

February 18, 2014

Dear Steve Lavagnino, Honorable Member of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors:

My family loves visiting the Sea Center whether it is sunny or gray, cold or hot. My two sons are becoming quite the marine biologists, but even more than that, our visits to the Sea Center help anchor them with the passion and knowledge about protecting the ocean and the wonderful animals.

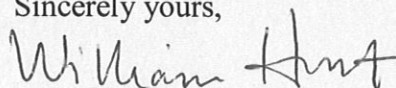
Over the years, we have come to love the different exhibits, from the super powers of marine animals to the mesmerizing beauty of floating jellies. My family not only loves going, but will have long discussions with grandparents and aunts and uncles about why it is important of keeping our ocean plastic free as well as many details about the variety of animals that live in the ocean.

I understand that the Sea Center is requesting a Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund to construct an interactive exhibit about the Santa Barbara Channel. The Sea Center has a unique ability to make difficult ecological concepts understandable to a young audience. Creating a new exhibit is a critical component keeping my children engaged and will provide them with quality interactive opportunities so they can continue their environmental discoveries.

Though I am an educator in a formal institution, I feel that the dominant assumption behind current educational practice that school is the only place where and when children learn is outdated. A growing body of research supports the contention that children learn science in settings outside of school. A 2009 report by the National Research Council, *Learning Science in Informal Environments: Places, People and Pursuits*, describes a range of evidence demonstrating that visits to national parks, science centers, zoos and botanical gardens enhances a child's understanding of the natural world. Data has shown that children significantly increase their conceptual understanding of science on a variety of levels immediately following a visit to a zoo or aquarium. Informal science learning opportunities can in fact jump-start children's long-term interest in nature, as those experiences become part of their long term memories. Only through specialized funding can institutions such as the Sea Center continue to provide up to date exhibits and learning opportunities.

Funding a new Sea Center exhibit will continue to allow my boys to have authentic experiences that will serve as life long memories. **Without any hesitation, I strongly recommend that the Board of Supervisors use the Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund to support the construction of a new Sea Center marine exhibit.**

Sincerely yours,



William Hunt  
Dean, California School of Law

**Our family strongly recommends that  
the Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors  
use the Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund  
to support the construction of a  
new Sea Center marine exhibit.**



*"Sea Otter"*  
Art by Duncan Hunt



February 28, 2014

Dear Honorable Members of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

I learned recently that the Ty Warner Sea Center is applying for the much needed funds to build a new exhibit called the California Coastal Immersion Zone that would have larger touch tanks and many other great features for our community to enjoy. Please consider funding this important exhibit to your maximum ability through the Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund.

This letter of support is inspired by personal experiences at the Sea Center, one of my son's favorite places to go. When we visit the Sea Center, he becomes our little scientist, asking endless questions about the world around him. Providing these kinds of hands-on learning experiences to him are important to me because I am passionate about seeing my children learn and develop. While the Sea Center does their best with buckets and other creative solutions to create more critter touch space- the improvement the new exhibit would bring is much needed. You can see him in this picture from a recent visit to the Sea Center; he was especially intrigued by the Decorator Crabs.



As a mother of two children and an instructor for the Teacher Education Program at UCSB, I would love to see the Sea Center expand its exhibit space. The Sea Center is such an important resource for parents and teachers. From taking my family to places like the Sea Center, I can teach my kids more about the beach and tidepools when we have a family beach day. I have a greater comfort level in letting my kids explore the marine environment because we have learned how to safely tidepool and be respectful to ocean critters. I know other parents feel the same. Additionally, the teachers who take their class to the Sea Center gain an excellent launching pad for teaching ocean sciences. They are able to draw upon the kids' experience and enthusiasm for marine science from the field trip.

By connecting children directly with marine life, the Sea Center is creating formative experiences that lead to a future passion, respect, and eventual stewardship for the ocean. Thank you for your consideration for the new exhibit at the Sea Center.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Erin Vernon in blue ink.

Erin Vernon

February 25, 2014

Dear Steve Lavagnino, Honorable Member of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

As an educator and active community member, I am submitting this letter in strong support of the proposal to the Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund (CREF) requesting funding to help the Sea Center construct a solutions-based "California Coastal Immersion Zone" (CCIZ) interactive exhibit. Many of my current and former students have had formative experiences at the Museum and Sea Center. The mission and message of awareness and conservation is greatly needed in our community. The Museum and Sea Center are a tremendous and unique local resource, one that makes our community special. Funding this exhibit will help the Sea Center update its' message to focus on current and relevant issues facing our oceans and our community.

The California Coastal Immersion Zone, or CCIZ exhibit, will continue to connect our families to the wonders of the ocean and Santa Barbara Channel. The ocean setting of the Sea Center reaches not only local families but visitors from all over the state and the world. The Sea Center is the general public's premier central coast marine education facility. I strongly urge you to support them in their mission.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Bone". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Michelle Bone  
Librarian at SBCC and Midland School