



1933 – 2008
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San Mateo County Harbor District

Board of Harbor Commissioners

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Peter Grenell, General Manager

March 26, 2008

Paul Michel
Superintendent
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam St.
Monterey, CA 93940

Ref: Beneficial Use Shoreline Protection at Surfers Beach, Pillar Point Harbor

Dear Paul:

As you know, Mr. Brian Overfelt delivered a statement during Public Comment at the February 15, 2008 Joint Sanctuary Advisory Councils meeting in Half Moon Bay (see enclosure), concerning a serious beach erosion problem at Surfers Beach, adjacent to the Pillar Point Harbor breakwater. Mr. Overfelt was accompanied by approximately fifty (50) local citizens including beach users, surfers, property owners, business people, and others who represent a broad range of community interest in this issue and who are Sanctuary users and supporters. Many of these people had arrived at 9:30 a.m., but had to leave before the 10:30 a.m. Public Comment period.

As Mr. Overfelt stated, the community strongly supports the Sanctuary Program but feels that the existing Sanctuary restriction on “artificial placement” of clean harbor dredged sand on Surfers Beach inhibits the San Mateo County Harbor District’s ability to address the beach erosion problem through a beneficial use solution. Such a solution will benefit the public, Sanctuary resources, and enable the District to properly maintain its harbor. At present, the badly eroded beach limits use and enjoyment by a variety of public users, and continues to undermine Highway 1, the only available vehicle route through the Coastside area and thus an essential artery for public safety and security.

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Draft Management Plan of October 2006, Volume III, p. 94, Strategy HDD-5: Alternative Disposal Methods, states: “At this time there does not seem to be a need for additional beach nourishment sites within the MBNMS, **except for possibly at Pillar Point Harbor.**” [my emphasis] The inclusion of this statement is a result of extensive discussions of this issue by the Dredging Working Group during the lengthy Joint Management Plan Review Process.



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The Management Plan's recognition of this opportunity for a simple solution to a long-standing problem is significant, in that it can lead to great benefit for the Sanctuary, its resources, and its users, and for Pillar Point Harbor, which is a major gateway to Sanctuary waters, at no cost to the Sanctuary.

The Harbor District views Surfers Beach beneficial use placement as a very cost-effective solution to its harbor dredged material disposal problem. The District is prepared to conduct all the necessary planning and testing and meet the requirements of all of the concerned federal, state, and local permit agencies needed for beneficial use beach nourishment. The District therefore seeks Sanctuary authorization for harbor dredged material placement at Surfers Beach conditioned upon prior approval of all required permits and certifications of the concerned permit agencies.

The Pillar Point Harbor/Surfers Beach situation is unique and does not represent a potential issue of precedent with respect to other possible circumstances.

Your letter to Mr. Overfelt of March 20, 2008 makes note of the Harbors and Dredge Disposal Action Plan, which "outlines necessary steps needed to evaluate a disposal site at the Pillar Point Harbor. Your letter also refers to a 2003 request to Pillar Point Harbor for certain information. In fact, the information in your first two bullet points was provided; information for the last three was not, because at that time the Harbor District was not in a position to immediately proceed with the expenditure of time, effort, and funds to develop a project, which activity would necessarily have produced the items referred to in those three points. We acknowledge, however, that such information would be needed in order for the Sanctuary to issue a final authorization for disposal.

We recognize that the Sanctuary is not yet in a position to take an action in this regard without obtaining further information about possible solutions to the problems. However, you will understand that the District needs to feel that there is a reasonable chance of Sanctuary authorization being given, assuming that necessary information is provided and that all needed permits and other authorizations and certifications are approved, before investing the considerable effort and resources required to bring a project to the stage at which Sanctuary review and authorization could be given.



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Thus, I invite you to participate with us in seeking a mutually successful resolution of the Surfers Beach issue. To that end, I would like to meet with you and Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary Superintendent Maria Brown at the soonest opportunity to discuss this matter, with the aim of ultimately reaching an agreement that will enable the Harbor District to take positive action to everyone's benefit. I await your response with great interest.

Sincerely,

SAN MATEO COUNTY HARBOR DISTRICT

Peter Grenell
General Manager

Cc: Congress Member Anna Eshoo
Bonnie McClung, Mayor, City of Half Moon Bay
Board of Harbor Commissioners
Maria Brown, Superintendent, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary
Marcia Raines, City Manager, Half Moon Bay
Thomas R. Kendall, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
George W. Domurat, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
Brian Overfelt
Dan Temko, Harbor Master, Pillar Point Harbor

Encl. Statement by Brian Overfelt at Joint Sanctuary Advisory Councils meeting at Half Moon Bay, February 15, 2008

Statement by Brian Overfelt at:

Gulf of The Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries Joint
Advisory Council Meeting

Friday, February 15, 2008

We have a serious beach erosion problem within our community that needs healing. This exact location starts at Surfers Beach then south wrapping all the way to the tip of Half Moon Bay. This is not a new problem nor is it new to the sanctuaries as it was first brought to your attention in a memo dated April 2003 sent by Harbor District General Manager Peter Grenell. In this memo Peter outlines details of the proposed dredge project which would allow a much needed dredging activity in an environmentally sound, cost effective, and broadly beneficial manner. I don't think Peter realizes that if this community knew of his efforts a few years back everyone would have rallied behind him. No one seemed to know, but we know now. All you have to do is look at the many tons of sand collected inside the rock walls of the PPH and then look how depleted our beaches are directly south. Notice the depletion of sand and look at the cliffs as they erode and fall to the beach. CalTrans has already had to place riprap along Highway 1 to prevent further degradation caused by erosion at the Surfers Beach location. My friend, a local fisherman, has almost lost his house twice in the last twenty years due to the beach disappearing near his Miramar home. There are many stories like these.

The Sanctuary Program to this time has opposed District requests for authorization to place clean, otherwise permit-approved harbor dredged material on Surfers Beach. I know the first memo came to you in 2003, but even back then it was long over due. The Sanctuary finally recognized the possibility of a new beach nourishment site at Pillar Point Harbor in the updated MBNMS Management plan of 2006; strategy FIDD5/Alternative Disposal Methods p.94.

Our beaches need nourishment and they need it now. This community strongly supports the Sanctuary Program but we have concerns that need to be immediately addressed. Unfair and overly restrictive laws by the Sanctuary are stopping our Harbor District from curing a horrible problem. A cure that can demonstrate no environmental impact or concern in the negative, but so many positives and benefiting so many; a win win situation for everyone: homeowners, business owners, Cal Trans, beach goers, harbor users, the snowy plover, etc. Nothing would ever go over the wall that wasn't approved first by all the required regulatory agencies. {not to mention the inside of the harbor; testing and dredging the sand would allow the Harbor District to vacuum out the PPH and improve it as well as nourish beaches that need it inside as well. Talking to a local fisherman I have found that parts of the inside of the Harbor are already not navigable by boat due to the sand build up.

I am asking you to look at this situation as a special circumstance, just like at the Santa Cruz Harbor and the Moss Landing Harbor, where you can find enough evidence to consider the sanctuary precedent "ARTIFICIAL SUBSTANCE" as a law that is hindering in this situation not helping. Our bay starting at Surfers Beach then to the south is in dire need of beach nourishment. Please, help us.

Thank you for listening and thank you for your time.
Sincerely,

Brian Overfelt
650 888-4650
brianoverfelt@hotmail.com