



RBOC

Protecting your boating interests.™

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September 2, 2021

via email to Jennifer.Lucchesi@slc.ca.gov

Jennifer Lucchesi, Executive Officer
California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South
Sacramento CA 95825

Re: Dana Point Harbor – Slip Rate Increase

Winston Bumpus

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c/o Otis Brock

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Recreational Boaters of California [RBOC] supports the request of the Dana Point Boaters Association, area clubs and individual boaters that the State Lands Commission take timely action to prevent the slip rate increase that will take effect on October 1 of this year.

RBOC is the nonprofit organization that advocates to promote, protect and enhance the interests of the state's recreational boating public.

Dana Point Harbor Partners – the private firm that operates publicly owned Dana Point Harbor under a 66-year master lease with the County of Orange – recently notified slip tenants that effective October 1, 2021, slip rates would increase by 26% - 96%, depending on the size of the slip.

This is by far the largest single slip rate increase in the history of Dana Point Harbor and disregards decades of precedent-setting protections of affordable access to public boat slips. These radical slip rate increases also violate the Dana Point Tidelands Act, which deeded in trust this stretch of coast to the County of Orange for the creation and maintenance of a public boat harbor, with the protections of affordable coastal access that go with it.

Dana Point Harbor Partners justifies their rate increases with a market analysis limited primarily to private Newport Bay marinas, and disregards comparable public marinas, such as Long Beach and Oceanside. Of course, Newport Beach is among the wealthiest communities in the United States and marinas in Newport Bay cater to these wealthy yacht owners. On the other hand, Dana Point Harbor was built as an affordable alternative to Newport Beach to serve a less affluent community of boaters. In fact, in 2001, when a previous private operator attempted to raise DPH slip fees by a fraction of today's increase, justified by a comparison to Newport Beach, the County of Orange intervened and halted the increase because it did not accurately consider comparable public marinas. The County has not chosen to intervene this time.

For more than 20 years, Dana Point Harbor boaters contributed tens of millions of dollars to a dedicated government fund (Tidelands Fund 108) for the redevelopment of Dana Point Harbor. No redevelopment ever occurred. And now, nearly three years after the County of Orange outsourced

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the project to Dana Point Harbor Partners, still no redevelopment has taken place and the marinas remain in a state of disrepair. Now, DPHP is imposing drastic fee increases without any notable improvements to the boater experience.

In anticipation of the October 1 slip fee increases, many boaters who cannot afford the added costs are already vacating their slips, some leaving boating altogether. After October 1, Dana Point Harbor will surrender its character as a casual community of working-class boaters to become yet another haven for wealthy yacht owners. This precedent will almost certainly cascade to other California municipal marinas, which will be tempted to follow suit with impunity.

For the protection of affordable access to public marinas everywhere, your timely action is critical.

Thank you for this opportunity to express RBOC's concerns and request on this issue. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this issue with you at your convenience. I can be reached at 650.644.7968, and Jerry Desmond, RBOC's legislative advocate, can be reached at 916.441.4166.

Sincerely,

Winston Bumpus

Winston Bumpus, President

C: Anne Eubanks, President, Dana Point Boaters Association