

Deputy Director Fernandez, Chair Pier, and Commissioners,

It has been brought to my attention by many recreational boaters and emergency responders that San Francisco Bay has experienced a significant decline in public marine fueling infrastructure over the past 15 years. Of the seven fuel docks that once served the central Bay and main bay entrance, three have already been closed, and a fourth may close as early as 2027.

Current San Francisco Bay Area Marine Fuel Dock Status (May 2026):

Active Fuel Docks

- San Francisco — Gashouse Cove Marina
Currently the only public marine fuel dock in San Francisco, providing both gasoline and diesel fuel. This fuel dock is proposed for removal in June 2027 as part of the San Francisco Marina Renovation Project (SFRP). Its removal is a project planning decision and is not specifically required by California Water Board regulations.
- Emeryville Marina Park
Public gasoline and diesel fuel dock currently in operation, including pump out services.
- Oakland Marinas Fuel Dock
Fuel dock access available for recreational and transient vessels, including pump out services.
- Clipper Yacht Harbor
Public fuel dock offering gasoline, diesel, propane, and pump out services.

Deactivated / Closed Fuel Docks

- San Francisco Marine — Hyde Street Pier, San Francisco
Diesel fuel service currently inactive, with intermittent operations since approximately 2012.
- Berkeley Marina Fuel Dock — Berkeley
Fuel dock closed since 2016 for necessary fuel system renovations.
- Loch Lomond Marina — San Rafael
Fuel dock inactive since April 2016. The facility closed during major marina reconstruction and was not reopened following redevelopment.

As fuel access becomes increasingly limited in San Francisco Bay, vessel operators are forced to travel longer distances with reduced fuel margins, creating avoidable safety risks on the water. The reduction in fueling availability also disproportionately impacts emergency responders, youth boating programs, small craft users, and working waterfront activities that rely on dependable marine services.

Currently, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) is reviewing a permit application to allow San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (SFRPD) to modify the San Francisco Marina in a hazardous materials remediation and marina restoration project with PGE. I respectfully request the Chair of this Commission write a letter, with the Commission seal, to Larry Goldzband, Executive Director of the BCDC recommending that BCDC require as a condition of the permit that the Gashouse Cove fuel dock remain open until a replacement facility in the general vicinity is fully constructed and operational.

According to the Statutory Authority Harbors and Navigation Code Section 82.3

“The commission shall have the following particular duties and responsibilities:

(a) To be fully informed regarding all governmental activities affecting programs administered by the division.”

In light of this statutory responsibility, I request clarification regarding whether California Boating and Waterways has oversight authority and responsibility to mandate or preserve gasoline and diesel fuel dock access and emergency maritime service access points on California waterways. I recommend that DBW Commission request a review by staff of the jurisdictional authority for fuel dock availability, funding and licensing to help clarify DBW's role in maintaining gas and diesel fuel access.

I'm also looking forward to the DBW Commission making recommendations concerning the preservation of emergency responder access points and infrastructure. The boating public greatly benefits from the public safety sector's boating safety and law enforcement resources, and it is our duty to support these facilities.

Additionally, the California Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) provides funding for environmental improvement programs and actively promotes "Use Safe, Spill-Proof Fueling Practices" as part of its boating safety and environmental stewardship mission. However, current guidance does not adequately address the increased environmental and public safety risks associated with the growing reliance on portable fuel containers resulting from the continued loss of public marine fuel docks throughout San Francisco Bay.

As permanent fueling infrastructure continues to disappear, recreational boaters and small vessel operators are increasingly forced to transport gasoline and diesel fuel in portable containers by vehicle, dock cart, or hand transfer onto vessels. This practice can significantly increase spill risk. DBW's role in California maritime fuel docks should include a recommendation to minimize the use of fuel in portable containers to prevent spills. DBW's website and educational programs could include a section on "Use Safe, Spill-Proof Fueling Practices"

Thank you for your consideration of this important public safety and maritime access issue. Please see Sergeant Michael Bushnell, San Francisco Police Department Marine Unit/Homeland Security Unit email dated 3-31-2026 (attached below).

Respectfully,
Commissioner Hallahan

(Letter from Sergeant Michael Bushnell, SFPD)

Hello Maggie,

Both the fuel dock at Gas House Cove and the small dock next to Gas House Cove has been used numerous times by members of the SFPD, SFFD and USCG. During boardings of vessels it sometimes becomes unsafe to board a vessel on the bay so we re-route the vessel to Gas House Cove to conduct the boarding on a dock. We have taken kitesurfers, windsurfers, sea sick passengers from charter boats and several other injured/sick or deceased individuals that we encounter on the job to that dock.

Maintaining a centrally located fueling station that supports both diesel and gasoline vessels is critical to the safety, efficiency, and economic stability of the waterfront. From an operational standpoint, marine units—including local law enforcement, fireboats, and our federal partners such as the United States Coast Guard—depend on immediate and reliable access to fuel. Relocating this resource to a less central area would increase response times and could negatively impact emergency readiness during critical incidents.

In addition to public safety, the fuel dock plays an essential role in supporting the working waterfront. Commercial fishing vessels, recreational boating and charter boats rely on centrally located fueling to minimize downtime and maintain efficient operations. Moving this service farther away would require additional transit time strictly for fueling, increasing congestion and operational costs across the harbor.

From a maritime safety perspective, keeping fueling operations centralized helps reduce unnecessary vessel movement across busy navigation channels. The San Francisco Bay is already a high-traffic and complex waterway, and reducing fueling locations could increase the risk of congestion at fuel docks.

There are also important economic considerations. The Port of San Francisco depends on accessible infrastructure to sustain its commercial users. Removing or relocating the fuel dock could push operators to alternative ports (Pillar Point Harbor) ultimately impacting local revenue and maritime activity.

Finally, from an environmental and practical standpoint, upgrading and modernizing the existing facility presents a more efficient and lower-impact solution than constructing a new site.

Enhancements to the current dock can incorporate modern safety and environmental protections without the added disruption of new construction.

For these reasons, I strongly recommend retaining and improving the existing centrally located fuel dock rather than pursuing removal and relocation. Its continued operation is vital to maintaining a safe, efficient, and economically viable waterfront.

As far as the question of the turning basin being too windy to operate a vessel safely. I do not agree. I believe the ability to operate a boat is limited by the operator and vessel. Based on my 18 years in the San Francisco Police Department and 2 years at Station Golden Gate, I do not recall any vessel accidents.

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