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Harbour rescue mustn't founder

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It is a wise move on the part of the Bay Area Restoration Council to ensure the right data are being gathered to make the case for taking Hamilton Harbour off the official list of Great Lakes pollution hotspots.

The harbour is more than halfway to meeting the targets of the Remedial Action Plan, which identifies the types of pollution in the harbour, how it will be cleaned up and who is responsible for the cleanup, as well as setting out specific pollution prevention measures.

The halfway point is a good time to make sure all the ducks will be in a row, so to speak, once it's time to make a case. Getting our harbour off that list by 2015 will be a huge accomplishment, made possible through foresight, hard work and determination.

This halfway point is also a good time to make sure we don't get laissez faire about moving Hamilton Harbour off the hotspot list. Certainly incredible work has been done to date, but more of the same is needed to get the harbour in good shape and keep it that way.

In assessing whether sufficient appropriate evidence will be available when it's needed, the Bay Area Restoration Council has identified some data gaps and stresses the need for continued monitoring of the process, as well as stable funding to see the remedial plan to its conclusion.

That funding piece is crucial, particularly in light of the Royal Botanical Gardens' review of its mandate. The RBG has been a valuable partner in harbour remediation through its work at Cootes Paradise and the mouth of Grindstone Creek.

The bottom line is that we can't afford to become complacent about harbour remediation simply because things seem to be progressing well. Now is the time to keep pushing harbour issue to the forefront of discussions with all levels of government, particularly in light of the council's concern about funding.

It's great news that targets will be met in barely 10 years. Let's make sure that momentum doesn't falter with the goal so close.