May 15, 2017

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Santa Barbara County
105 E. Anapamu Street
Fourth Floor
Santa Barbara, California 93101

RE: Item # 2, May 16, 2017 – NRDA Process Inadequacies – Informal Recreational Uses

Honorable Supervisors:

The Gaviota Coast Conservancy (GCC) is a § 501(c)(3) California public benefit
corporation. GCC's mission is the preservation of the rural character of the Gaviota Coast. GCC
has focused exclusively on Gaviota Coast land use and environmental issues since its formation
in 1998, and has a history of success and effectiveness in preserving this last rural stretch of the
southern California coastline.

The Plains Refugio Oil Spill on May 19 ("Plains' Spill") was catastrophic to the character
of the Gaviota Coast. The adverse impacts and injuries will likely never be fully quantified,
however the Plains' Spill caused immediate, interim and permanent injuries to the Gaviota
Coast's visual and aesthetic resources, marine and terrestrial biological resources, terrestrial and
marine cultural resources, agricultural resources, historical resources and significantly impaired
on-going and future recreational opportunities.

**We write to call your attention to an inadequate and incomplete effort to quantify
recreational use of the Gaviota Coast, with the result being incomplete recovery of NRDA
damages to recreational resources.**

The Gaviota Coast offers important recreational resources that were directly and
indirectly impacted by the Plains Refugio Oil Spill. Aside from closed campgrounds, most of
the Gaviota Coast's remote and wilderness beaches were closed or impacted for months. Even
after the initial cleanup effort was complete, people stayed away and even today, public use of
the Gaviota Coast for recreation is less than previously, as a result of the reputational damage
and stigma caused by the Plains spill.

Gaviota Coast recreationalists come to explore remote beaches, to surf and paddle, to see
marine wildlife in the water and hauled out at seal rookeries, to fish, and to observe birds,
tidepools, and kelp beds. These activities are mostly undertaken by local residents that have
been using these areas and activities for years and generations. But this use may not be obvious
or readily apparent to the NRDA process. Many people that experience the Gaviota Coast do so
discretely, and avoid obvious displays of their presence. Historically, CHP, Caltrans and private
Landowners have taken actions to block informal public use of the Gaviota Coast. CHP has

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Dedicated to protecting the rural character and environmental integrity of the Gaviota Coast for present and future generations
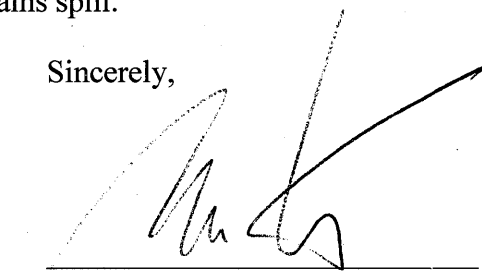
ticketed recreationalists that park on the side of Highway 101, so now people park discretely. Caltrans has erected K-Rail and placed Jersey Barriers to block roadside parking areas and deter access to many informal parking areas. Landowners employ increasingly sophisticated systems to deter public access, all leading to less obvious and overt public use of many areas of the Gaviota Coast.

At the Interagency meeting in January 2016, we approached state agency representatives and others asking that they recognize and seek compensation for impacts to informal recreational use of the Gaviota Coast. We also shared these concerns with County Counsel and members of the Board of Supervisors. And we raise this issue to the Board to ask that staff strive to measure and document informal public recreational use of the Gaviota Coast to ensure compensation in the NRDA and any ensuing spill impact recovery processes.

We are gravely concerned that much of the local public's use of the Gaviota Coast's recreational resources is being ignored or undercounted in the NRDA process, and as a result, the local community will recover an even smaller portion of compensation for the spill's adverse impacts on the Gaviota Coast.

We ask that the Board direct staff to take steps to document and quantify the public's recreational use of the Gaviota Coast for use in the NRDA process and to maximize recovery for local residents from the impacts of the Plains spill.

Sincerely,

Marc Chytilo
For Gaviota Coast Conservancy and the Naples
Coalition

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