

To: Tom Modica, Manager Government Affairs  
From: Peninsula Beach Preservation Group  
Re: Breakwater Study  
Date: October 17, 2008

As you may be aware, the residents of the Alamitos Bay peninsula are overwhelmingly opposed to either removing or modifying the breakwater. In a survey earlier this year, which was sent to all peninsula residents, 89% responded that they are opposed to removing the breakwater, and 87% responded that they are opposed to modifying the breakwater.

Many residents in our community are of the opinion that the study being performed by Moffat and Nichols is primarily focused on the potential benefits of modifying the breakwater, without legitimate consideration given to the myriad reasons why this proposed project may be a bad idea.

Thus we have drafted this list of concerns which we would respectfully request be addressed by the study you are performing.

1. Environmental: Opening up the breakwater so that trash from the L.A. River can be “flushed” out to sea is an irresponsible and short-sighted solution, and inconsistent with any legitimate environmental approach.
  - a. It seems disingenuous and hypocritical for an environmental group to promote “flushing” polluted water from the L.A. River out to sea, rather than stopping it at the source. Wouldn't funds for reconfiguring the breakwater be better spent on cleaning up the water before it exits the L.A. River? If the water is clean, then the beaches will be clean, and reconfiguring the breakwater for that reason will become a moot point.
  - b. To what extent does the port contribute to the pollution problem rather than the breakwater? The same argument as above holds, for addressing the source rather than flushing it out to sea.
  - c. From an environmental perspective, it is much better to have any floating trash collect on the beach where it can be raked and disposed of properly, rather than sending it out to sea where it becomes much more of a hazard to wildlife.
  - d. What would be the effect on wildlife habitats? Wouldn't many birds, marine mammals, and other wildlife be losing their long-established habitat? We don't know the answer to this question, but feel that it is an important point to consider.
2. Economic and recreational: How will the various existing business and recreational facilities be affected by the loss of our calm harbor?
  - a. Marinas
  - b. Cruise Lines such as Carnival, Catalina, Aqualink and others.

- c. THUMS
  - d. Port of Long Beach
  - e. The effect on existing uses of still water, high wind conditions – kite surfing, small children, those preferring calm waters, pleasure boating and sailing.
  - f. What are the dollars which may be lost if TransPac, Congressional Cup and other such yachting events should relocate to areas of high wind, still water conditions.
3. Before the breakwater protected the peninsula, there was no beach – the water came all the way up to the boardwalk wall. Even with the breakwater, it is necessary to constantly replenish the sand in order to prevent the beach from washing away entirely.
- a. Who will bear the additional expense of trying to maintain a beach under conditions that have proven to be significantly more difficult than they already are? Will it even be possible to do?
  - b. If this issue is not addressed, how can we expect to increase tourism at a beach that no longer exists?
  - c. We have heard boasts that the beach on the peninsula would be extended to the end of the Jetty. How realistic is that in light of economic considerations?
4. Protection of property all along the shoreline. Many of our residents recall times when the water flooded much of the peninsula and other areas of Long Beach. This problem was substantially mitigated by the addition of the breakwater and subsequent beach.
- a. Please recognize that everything built in the last 60 years assumes the protection of the breakwater. Who will be held liable for the property damage that is sure to occur if the breakwater is modified? Is the city prepared to defend these cases, or to compensate the victims?
  - b. What will the consequences be for other communities – Seal Beach, Surfside, and Sunset Beach for example? Is the city prepared to assume any potential liability for property damage?
  - c. Consequences for Naples, Belmont Shore, Bluff, Belmont Park and Ocean Blvd. condos. Flooding has extended well beyond just the peninsula.
5. Effects of global warming, rising water levels, subsidence and increased storm activity.
- a. The beach is already unstable because of subsidence, artificial rising of sand and bulldozing.

- b. Water levels in the ocean seem certain to rise in the foreseeable future. Long Beach property owners and residents will need more, not less, protection from the effects of global warming.
  - c. Because the city is already aware of these issues, contributing to efforts that will knowingly exacerbate these problems may result in significant liability down the road.
- 6. Benefits vs. Cost in light of other more important issues.
  - a. What do the ordinary citizens of Long Beach want? Is this an effort being pushed by a vocal and well-organized minority, or do the majority of Long Beach residents actually feel that the benefits of this project outweigh the cost?
  - b. Are there other projects which are more pressing and which could deliver greater value for our taxpayer dollar?
  - c. Are the new revenues that are being suggested (increased tourism, etc.) even remotely going to offset what this project would be likely to cost, or are they dwarfed to the point of being irrelevant? Please don't forget to also consider the revenues that are likely to be lost as a result of sinking or modifying the breakwater, as outlined above.
- 7. Qualifications of those making the recommendations and preparing the models.
  - a. What are the qualifications of those making the recommendations?
  - b. Have they made a thorough study of the conditions that existed prior to the construction of the breakwater, including the beach (or lack thereof) and flooding?
  - c. Have they made a thorough study of existing conditions, particularly with regards to the long-term issue of beach erosion?

We hope that the above questions and issues will help contribute to a more balanced analysis of the breakwater reconfiguration assessment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jeanne Muench

President, Peninsula Beach Preservation Group, Inc.

cc: Bob Foster, Mayor  
Pat West, City Manager  
Gary DeLong, Councilmember