

Leo Villareal Saves San Francisco's Bay Lights

Sarah Cascone
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Leo Villareal, *The Bay Lights* (2013). Photo: via Wikipedia Commons.

Leo Villareal's *The Bay Lights* may go dark in March, when the Bay Bridge undergoes planned maintenance, but the popular art installation will only be temporarily extinguished: the artist has just announced that enough money has been raised to reinstall the piece as a permanent fixture in San Francisco Bay.

As reported by the *New York Times*, a total of \$4 million in funding has been privately raised, half of which is from local real-estate magnate and philanthropist Tad Taube. This baseline goal goes along way toward the projected \$12 million needed to keep the lights aglow for the next decade.

The official announcement from Illuminate the Arts, the non-profit that helped create the piece back in March of 2013, and launched the Keep 'Em Lit Through 2026 campaign in June of this year (see "[Crowd-Funding to Keep Leo Villareal's Bay Lights On](#)"), called it "the best possible news for *The Bay Lights*." Claiming to have

"accomplished the impossible" (this summer's initial crowd-funding efforts fell short), the statement promised that "Villareal's masterwork of public art will lift the gaze and spirits of Bay Area residents and visitors for generations to come" and ended with the appropriate #ForeverBrilliant.

The successful campaign to save The Bay Lights comes as welcome news for many, none more so than the Cultural Landscape Foundation, who included the project in their annual Landslide, a list of culturally-significant land-based art sites that are considered threatened or at-risk.

The 25,000 computer-controlled LED lights of The Bay Lights will be re-lit in January 2016, in time for that year's Super Bowl. Moving forward, the art piece will belong to the State of California, which will be responsible for maintaining the beloved installation.