



# San Mateo County Harbor District

## Board of Harbor Commissioners

Tom Mattusch, President  
Nicole David, Vice President  
Robert Bernardo, Secretary  
Pietro Parravano, Treasurer  
Sabrina Brennan, Commissioner

Glenn Lazof, Interim General Manager

August 19, 2015

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
99 Pacific Street, Bldg. 455A  
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Mr. Michel,

The San Mateo County Harbor District is looking forward to addressing erosion at Surfer's Beach and to coordinating our efforts with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) and the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. We thank Superintendent Maria Brown and her team for her supportive letter and are excited about the opportunity to collaboratively develop short-term and long-term solutions for shoreline protection at Surfer's Beach.

While two harbors in the Santa Cruz Littoral Cell have optimized dredging operations with beneficial use of sand on adjacent beaches, the third one, Pillar Point Harbor, remains one of the few harbors on the coast of California without a beach nourishment effort. Because of this, much-needed sand gets trapped behind the Harbor breakwater, and is not allowed to continue on its natural north-to-south path, resulting in sand-starved beaches down the coast.

Over the past 50 years, an estimated 250,000 cubic yards of sand has been deposited in the Harbor, the same sand that should have continued to replenish the coast to the south. At the same time, beach erosion accelerated from inches to several feet per year to the south of the Harbor. This significant, rapid erosion and beach loss have threatened sandy beach habitat, greatly diminished opportunities for public recreation, and continues to put beaches, roadways, bike paths, and structures at risk.

It is our understanding that MBNMS is initiating a process to update its management plan this year. As part of this update, we strongly urge you to amend your plan and regulations (CFR 922.132(f)) to allow for the placement of clean dredged material within the sanctuaries for beneficial beach nourishment if the effort mitigates shoreline erosion. We believe these important changes would be consistent with the goal outlined in your Coastal Armoring Action Plan "to reduce expansion of hard coastal armoring in the coastal areas near the MBNMS through proactive regional planning, project tracking, and comprehensive permit analysis and compliance". Further, it would allow Surfer's Beach to receive sand from Pillar Point Harbor that, without the presence of the breakwater, would have naturally been deposited in this area as a result of the natural sediment transport processes of the Santa Cruz Littoral



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Cell. Utilizing clean sand as a resource will provide the much-needed beach replenishment and reduce erosion at this site, and it will also reduce the risk of erosion and impacts to sandy beaches further down the coast.

Not only is this a cost-effective and practical solution to sustain the economic viability of Pillar Point Harbor, but it fulfills the need for a more durable and sustainable solution to erosion control for Highway One. We understand the need for some short-term solutions, such as the emergency revetment to be installed by Caltrans this fall. However, longer-term solutions are also needed and a pilot beach nourishment project would be an important step to provide local agencies the ability to manage their own finite and eroding recreational resources at a time of increased public usage. Simultaneously, developing a longer-term solution with continuous beach nourishment will result in shoreline protection that does not rely on further coastal armoring.

Sincerely,

Tom Mattusch, President  
San Mateo County Harbor District

Cc:

Maria Brown, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary  
Max Delaney, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary  
Charles Lester, California Coastal Commission  
Renee Ananda, California Coastal Commission  
Clifton Davenport, California Sediment Management Plan  
Chris Potter, California Sediment Management Plan  
Ron Moriguchi, California Department of Transportation  
Bob Solatar, California Department of Transportation  
Tom Kendall, US Army Corps of Engineers  
Tessa Beach, US Army Corps of Engineers  
James Zoulas, US Army Corps of Engineers  
Brian Ross, US Environmental Protection Agency  
William Douros, ONMS West Coast Regional Director  
Nicholas Calderon, County of San Mateo, Supervisor Don Horsley's Office