

July 24, 2025

To:

Ramona Fernandez
Deputy Director
Division of Boating and Waterways
California Department of Parks and Recreation

Subject: Formal Appeal – 2025 Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Denial

Application Title: *Clear Lake Mussel Prevention Project*

Applicant: Lake County Watershed Protection District

Dear Deputy Director Fernandez,

I respectfully submit this letter as a formal appeal pursuant to Section 6.3 of the 2025 Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program Guidelines regarding the recent denial of funding for the Lake County Watershed Protection District's application titled *Clear Lake Mussel Prevention Project*.

We understand that our application was deemed incomplete due to the absence of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Prevention Plan Acceptance Letter. However, we request reconsideration based on the following justifications:

Justification for Appeal:

1. Omission was Administrative, Not Substantive:

The Lake County Watershed Protection District maintains a valid and active CDFW-accepted Prevention Plan. The omission of the letter from the OLGA submission was an unintentional administrative oversight, not a reflection of the readiness, compliance, or technical merit of the program.

2. Substantial Public and Environmental Impact:

The funding from this grant is critical to the continuity of a well-established mussel prevention program at Clear Lake—the largest natural freshwater lake entirely within California and one of the state's most heavily recreated and high-risk inland water bodies. Without this funding, our prevention program—including inspection, decontamination, and outreach—may face operational cuts, potentially exposing the region and downstream watersheds to invasive species introduction.

3. Precedent of Allowing Corrective Submissions:

In other grant programs managed by state agencies, minor administrative omissions have been addressed through conditional approvals or supplemental submissions. We believe our application meets all substantive requirements and respectfully request a similar opportunity.



LAKE COUNTY
WATERSHED
PROTECTION DISTRICT

255 N. Forbes Street Lakeport, California 95453

Pawan Upadhyay, PhD
Water Resources Director

4. Alignment with Statutory and Program Goals:

Our program directly advances the purpose of the Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program as outlined in Harbors and Navigation Code § 675 et seq., and fulfills the objectives identified in the 2025 Guidelines. Penalizing this omission risks undermining statewide prevention efforts.

Supporting Documentation:

- A copy of the current CDFW Prevention Plan Acceptance Letter is enclosed.
- No changes have been made to the previously submitted budget documents at this time, as the scope and cost structure remain unchanged. However, we are prepared to submit revised budget documents, if requested.

We respectfully urge the Division to reconsider our application based on the above facts and in light of the critical importance of sustained mussel prevention efforts at Clear Lake. Should further clarification or documentation be required, we are available to respond promptly.

Thank you for your continued support of local agencies working to safeguard California's aquatic ecosystems.

Sincerely,

Pawan Upadhyay, PhD

Water Resources Director

Lake County Water Resources Department

Lake County Watershed Protection District

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