

To: County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors

From: Chris Crabtree

Subject: Public Comments on Hearing of March 18, 2014 Agenda Item # 14-00171 – Consider Recommendations Regarding Goleta Beach 2.0 Project Selection

Date: March 14, 2014

This letter is a continuation and update to the comment letter I sent to the Board of Supervisors (Board) on March 3, 2014, in regard to the hearing Agenda Item # 14-00171 – Set Hearing for Goleta Beach 2.0 Project Selection of March 4, 2014. I have reviewed portions of the project FEIR, as it became available to the public on March 6, 2014. However, it is disappointing that the County is allowing so little time for the public to review the FEIR and prepare for the March 18 hearing. There are many important and complex issues to consider at this critical stage of the project development and a bit more time would enable the public to provide more adequate input into the project decision process.

The FEIR contains an exceptional amount of valuable information and analyses. It has many of the components needed for viable management of the Park. Unfortunately, they are not grouped together into one project scenario or alternative. For example, Mitigation Measure REC-2a - Managed Retreat Implementation Plan (MRIP) is an improved version compared to the one in the DEIR, as it proposes a phased removal of Parking Lots 6 and 7 and has more details regarding a long-term erosion planning process for the Park. However, its problem is that it is still a mitigation of the ultimate removal of the western rocks. My suggestion is that some form of a MRIP should be the “project” and not project mitigation. In CEQA terms, this “project” equates to the No Project Scenario 2, with the addition of a MRIP, as suggested in my comments submitted to date as part of the Goleta Beach 2.0 project administrative record.

Clearly, the Park will continue to come under attack from wave energy. This threat will increase in the future due to increases in sea level rise (SLR). The recently released Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment Report (AR5) predicts that global mean SLR for 2081–2100 relative to 1986–2005 will likely be in the range of 0.9 to 3.2 feet for its low to high radiative forcing scenarios (Climate Change 2013 - The Physical Science Basis - Summary for Policymakers December 2013). Add only a median value of 2.1 feet of SLR to many of the past high wave events that occurred at the Park and it is safe to say that these waves will completely wash over the Park and cause such costly damage that it will be economically infeasible to sustain the Park in its current configuration. In other words, the Park as we know it today is on the verge of extinction. It is this inevitability that makes me want to preserve the current state of the Park for as long as possible.

In my letter to the Board of March 3, I gave a preliminary estimation of how high the swell of March 1 and 2, 2014 ranked in the historical wave record for Goleta, as I think it is important to put this event into perspective for future management of the Park. I have had an opportunity to refine that estimate, although I still have more work to do on this task. I am virtually certain that this swell was the fourth or fifth highest to hit Goleta since 2002, based on data collected at the Scripps Goleta buoy located about three miles south of Goleta Beach (http://cdip.ucsd.edu/?nav=historic&stn=107&xitem=stn_home&stream=p1&sub=data) and my personal daily observations. In terms of ranking over a longer period of record, it is possible that this swell ranges between the 15th to 20th highest swell to hit Goleta since 1963,

based on special studies (Seymour, Strange, Cayan, and Nathan 1984), personal discussions with the late Rea Strange of Pacific Weather Analysis in Montecito, and my daily observations dating back to 1974. What is more difficult to determine is its ranking in terms of inflicted damage, as this effect is dependent on the coincidence of high tide and swell. For example, the main brunt of the swell hit on a moderately high spring tide the morning of March 1 (6.1 feet) and inflicted a fair amount of damage to the Park, whereas the higher swell of February 24, 2008 occurred during neap tides and for the most part spared the Park of damage. More work for me to do on this subject for the future.

It is unfortunate that the swell of March 1 and 2 eroded away most of the sand placed in front of the Park from past beach nourishment projects. Fortunately however, the rocks backed up this protection and kept erosion to the front of the Park to a minimum.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of my comments.

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