

Cleanup San Francisco Bay for Everyone's Benefit — Not Just for Some



Join Clean Water Action in demanding that the San Francisco Regional Water Board protect subsistence fishers and their families.

The Problem:

- San Francisco Bay is so contaminated by mercury, a potent neurotoxin that particularly threatens children and women of childbearing age, that the State has issued guidance indicating some fish species are unsafe to be eaten in any quantity, and consumption of other species must be limited to only one or two servings per week. In addition, PCBs, dioxins, pesticides, and other bioaccumulative contaminants pose other serious threats to human health.
- For reasons of economic need and/or cultural tradition, thousands of people fish in San Francisco Bay to put food on their table. These “subsistence” fishers often consume fish between 4 and 5 times per week, resulting in unsafe exposure to



pollutants. Most of those who are at highest risk live in low-income communities and communities of color.

- Clean-up plans for mercury and other pollutants in the Bay will not protect subsistence fishers who consume high levels of contaminated fish, because when these plans were developed, the State did not recognize “subsistence” fishing as a “beneficial use” of California waters. The State uses whatever activities are deemed “beneficial uses” to determine standards for acceptable levels of contaminants. Consequently, ***the proposed standards protect some people — like recreational fishers — but not others, like subsistence fishers, who are most impacted by contaminant levels.***

The Solution:

Clean Water Action is fighting to designate San Francisco Bay as a water body that supports subsistence fishing.

In 2017, with the help of our members, Clean Water Action got the State Water Board to formally recognize subsistence fishing and tribal cultural practices as “beneficial uses” of state waters that must be protected. However, this recognition won’t help local fishing populations unless the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board designates San Francisco Bay as supporting these practices. For this reason, we’ve started a campaign to protect all families, especially those who rely on the Bay for basic sustenance and survival. We’re asking the Regional Board to officially designate the Bay so that pollution-cleanup goals can be changed over time to protect our most vulnerable populations.

Stand for Environmental Justice! Help us ensure that everyone is protected and our waterways are restored to health. Tell the San Francisco Bay Regional Board to officially recognize subsistence fishing and tribal uses in the Bay so that cleanup goals will ultimately ensure that fish are safe enough to be eaten on a regular basis by all Californians.

➤ **WRITE YOUR OWN OR SUBMIT COMMENTS VIA OUR ONLINE ACTION AT**
<https://bit.ly/2zvsqgp>

SAMPLE COMMENT FORMAT

*Write or type on a separate sheet of paper.
Please personalize for greater impact!*



Date

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board should be commended for its work to address mercury, PCBs, and other dangerous contaminants in San Francisco Bay. However, as a matter of Environmental Justice, **I urge the Board to designate the Bay as supporting subsistence fishing and tribal uses through its Triennial Review.**

Fishing is not optional for those who rely on the Bay for food out of economic need and/or cultural tradition. These families may consume 5 meals or more a week of contaminated fish, putting them at greater risk than sports fishers to neurological impairment, reproductive harm, cancer, and other serious health threats. While addressing the Bay's contaminants will take decades, if we don't recognize subsistence fishing and tribal uses as beneficial uses now, the most vulnerable members of our communities will never be protected by cleanup plans. Please ensure that we protect all Bay Area residents, no matter their economic or cultural background.

Sincerely,

Sign Your Name

Include your name, address, city, state and zip code