



SAN DIEGO FISHERMEN'S WORKING GROUP
8021 Lemon Avenue La Mesa ,CA 91941

Unified Port of San Diego
3165 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Central Embarcadero Redevelopment Recommendations

12 July 2016

Dear Port Commissioners:

A world-class community fishing commercial fishing harbor on the Embarcadero is a crucial and beneficial part of the fabric of the waterfront and the San Diego community. Our fishing harbor and the people within provide *food security, economic value, legal consistency,* and strengthen connections to our *history and culture.*

Food security. San Diegans want access to safe, secure and healthy food. While 90% of the U.S.'s seafood is imported, with most from unknown origins, San Diego fishermen provide a local source of traceable seafood. This seafood is a safe, secure, healthy and affordable option for the community, and is some of the most sustainable seafood in the world.

Economic Value. The San Diego fishing industry supports 130 commercial fishing vessels, including crew members and their families. In the San Diego area, 2.3 million pounds of seafood were landed in 2014, at a value of \$10.3 million. Landed value is just the tip of the iceberg of the full suite of values that commercial fisheries bring to San Diego. Other values include: networks, stewardship, lifestyle, income, fishing expenses, gifting and trading seafood, culture and tradition, education, spiritual, intergenerational, and transportation.

Legal Consistency. A fishing harbor is consistent with local and State plans and acts that protect the coast and its people. The current proposals for Central Embarcadero development may not adequately meet the requirements of the Unified Port of San Diego Master Plan or the Commercial Fisheries Revitalization Plan to maintain a working fishing harbor at this location; the State Land Commissions Public Trust Doctrine that holds the waterfront in trust for the people of California; nor the Coastal Act that states that fishing harbors should be maintained (or moved into an equal or better area).

History and Culture. Downtown San Diego is the cultural and historical home of San Diego fishing. It's the last place that you can see a commercial fishing harbor that connects the past to future. San Diego fishing operations need to be in sight of our community to build support and to allow young San Diegans to view fishing and consider it as a viable line of

work in order to keep our food sources secure. Once fishing is not visible, it will disappear along with the food security, economic stability, jobs and local identity it provides.

The Future: A Local Seafood System is Within Reach

Our vision is a thriving local food system, of which fishing is an integral and respected part. In this safe food system, San Diegans can access fresh, healthy, sustainably sourced seafood, and they can afford this local bounty for the whole family. After years of decline following the tuna industry collapse, our commercial fisheries are poised to responsibly expand, increasingly able to support a local seafood system and all its benefits. With recent efforts focused on cooperative *fisheries management* and *training, legislative reform, and public outreach* we are achieving reliable, local, and sustainable seafood supplies.

Fisheries management. U.S. fisheries management is among the most rigorous in the world. Groundfish stocks have been undergoing a rebuilding phase for the past 20 years and it's starting to pay off with increased harvests foreseen. Increased harvests are also predicted for pelagic fish and squid.

Fishermen Training. Funding has just been awarded to the San Diego fishermen and colleagues for the development of a statewide Commercial Fishermen's Apprenticeship Program. The program will train young fishermen to sustainably fish, safely navigate, collect much-needed fisheries data, and market their catch. This is the first program of its kind in the country, possibly the world, and San Diego is leading the way.

Legislative Reform. Direct access to local seafood is now easier than ever with the recent passing of California's Pacific to Plate legislation (AB 226), which allows fishermen to sell their catch directly to the public. The San Diego Fishermen of Central Embarcadero led the way for this statewide reform.

Public Outreach. Through collaborative outreach including fishermen, chefs and scientists, there is growing public awareness of the over 70 seafood species landed in San Diego so that there is always something for everyone available. We are no longer just tuna eaters and are undergoing increasing appreciation of San Diego's unique and satisfying harvest.

Moving toward world class.

Achieving a world class community fishing harbor requires only modest improvements, including upgraded areas for berthing, net mending, processing and offloading, fishermen's market space, access to a crane for offloading, ice machines, freezers and refrigerator space, and a wet-floor for small-scale processing. The San Diego fishing community would like to work with whoever is selected to make sure that the specific needs are addressed using the fishermen's knowledge. Presently, the existing Santa Monica Seafood operation provides some of these facilities and possesses knowledge of fishery needs.

In Summary

With only modest modifications to the fishing harbor, the Embarcadero can be a centrally located, world class, working waterfront. Downtown San Diego will be known for its healthy, sustainable seafood; its strong fishing heritage; and its beautiful, fully operational fishing harbor accessible to all. San Diegans and visitors will be able to view the fishing activities and experience our fishing heritage and the waterfront.

Besides the aesthetic and cultural benefits, this iconic locale and its progressive, hard-working fishermen will connect us with our food sources, improve food security, bolster local jobs and economic growth, and decrease the current amounts of untraceable, unsafe and unsustainable seafood on our plates. Further, a fishing harbor is consistent with local and State coastal plans intended to protect and support our coastline, our people and our well regulated domestic fishing industry.

We need your help and your support to ensure that San Diego fishing will have the infrastructure, visibility and community involvement it needs in order to thrive. Downtown San Diego, like many other downtowns, has its share of large hotels, chain and non-local retailers and restaurants, and a lack of fresh, locally sourced food. We have an opportunity to highlight San Diego's local treasures and create a beautiful, unique, accessible, and purposeful world-class waterfront. We encourage the Port of San Diego to seek this in any proposal they consider, and to keep fishermen involved in the planning process.

Best regards,

Peter Halmay president