



March 18, 2024

Ventura County Air Pollution Control District
Tyler Harris, Manager – Planning, Rules and Incentives
4567 Telephone Road, 2nd Floor
Ventura, CA 93003

**RE: Letter of Commitment for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Opportunity
“Reducing Ocean-Going Vessel Speeds - Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies
(BWBS)”**

Dear Mr. Harris:

On behalf of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD), I am submitting this letter of commitment in respect to the **Ocean-Going Vessel Speeds - Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies (BWBS)** implementation grant application for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) as part of the Inflation Reduction Act.

MBARD has actively participated in this program since 2023 and strongly supports the continuation and expansion of this program through the CPRG implementation grant application.

The BWBS program engages and enrolls large global shipping lines to motivate them to reduce speeds in key areas off the California coast to reduce air pollutant emissions, underwater noise, and the risk to whales. Since 2014, the program has achieved more than 150,000 metric tons of regional greenhouse gas emission reductions, over 4,400 tons of harmful oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emission reductions, and an estimated 44 percent decreased risk of fatal whale strikes during prime migration season in the targeted coastal areas. The BWBS program is readily expandable to other parts of the California coastal waters given the resources and local partners. A statewide vessel speed reduction program could cut greenhouse gas emissions significantly as part of a comprehensive effort to reduce emissions from ocean-going vessels. CPRG funding will allow the BWBS program to expand statewide and provide funds to increase outreach and develop partnerships with interested state and local agencies outside of California.

As the local agency responsible for maintaining air quality along the Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties coastline, MBARD directly benefits from any emission reductions from the slowing of vessel speed along the California coast. MBARD has been an active participant in BWBS in support of the program and will continue in that capacity if the grant is awarded.

MBARD is pleased to support the **Ocean-Going Vessel Speeds - Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies (BWBS)** application and requests federal assistance to continue and expand the successful operation of this program and further reduce harmful air pollutants and impacts to wildlife along the California coast. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (831) 718-8039 or rstedman@mbard.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Stedman".

Richard A. Stedman
Air Pollution Control Officer