

March 12, 2014

Ms. Naomi Kelley
City Administrator
City and County of San Francisco
City Hall, Room 362
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Ms. Kelley:

Yerba Buena Gardens is a San Francisco treasure, a wonderful and precious urban amenity in the heart of the City for people of all ages and walks of life – residents, workers, and visitors. The Gardens are the signature legacy of Mayor George Moscone, who forged this “grand compromise” between the City’s economically vital visitor industry and its need for modern convention facilities and the community constituencies with their vision of a vibrant gardens and recreational and cultural facilities.

That vision placed the convention center below ground so that the new Gardens would fill and embody the above ground City. And it has proved a dramatic success. The Gardens’ beautiful and diverse facilities are in continual everyday use and beloved by the people of San Francisco, while Moscone Convention Center hums busily beneath it and downtown San Francisco grows around it.

We are members of, or consultants to, the original “Select Committee” civic advisory body appointed by Mayor Moscone in 1977 to resolve a decade of bitter civic controversy. Subsequent to the Committee’s recommendation and a public vote to place the convention facilities underground and a vibrant garden activities above, we worked for over two decades to realize that vision.

37 years later we are now dismayed and angered by the latest Moscone Expansion Project which violates the integrity and spirit of the agreement to keep the convention facilities underground and will vigorously oppose that plan from becoming a reality.

1 California Street, # 1900
San Francisco, CA 94111

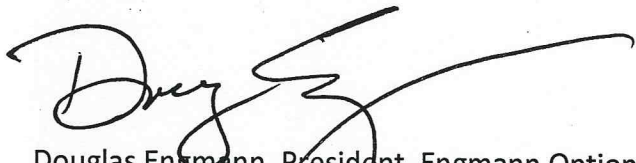
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Engmann Options, Inc.

The massive above-ground Expansion Project proposed now by the City – essentially jamming an above ground **airport terminal-sized 500 ft long and nearly 100 ft high new convention building** onto Howard Street, directly next to the Childrens' Garden, would fundamentally betray Mayor Moscone's "grand compromise." It cannot but overwhelm the adjacent Gardens, physically, psychologically, and spiritually. The current plan is unacceptable to those of us who have worked tirelessly to preserve the Gardens as the essential element of the vibrant SOMA area.

The convention industry is undoubtedly an important economic driver for San Francisco; however, the convention industry's claims that needs for ballroom and meeting space have been ballooning for years -- there can be no guarantee that they will be satisfied with this 42% increase in facility space and want to expand further into the Gardens. The convention industry would be better advised to find alternate locations in San Francisco for a convention center that has room for expansion rather than a proposal that threatens a vital and vibrant public development and park that has been the economic engine for that area for many years.

Sincerely,



Douglas Engmann, President, Engmann Options, Inc.
Member, Mayor's Select Committee on Yerba Buena Center - 1977
Former President, City Planning Commission

Calvin Welch
Consultant, Mayor Select Committee on Yerba Buena Center

Sue Hestor
Friends of the Gardens, Yerba Buena Center

Helen Sause
Deputy Director for Programs and Projects (Retired)
San Francisco Redevelopment Agency

cc: Mayor Edwin M. Lee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
John Rahaim, Director - San Francisco Planning Department

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