

August 19, 2012

Dear Planning Commission Representatives,

It is my understanding that the Planning Commission will be considering whether to approve a year round rope at the Children's Pool. I would like to weigh in on behalf of the Lifeguards that have worked the area for years. I want to make it clear that I am speaking as the union representative, and I am in no way speaking on behalf of the City. As a twenty-three year veteran and current sergeant, I feel that my fellow Lifeguards and I have valuable information that the commission should hear prior to making such an important decision.

A year round rope in its current configuration will not help the situation. The ability to compromise on a common sense solution needs to be considered. There are some simple facts that should be looked at. Seals do not like the beach when it's warm out or during extreme low tide. During these times, they prefer to be on the rocks. People, especially children, do not use the pool when it's cold. The rope was somewhat effective until it became clear that there is no legal way to enforce it. People pass freely over, under and around it. Lifeguards, Rangers and Police receive countless calls about those crossing over. It takes up resources and distracts us from our primary mission.

#### Solution

Rather than putting up the rope, use large moveable boulders. The boulders would create a separate pool within the pool. During the winter months, the seals use the beach more frequently. During pupping season, it would be logical to block approximately seventy five percent of the beach. The rocks would be adjusted so that twenty five percent of the beach would be left open to the public. It would include an area on the east side close to the stairs that would have water access. Seventy five percent of the beach would be blocked off for the seals.

During the summer months, beginning after the pupping season, the rocks would be adjusted to the west. Twenty five percent of the beach would be roped off for the few seals that use the beach during the warmer months. The rest of the beach would remain open for humans. By doing so, there would be no reason to cross into the protected area. Access and protection would be achieved so you would have more acceptance from the community. The seals naturally gravitate towards the wall; this would be the area reserved for them.

It is important to note that the Lifeguards have remained neutral. We enjoy the seals and humans equally. There have been copious amounts of misinformation put out from both sides. We believe the seals need space during the pupping season. We have observed humans and seals cohabitating far before this was a newsworthy debate. Contrary to what is often portrayed, the seals do not fear us. They

frequently follow swimmers, snorkelers and divers for hours. They play with our fins and playfully bump us with their bodies.

### Contamination

We are deeply concerned about contamination of the water and sand. If you visit your local dog park, there are signs encouraging all to pick up after their dog. The signs provide information about the dangers of bacteria due to fecal matter. Imagine if no one picked up after his or her dog in your local park. There has been no clean up of seal feces at the Children's Pool that I am aware of. We have had several hundred seals defecating on the beach daily for over ten years. The bacteria have percolated through the sand and have polluted the water. As part of the plan, we suggest that each time the rocks are moved, several feet of sand should be moved out. We would like the Coastal Commission to address this issue and consider recommending a low cost solution.

### Solution

The Children's Pool is an unnatural structure that traps sand and bacteria like no other place in San Diego. Natural flushing is prevented even during the largest swell and tide. On most beaches, large quantities of sand shift from one beach to another. Large swells can take ten to fifteen feet of sand off a beach in a day. Smaller swells push sand up and can replace it in equal time. The north swells of winter often take sand from various beaches, then the south swell brings it back. The movement of sand is most noticeable at Windansea, Boomer and Shell Beach. Clean up does not require expensive dredging and hauling. The City moves sand and cleans beaches year round.

Use City bulldozers to scoop sand out of the pool after pupping season. The bulldozer can easily dump the sand over the wall. The South swell will clean the sand and replace it. Seal feces are a natural element that will no longer pollute the area once dispersed into smaller quantities.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ed Harris, Teamsters 911