California State Senate

SENATOR MIKE MCGUIRE

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S SECOND SENATE DISTRICT

April 11, 2016

Steve Kinsey, Chair
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219

Dear Chairman Kinsey and Honorable Coastal Commissioners: Chairman Kinsey & Commissioners -

I want to start out by thanking you for your service and for your consideration of this letter on the Sonoma Coast beach fee proposal.

I continue to be opposed to this plan. There are several reasons for this stance and I would like to briefly outline them below:

1. The fees would be inconsistent with the Coastal Act and Sonoma County's Local Coastal Plan.

2. The plan deters public access to some of the most cherished public beaches in Northern California. We should be in the business of opening up our coast to all residents, no matter their socio-economic background and this plan stifles many who live paycheck to paycheck from visiting our beloved coast.

3. I have heard from several Commissioners that you want visitors who enjoy our coast to be more diverse. If this is the case, enacting fees on the Sonoma Coast would have the opposite effect of your stated goal.

4. Like many coastal regions north of the Golden Gate, the Sonoma Coast is isolated due to the lack of public transit. Adding yet another barrier will not only hurt visitor numbers, it will have an impact on the local economy.

5. Our state beaches and parks are desperately underfunded. For too long, we have run the State Park system on the cheap. There is over one billion dollars in deferred maintenance and our continued reliance on corporate sponsorships and outside donors isn't a sustainable strategy (it also hurts regions who have a majority of disadvantaged communities and are unable to raise the needed dollars). If we're serious about injecting revenue into the park system, the Administration should be focused on revenue measures that can move the needle for the system as a whole. For example: Our marijuana user fee proposal would generate $20 million for State Parks starting in 2017.
In addition: I hope the Administration believes that they have brought stability to the State Park system and its time to start reinvesting General Fund revenue, especially since we're looking at a first quarter surplus upwards of $340 million.

Rather than taking a piecemeal approach, which this plan is, we should be introducing a statewide funding proposal that would eliminate the need for any beach fees to be established.

Californians deserve a park system that is open to all. Rather than working on a plan that stifles public access, let's work together on a plan that will bring financial stability to our beloved parks for generations to come. Our future depends on it.

Thank you for consideration of this request and for your service on behalf of the State of California.

Warmest Regards,

MIKE McGUIRE
Senator

Chairman -
Please let me know if I can answer any questions.
Thank you for your consideration of this letter.