



March 14, 2014

Santa Barbara County
Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Goleta Beach Project

Dear Chair and Supervisors:

The undersigned organizations submit this letter to the Board of Supervisors in support of protecting Goleta Beach Park, including the beach, by removing the unpermitted rock revetments at the Park's west end. Our organizations collectively represent thousands of County residents who support our groups' respective missions.

The unpermitted rock seawall poses significant harm to Goleta Beach as sea level rises. Considerable evidence demonstrates that rock revetments cause adverse impacts to beaches, public access and recreation, scenic views and coastal wildlife habitats. The EIR acknowledges these impacts, but improperly dismisses them as speculative.

Sea level rise is not speculative and will exacerbate the impacts of the revetments or other armoring alternatives the County may consider. This project represents an important opportunity to adapt to the changing climate and sea level rise – while maintaining and enhancing the Park and beach for future generations.

Moving infrastructure – which has been repeatedly damaged even with the unpermitted revetments in place – out of the erosion hazard zone makes good environmental and economic sense. The sewer line and gas line should be moved out of harm's way. Parking spaces in Lot 7 have been damaged numerous times by erosion and by County efforts to abate erosion, requiring repeated repairs and resurfacing. Relocating – not eliminating – the 55 spaces in Lot 7 will minimize repair costs, will allow for restoration of almost an acre of beach for coastal recreation, will improve the Park's visual appearance (replacing oil-stained asphalt and cars with white sandy beach), and will locate the parking spaces closer to popular Park facilities including the pier, picnic areas, BBQs, restaurant and volleyball courts.

We support retention of the permitted rock revetment in front of the restaurant. Both the restaurant and the wastewater outfall vault will be better protected by a new buried cobble berm.

Instead of removing the unpermitted rocks without installing any protective structure, we are willing to consider installation of a buried cobble berm¹ in front of other key facilities, such as Parking Lot 6, if installation of the berm is part of a comprehensive package that protects both the beach and the Park. In this way, concerns about erosion of both the Park and the beach are largely mitigated. Studies show that cobble berms have been effective in mitigating erosion in the face of 20-foot waves at an Oregon park.

There is a win-win for the County and the community. We urge the Board to consider a hybrid alternative which removes the unpermitted rock seawalls to protect the beach, retains permitted revetments in all other locations in the Park, relocates the utilities, bike path and Parking Lot 7 out of harm's way, and if necessary installs a cobble berm in front of important Park facilities and infrastructure.

Thank you for considering our recommendation.

Sincerely,



Owen Bailey,
Executive Director
Environmental Defense Center



Dave Davis,
Executive Director
Community Environmental Council

¹ The EIR describes the cobble berm in conjunction with a geotextile core dune. While willing to consider cobble berms as needed to protect park facilities, we do not support the geotextile cores because of concerns the plastic material can be shredded and released onto beaches and into the ocean.

Eddie Harris,
President
Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen J. Ferry".

Steve Ferry,
Co-President
Santa Barbara Audubon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Morey".

Mark Morey,
Chapter Chair
Santa Barbara Surfrider

Paul Jenkin,
Chapter Chair
Ventura Surfrider