



BELLWETHER  
FINANCIAL GROUP

Lisa Bartlett  
Supervisor, 5th District  
County of Orange  
333 West Santa Ana Blvd.  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

June 30, 2021

Dear Supervisor Bartlett,

The letter sent to you on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, from Anne Eubanks, the current President of the Dana Point Boaters Association (DPBA), was forwarded to my attention by my team. There are a few items in the letter that I believe merit comment. The first item is the statement that DPHP did not discuss with DPBA about slip rate increases. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Ralph Grippo and I met with five members of the six-person DPBA board for a couple of hours. During that meeting, we clearly communicated that we would be sending out a notice soon, notifying our tenants that a significant rate increase would be going into effect in the fall of this year. On June 16<sup>th</sup>, Anne and I had a follow up call that lasted over an hour and the primary subject was rate increases. I did not provide her the exact rates; however, I did discuss that the minimum increase would be over 20%, and that the most significant rate increase would be on the largest slips. She agreed with the issue of utility costs as it related to large vessels, and we had an in-depth conversation about how all costs were escalating and how it was impacting all businesses.

The assertion that our logic is flawed when our methodology compares Dana Point to other marinas in Orange County is difficult to understand. Let us first ignore the fact that our lease is with the County of Orange and that the California Coastal Commission determined that our social justice program should serve the disadvantage youths of Orange County. DPBA wants us to overlook the fact that over 95% of the boaters in the harbor and on our waitlists come from Orange County. DPBA is not willing to acknowledge that Dana Point does not draw boaters from San Diego, Long Beach, or San Pedro. Our new rates are significantly below the Orange County average, which is the market in which The Marina at Dana Point does business. Although our market is not all of Southern California, by coincidence, our new rates are actually in line with those averages.

The assertion that the rate increase will drive a mass exodus of boaters from the harbor, the boaters on the waitlist will vanish, and we will be marketing to unidentified group of wealthy boaters. We believe this will be proved false, for in our opinion The Marina at Dana Point continues to be the best value in Orange County. However, even with higher rates, there are so many Orange County residents that are waiting patiently on the waitlists, hoping that DPBA is correct on turnover.

Our team is in the harbor every day and interacting with our community, which includes existing tenants and the thousands of Orange County residents that wait for their opportunity to participate as a full-time boater in the marina. We have actually been pleasantly surprised by the respect and understanding that the vast majority of our tenants have shown our office staff as it relates to the rate increase. Of course, we have received dozens of angry emails. However, in contrast to DPBA, our office also continues to receive numerous emails, calls, and visits from our tenants that are very supportive. We have forwarded to your office and to County staff some of these emails and voicemails for these tenants you will not hear from for they are too respectful of your time and position in the community. By far the vast majority of the tenant interaction regarding the rate increases are informational versus combative.

Lastly, the revitalization of the harbor has and will continue to require significant work and investment on the behalf of DPHP. There are many steps that we need to execute to make the revitalization a success. Over the next several months, we will be required to tackle several challenges in the marina that will continue the drumbeat from some boaters that DPHP is purposely driving out boaters who require affordability. A couple of the major challenges we will have to tackle is enforcing seaworthiness and testing vessels for electrical compatibility to the new standards. Both of these items we are required to do, but at the same time we anticipate more negative feedback from a segment of the harbor.

As always, your championing of the revitalization of the harbor and support of our endeavors is invaluable.

Respectfully,



Joe Ueberroth

Founder & President

Bellwether Financial Group