGNRA Phleger  
14 Estate; and, be it

15 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the SFPUC to provide  
16 additional access to the watershed beyond what is included in the current PWMP, subject to  
17 applicable environmental clearances, including the following:

- 18 - working with the GGNRA and San Mateo County Parks to determine what steps  
19 are necessary to open the Whiting Ridge Trail to public access, subject to relevant federal and  
20 state environmental review requirement;
- 21 - proposing possible routes for further public access to existing service roads by  
22 permit-holders and that these routes include at least one east-west route starting on the  
23 Crystal Springs Regional Trail near the Western end of the San Andreas reservoir dam,  
24 connecting to the Bay Area Ridge Trail and then passing the Pilarcitos Reservoir and  
25 ultimately connecting to the trail system in the Corral de Tierra unit of the GGNRA;

1 - proposing the opening of other such routes north of Highway CA-92 that would  
2 permit access to a variety of scenic loop routes for hikers and riders; and

3 - proposing the reopening of Old Cañada Road on the west side of Upper Crystal  
4 Springs Reservoir and the construction of a new multi-use trail on watershed lands from this  
5 road to the Ridge Trail south of CA-92; and, be it

6 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests the SFPUC to report  
7 on its progress developing these plans, including the projects already approved as well as the  
8 potential revisions to the PWMP listed here, by September 1, 2016.

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