

# ENVIRONMENTAL and SAFETY OPPOSITION to SAN RAFAEL AIRPORT RE-ZONING FOR HUGE COMPLEX

## MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE ([www.marinconservationleague.org](http://www.marinconservationleague.org))

“This site’s sensitivity was recognized in 1983, when the City and County agreed to allow higher-than-usual density near the freeway in order to keep the more sensitive wetlands to the east free from development. Both parcels were sold to developer Joe Shekou. Since then, his attempts to develop the eastern (airport) portion have never ceased. Although a covenant dating from 1983 restricts uses of the airport, “public and private recreation” is included among those uses, [and] city staff have argued that the complex complies with the covenant. MCL and many others view this response as unsatisfactory, citing the *intent* of the covenant, which was to limit development and human activities, not to intensify development.”

## SIERRA CLUB, MARIN ([www.sanfranciscobay.sierraclub.org/marin](http://www.sanfranciscobay.sierraclub.org/marin))

“[T]his two-story, Walmart-size indoor and outdoor sports complex, 184 car parking lot with outdoor lighting would put soccer playing kids within 160 feet of an active runway and flight-path. The project would bring light and noise pollution, toxic runoff, increased traffic, and excessive disturbance to the marsh and creek. It threatens sensitive habitat for the endangered California Clapper rail, salt marsh harvest mouse, black rail and steelhead trout, and other species in the Gallinas Creek watershed.”

## CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ([www.biologicaldiversity.org](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org))

“One of very few populations of an endangered bird -- the California clapper rail -- is under threat from a major development next to its salt-marsh habitat at Gallinas Creek. The project would crack open nine acres beside the rails' creek to construction disturbances and noise, nighttime lighting and human-adapted predators. There are better places to put soccer fields, but very few natural homes left for clapper rails. *At last count there were only 543 of these charming birds in the entire San Francisco Bay Area; the breeding population in Gallinas Creek was identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as one of the most important in the North Bay.*”



**The Endangered Clapper Rail**

## SAN FRANCISCO BAYKEEPER ([www.baykeeper.org](http://www.baykeeper.org))

“The proposed project will convert undeveloped, low-lying land in a floodplain into acres of impervious parking lots and roofs. In light of the projected climate change-related sea level rise in the Bay Area, it is undesirable and arguably foolish to develop any Bay margin lands, especially those that are already flood-prone and surrounded by levees.”

**MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY ([www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org))**

“While Marin Audubon Society does not actually oppose many projects, our Board voted unanimously to oppose this one because of the many environmental impacts this project would cause. There are many reasons to oppose this massive project – view, traffic, pollution, safety and environmental impacts. The potential adverse environmental impacts are numerous. The project, and the multitude of people that would be attracted to the games, would disturb the adjacent tidal marsh and the species that depend on it.”

**MARIN COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ([www.marinparks.org/Depts/PK.aspx](http://www.marinparks.org/Depts/PK.aspx))**

“[T]he proposed building is considerably out of scale with the development in [this] area. [T]he purpose of the Declaration [of Restriction] is to prevent the construction of large structural buildings and to maintain the open character and habitat of this area. The wetlands surrounding the proposed recreation facility provide habitat for the California clapper rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse. Both the State and Federal Governments have listed these species as endangered and the County has invested a significant amount of money in protecting these animals.”

**OTHER GROUPS OPPOSING THE PROJECT**

**SUSTAINABLE MARIN ([www.sustainablemarin.org](http://www.sustainablemarin.org))**

**SAVE THE BAY ([www.savesfbay.org](http://www.savesfbay.org))**

**GALLINAS WATERSHED COUNCIL ([www.gallinaswatershed.org](http://www.gallinaswatershed.org))**

**FRIENDS OF GALLINAS CREEK ([www.gallinascreek.org](http://www.gallinascreek.org))**

<p><b>CALTRANS AND PILOTS ON SAFETY ISSUES</b></p>
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**STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, DIVISION OF AERONAUTICS  
(<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/planning/aeronaut/index.html>)**

“The project is located in Safety Zones 3 & 5 according to the updated Handbook. In these safety zones, the Handbook recommends prohibiting group recreational uses. In general, society gives special attention to protection of children. Special consideration should be given to facilities that cater to children such as recreation and sports facilities. We ask the City of San Rafael consider this new information in future decisions regarding this project.”  
*(Letter submitted to the City of San Rafael)*

**ELEVEN PROFESSIONAL PILOTS (LONG-TIME FLYERS FOR MAJOR AIRLINES)**

“As professional airmen, we are alarmed that the proposed Airport Sports complex is being seriously considered in such close proximity to the active runway at the San Rafael Airport. As professionals with years of flying experience, we are putting you on notice of the greatly increased risk of an air crash caused by this project’s scope and location. This project flies in the face of the customary use of land in close proximity to runways, which by both mandate and tradition involves keeping such areas free of dense population use development, especially involving children. Based on our experience as pilots, this project appears to be a tragedy waiting to happen.” *(Letter Submitted to the City of San Rafael)*