Jim McGrath currently serves as a water quality appointee to the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. He is also the Regional Board's representative to the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. He started his career as a student intern with the US Environmental Protection Agency, where he served for five years before he went to the Coastal Commission. He was hired by the Port of Oakland in 1990 to serve as Environmental Manager, and retired in 2005.

Mr. McGrath has graduate and undergraduate degrees from the University of California, where he received a Master's degree in Hydraulic and Coastal Engineering, studying sediment dynamics in streams and estuaries and coastal processes.

Since retirement, Mr. McGrath has volunteered several days a week at LeConte Elementary School in Berkeley, teaching and tutoring in reading, writing, and math.