

Dear Coastal Commissioners,

06.10.18

Re: We are seeking relief from Coastal staff actions (letter enclosed) contrary to the intent and goals of the Coastal Act and the Big Sur Land Use Plan.

The Coastal staff have recently acknowledged that not allowing the Big Sur LUAC to review the Ventana application (December 2016) was a mistake. They have refused, however, to recognize the resulting inconsistencies and violations of the Big Sur LUP. These inconsistencies and violations, left unaddressed, will act as de facto amendments subverting the plans intention to protect: the critical viewshed, limits on development, affordable accommodations, preservation of highway capacity for scenic travel, its rustic character and the Big Sur community, its housing and culture.

The violations need to be removed, the inconsistencies need to be acknowledged as mistakes and the plan's existing policies reaffirmed.

This plan protects California's most popular scenic drive (AAA). The pressures for development will continue to grow. Access to the coast, its unspoiled natural beauty and historic character as well as the surrounding business communities will all suffer if these corrections are not made. The Big Sur coast is a national treasure, failure to protect it is a breach of the public trust.

Tim Green  
for the Defense Committee

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CC: Governor Edmund G. Brown  
Senator Diane Feinstein  
Congressman 20th Dist. Jimmy Panetta  
Secretary of Natural Resources, John Laird  
Senator William W. Monning  
Assembly Anna M. Caballero

Senate Rules Committee  
Senator Toni G. Atkins (Chair)  
Senator Anthony Cannella (Vice Chair)  
Senator Tom Berryhill  
Senator Bill Monning  
Senator Richard D. Roth

Monterey County Supervisors:  
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District 2 John M. Phillips  
District 3 Simon Salinas  
District 4 Jen Parker  
District 5 (includes Big Sur) Mary Adams

Coastal Commissioners:  
Effie Turnbull-Sanders  
Donne Brownsie  
Dayna Bochoco  
Sara Aminzadeh  
Mary Luevano  
Mark Vargas  
Ryan Sundberg  
Aaron Peskin  
Carole Groom  
Erik Howell  
Roberto Uranga  
Steve Padilla

Monterey County Planning Commissioners:  
District 1, Ernesto G Gonzalez  
Anna Ambriz  
District 2 Cosme Padilla  
Francisco Mendoza  
District 3 Paul C. Getzelman  
Melissa Duflock  
District 4 Amy D. Roberts  
Jon Wizard  
District 5 Keith Vandever  
Martha Diehl

Monterey County RMA:  
Director Carl Holm  
Deputy Director John Dugan  
Service Manager Melanie Beretti

State Lands Commission:  
Betty Yee  
Anne Baker  
Nicole Jones

State Transportation Agency  
Brian Annis  
Jeremiah Ketchum

Leon Panetta, former Congressman

Supporters of the Defense Committee:  
Sam Farr, former Congressman 5th Dist. Supervisor  
Karin Strasser Kaufman, former 5th Dist. Supervisor  
Dave Potter, former 5th Dist. Supervisor

Letter read and distributed to the Big Sur Multi Agency Council Meeting / May 11, 2018

The Big Sur Coast has become an icon of natural beauty known around the world. It's popularity is now overwhelming its only access road, Highway 1 (a substandard two lane road). Extended traffic back-ups (hour/s) are commonplace, points of interest become chaotic (pedestrians and cars in the roadway), areas are overused and degraded, public safety issues arise regularly, and emergency services access is put into question. So, why, with the coast already seriously overcrowded, do the Coastal Commission Staff & Monterey County ignore the limited development policies of the Big Sur Land Use Plan (LUP) and encourage more visitor serving development?

The recent Ventana permits (Dec. 2016) were issued with no local review and were represented to the Coastal Commission as immaterial amendments (i.e. no objections, no negative impacts). These were amendments to a 35 year old permit with a 40 year old EIR. The community was not aware...that affordable camping would be converted to new lodging units (15), a new restaurant, a new art gallery (in the critical viewshed), destruction of historic buildings, the degradation (urbanizing) of a national historic site (Post Homestead)...were being considered.

Nearly a year after the issuance of the permits, the community became aware when construction began. By that time the CEQA appeal period had long past. There had been, as required, no LUAC review, no traffic study, no employee housing study, no flagging, no design review & no Big Sur Historical Society Review. The Coastal Commission staff, supported by Monterey County, insisted that all was properly permitted and that there were no violations. These actions, in fact, resulted in numerous inconsistencies and violations of the LUP. All are being left unaddressed.\*

Another push for more visitor serving development has come with Monterey County's determination that the prohibition of STR's in Big Sur will be lifted. As justification, the Coastal Staff's advocacy for STR's has been made clear. So Big Sur's seriously insufficient housing stock may be converted into more visitor serving accommodations. For years the community has tried to make clear the inconsistencies between STR's and the Big Sur LUP. It has all fallen on deaf ears.

So, why? Additional visitor serving facilities will not improve public access, rather the reverse. It is repeatedly laid out in the the Big Sur Land Use plan that the primary public resource of this coast is visual access to the 70 mile scenic corridor, HWY 1. All other uses are subordinate & limited to preserve highway capacity for its primary function: Scenic Travel.

The Big Sur plan (LUP) was developed forty years ago under the supervision of the Coastal Commission. It was designed to conform to the goals of the California Coastal Act (maximum public access & resource protection), and is often referred to as the gold standard of such plans. Whether by lack of institutional memory or error in judgment the actions and intentions of these oversight agencies regarding STR 's and the Ventana permits are promoting development beyond the policies and constraints of the plan. Left standing the inconsistencies created will amend the plan doing irreparable harm to the access and preservation goals of the Big Sur LCP and insulting the decades of effort put into protecting this coast as a national treasure, for all to see.

In the early 1980-ies, the promise of the Big Sur Local Coastal Program was a primary justification for resisting federal-ization of the coast. There was a great deal of confidence that we could protect Big Sur locally: the Coastal Commission, Monterey County, and the Big Sur community. That proposition now appears to be in question. The plan is sound though presently threatened by serious errors of te oversight agencies.

Tim Green / Big Sur LCP Defense Committee

\* www.bigsurlcp.com

*"a national treasure like Big Sur (can be protected) if there is a firm  
committment by local government and the community to do so."*

Leon Panetta