

NORTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY GROUP

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May 7, 2019

Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Members of Alameda City Council

2263 Santa Clara Ave.

Alameda, CA 94501

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

The Sierra Club urges you to *not* approve the current proposal for a water-cooled data center at Alameda Point. The data center will require constant cooling and the proponent, Nautilus Data Technologies, has developed a cooling system that uses water, in this case from the Bay, rather than traditional air conditioning requiring high electricity usage.

The Sierra Club supports efficient use of energy resources. In this instance, however, the company will be discharging water back into San Francisco Bay that is warmer than existing temperatures. Rising water temperature in the Bay can be a contributing factor in the appearance of toxic algae blooms. At the projected volume of 10,000 gallons per minute, the heat being transferred to the Bay will maintain a permanently warmer zone of water next to the rock wall jetty at Alameda Point. Movement of the tides will not permanently dissipate the relentless infusion of warmer water into the Bay.

Warnings from scientists about the growing potential for harmful algae blooms in San Francisco Bay have identified multiple factors that could influence its appearance, such as increased nutrients from urban runoff, greater clarity of the Bay, and rising temperatures. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also describes how warmer water could contribute to the growth of harmful algae. The EPA website states: "Toxic blue-green algae prefer warmer water. Warmer temperatures prevent water from mixing, allowing algae to grow thicker and faster. Warmer water is easier for small organisms to move through and allows algae to float to the surface faster. Algal blooms absorb sunlight, making water even warmer and promoting more blooms."

The San Francisco Bay and its delicate marine ecosystem is already under enough pressure. Adding another impact from warm water discharge is too risky, especially when there is no compelling reason for a data storage facility on the Bay shoreline. Other discharge sites, such as those already being utilized by the Nautilus system, are more environmentally appropriate locations. The Sierra Club urges you to not approve the lease for Nautilus Data Technologies.

Sincerely,



Sophie Hahn

Chair, Sierra Club Bay Chapter Northern Alameda County Group