

December 15, 1999

Dear Colleague:

We are pleased to present the Diversity Network Project report: *Common Ground: Building Collaborations for Sustainable Communities in the San Francisco Bay Area*.

Throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, region-wide organizations engaged in urban environmental, environmental justice and community development work are forming new alliances. Who are these groups and what issues are bringing them together? What lessons have key leaders in the community learned about building effective coalitions? What are the emerging trends and issues shaping the way in which people are working across these different fields?

Over the last year, the Diversity Network Project – sponsored by the San Francisco Foundation, the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and in cooperation with key community leaders – has explored these questions. It is our intention and hope that this report will help to inform grantmakers and the non-profit community on these issues and opportunities.

When we started this project last year, we knew there was excellent work happening on building sustainable communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. Through the Project's interviews, we have tapped a rich vein of multi-issue coalition work taking place across geographic, ethnic and economic lines.

The question before us now is how grantmakers can best support this work in the face of limited resources and the enormous environmental, social and economic challenges facing the Bay Area. To that end, we will be pursuing conversations with other grantmakers and community leaders in the next year to determine what next steps we might take.

Finally, we wish to thank our consultants Kimery Wiltshire and Omowale Satterwhite for their work and their ability to draw from interviews the most useful summary we have ever seen of best practices for sustaining effective coalitions. We also want to thank the community leaders interviewed for the report, and those who attended the Project's meeting in October, for their thoughtful comments and for their time.

We look forward to continuing this conversation and welcome your comments and questions.

Sincerely,

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