

March 24, 2026

Dear Assemblymember Wilson and Senator Cabaldon,

I am writing as a professor at California State University, East Bay whose research examines biogeochemical processes in wetland and agricultural systems, including greenhouse gas dynamics in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta. I strongly support the State funding the acquisition and restoration of Jersey Island and I encourage you to champion this effort.

The Delta is home to extensive peat soil that, under drained agricultural conditions, becomes a persistent source of atmospheric carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. This process is driven by the exposure of organic matter to air, leading not only to significant greenhouse gas emissions but also to ongoing land subsidence. These twin challenges of carbon loss and resulting subsidence are tightly linked and create long-term risk to California’s water delivery infrastructure.

Restoring wetlands in the Delta is perhaps the most effective intervention available to address these issues. Reestablishing saturated soil conditions fundamentally alters the microbial processes that drive carbon emissions and allows for the accumulation of organic material to reverse subsidence.

Jersey Island presents an especially valuable opportunity because of its size, location, and current degree of subsidence. Projects of this scale allow for meaningful changes in carbon flux at a landscape level. They also provide important opportunities for continued research, monitoring, and adaptive management, helping to refine our understanding of how restored wetlands function under changing environmental conditions.

I request that the state fund the acquisition and restoration of Jersey Island.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Patty Oikawa, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

CC:

Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee Chairman Laird
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee Chairwoman Gomez Reyes
Assembly Budget Committee Chairman Gabriel
Assembly Budget Subcommittee Chairman Bennett
Senator McNerney, Delta Caucus Co-chair
Natural Resources Agency Secretary Crowfoot
Wildlife Conservation Board Executive Director Norris
Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Executive Officer Ingram