

WAR 13 2002

March 10, 2002

Mr. William J. Douros  
Superintendent, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
299 Foam Street  
Monterey, CA 93940

Re: Proposed Visitor Center Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Douros:

We are members of the residential neighborhood surrounding the open-space field on the bluff above Seacliff Beach State Park. The field has long been committed exclusively to low-impact public recreation, with occasional over-flow parking for special events.

We are writing to express concern about the feasibility study which is apparently under way, or nearly so, in connection with a proposed visitor center contemplated for the Seacliff Beach area by the NOAA and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Unfortunately, there has been a significant lack of information about this potential project and an even greater level of misinformation. In recent months, we have received reports ranging from no Seacliff Beach project, to a small project on a vehicle maintenance yard in the area, to a 12,000 square foot building, with significant related facilities including an outdoor marine-theme playground and amphitheater to be located in the middle of the open field on the bluff above Seacliff Beach.

We now understand that proposals have been requested to study the feasibility of such a project at three sites: Seacliff Beach, Heritage Harbor in Monterey, and an as yet undetermined waterfront location in Santa Cruz. NOAA and local representatives of the State Park have been quoted as preferring the Seacliff site even prior to commencement of the study.

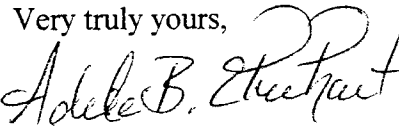
We strongly object to the expenditure of public funds on any "study" which has apparently been prejudged. Just as importantly, a number of publicly controlled sites which would seem far better suited for the proposed facility should be included in any objective analysis. These sites should include at least the following:

1. The Soldier's Club at Ford Ord, currently unused and in disrepair, located on a spectacular area with immediate freeway access and no residential impact.
2. State Park land at Moss Landing.
3. Land adjacent to the Long Marine Laboratory in Santa Cruz, with adjacent UC, state Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Game Wildlife services.
4. Wilder Ranch and Beaches State Park in Santa Cruz.

5. The Coast Dairies Ranch, several thousand coastal acres in Santa Cruz County recently acquired for preservation and public use.

All of these sites are on the coast, all are committed to public use, all have excellent public access, and none would have any negative impact on surrounding residential neighborhoods.

We hope you will include the alternate sites in your studies, and we request that we be provided with notice of all proceedings relating to this project.

Very truly yours,  


Adele Eberhart, *Chair*  
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*Coalition Committee Members*  
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Lori Adragna

cc: Daniel J. Basta, National Marine Sanctuary Program Director  
Congressman Sam Farr  
Senator Bruce McPherson  
Assemblyman Fred Keeley  
Rusty Areias, Director, California Dept. of Parks and Recreation  
Ellen Pirie, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Supervisor  
Stephanie Harlan, Chair, MBMS Advisory Committee