



COUNTY OF LAKE
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
LAKE COUNTY WATERSHED PROTECTION
DISTRICT

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July 29, 2025

Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O St, Ste 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire
1021 O St., Ste 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0004

RE: Urge the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways to Reverse their 2025 Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Determination and Fund the Clear Lake Mussel Prevention Project

Dear Honorable Governor Newsom, State Senate President pro Tempore McGuire, and Assembly Majority Leader Aguiar-Curry,

First, we want to thank each of you for the important leadership your provide to our State, particularly in these historic times; your tireless work, and support of ALL Californians, is very much appreciated.

The Lake County Watershed Protection District was recently notified our 2025 Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Application, facilitated by the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways, will not be funded. This would have enabled continuation of the Clear Lake Mussel Prevention Project, protecting one of California's most distinguished natural features.

On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, Water Resources Director, Pawan Upadhyay, PhD, contacted Division staff, emphasizing the potentially profound consequences of disruption to this critical funding. Funding was denied due to a clerical oversight (*exclusion of a Letter documenting California Department of Fish and Wildlife review of the County's Dreissenid Mussel Prevention Plan, received in 2019, attached*), as opposed to any substantive concern or deficiency. A Formal Appeal was filed Thursday, July 24, 2025, with the Division of Boating and Waterways' Executive, Deputy Director, Ramona Fernandez.

73% of this \$399,520 request (\$291,900) was expected to provide for essential monitoring of vessels entering Clear Lake, by funding up to three ramp monitor leads and twenty ramp monitors. In large measure because of the work of these trained individuals, introduction of Quagga and Zebra Mussels to Clear Lake has been kept at bay. Particularly with increased complexities associated with

recent infestations of Golden Mussels in California waterbodies, remaining vigilant in is essential to the health of the ecosystem surrounding our County's defining geographic feature.

As each of you are keenly aware, Clear Lake is an unmatched cultural resource, with Tribal history and stewardship extending back to time immemorial. It is an international treasure, both as perhaps the oldest natural lake in North America, possessing remarkable natural beauty and abundant opportunity for outdoor recreation, and an unparalleled bass fishery, as recently recognized by Bassmaster Magazine: <https://www.bassmaster.com/best-bass-lakes/slideshow/top-10-best-bass-lakes-of-2025/1322793>

You will additionally be aware, California's Delta Region is likewise a bass fishing haven, and fisherman commonly travel between the two water bodies. Should monitoring for Quagga, Zebra and Golden Mussels be suspended, it may just be a matter of time before infestation occurs, due to introduction by vessels visiting Clear Lake; spread of invasive mussels from one body of water to another is a clear (and significant) threat; the grant submitted would have covered a substantial share of expenses associated with this crucial program, and loss of Clear Lake as a vibrant fishery and habitat would have dramatic statewide implications.

Once introduced, Dreissenid mussels significantly alter lake ecology by displacing native species, destroying native habitats and the species that depend on natural habitats, blocking water delivery, disrupting recreational and commercial fishing, undermining docks and all other structures in the water, impeding navigation and enjoyment of the country's waterways. These mussels have caused devastating impacts on municipal water systems, recreation and fisheries in other areas of the country; it must not happen to California's Clear Lake (<https://www.nomussels.com/>).

The State of California has recognized Clear Lake's critical role in the statewide ecology and economy through such steps as support of the Middle Creek Flood Damage and Ecosystem Restoration Project and authorization of the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake.

Governor Newsom, you have long championed vibrant and diverse tourism in California, and eco and recreational tourism of the quality found in Lake County's Clear Lake is exceedingly rare and cannot be replaced, once lost. You will also be aware, Lake County's esteemed representatives, Honorable Senate President pro Tempore McGuire and Honorable Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, have always been central to that fight, and their unflinching support of Clear Lake, Lake County and Lake County Watershed Protection have been truly extraordinary.

Screening for Quagga, Zebra and Golden Mussels is essential to shielding gains made by those investments, and providing the best possible future for all Lake County residents and visitors. The Lake County Board of Supervisors took action during today's (July 29, 2025) Special Meeting to make \$341,445.86 in interim funding available, but this level of local support is not sustainable.

We request your strong support in urging the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways to Reverse their 2025 Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program Determination and Fund the Clear Lake Mussel Prevention Project. California is strongest and most prosperous with a vibrant Clear Lake.

Respectfully,

Susan Parker
County Administrative Officer

Pawan Upadhyay, PhD
Water Resources Director