



P.O. Box 331, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272 - PacPaliHTF@gmail.com

July 12, 2021

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency

Via email: wade.crowfoot@resources.ca.gov

Armando Quintero, Director, California Dept. of Parks and Recreation

Via email: armando.quintero@parks.ca.gov

Re: Use of Will Rogers State Beach (WRSB) Parking Lot by the City of Los Angeles for Homeless Housing

Dear Secretary Crowfoot and Director Quintero:

We write on behalf of the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness (PPTFH) whose mission is to “Provide leadership and resources to address the destructive consequences of homelessness in Pacific Palisades so that the community is protected, remains safe and our homeless people receive compassionate, effective services with access to permanent supportive housing.” We are an independent, all-volunteer, community-funded organization. Since January 2016, we have helped 147 homeless individuals move from the streets and 93 of those into permanent supportive housing. (www.pptfh.org) We have worked diligently to become informed and measured in our understanding of homelessness in the Palisades as well as all of Los Angeles.

PPTFH supports tangible efforts to implement compassionate and effective solutions, services, and access to permanent supportive housing for our homeless people that also ensure the continued protection and wellbeing of the community. (We define “community” to include those with and without homes.) **PPTFH does not support or believe that the use of the Will Rogers State Beach (WRSB) parking lot for housing homeless individuals adequately addresses these goals, nor is it safe, appropriate housing or an effective solution to the city – and county-wide homeless issue.**

The WRSB parking lot is located between the beach, four-lane Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) which leads onto the I-10 freeway, and the brush-filled hillsides below densely populated residential neighborhoods. Our volunteers, outreach workers, and the general public (including children) often watch, powerless, as homeless individuals haphazardly walk along or cross this no-barricade section of PCH in dense, high speed traffic; crossing to access the hillside, local services, or the beach pathway. Our calls to 911 for homeless individuals on PCH have been increasing. We expect that the number of fatalities (currently three homeless individuals within the last 2 years) and associated vehicle deaths/injuries in this stretch will increase as a result of housing efforts at WRSB. This location basically is not a safe site for anyone to live, especially

individuals experiencing addiction, mental illness, or other factors that make them unaware of the dangers of this location.

The Via and Corona Del Mar bluffs and hillsides located across from WRSB are attractive to homeless persons seeking seclusion even though they are designated High Fire Hazard, Restricted Entry Zones. No one, whether housed or not, is allowed to camp in these areas due to the high fire risk. This year alone, four fires have been started by homeless individuals who have entered the restricted entry bluff areas. The road access into and out of the Palisades is essentially limited to Sunset Blvd. If a fire ignites and cannot be immediately contained, the entire neighborhood is at high risk.

The WRSB parking lot is not an appropriate location because the area is experiencing increasingly large numbers of beachgoers coming from throughout Los Angeles to seek relief from the heat and relaxation for their families. The parking lots are crowded, space is at a premium and the nighttime activity level is high. Alcohol and drugs are already an issue as are meth labs and drug dealers on our beaches and in our hillsides. This is not an appropriate area for homeless individuals who are vulnerable with substance abuse issues.

The WRSB area is active and unpredictable even without adding 200 or more homeless individuals with special needs. We are currently working with 58 homeless people living on our streets and in the surrounding community. We simply do not have the expertise, skills, and capacity to absorb and do justice to individuals housed in an unsafe location. We must expect that those living at WRSB will want to come into the community and we do not have the capacity to absorb and assist them. The City and County are not providing the necessary support services to communities to help them cope with unanticipated homeless housing and are not working with communities in advance to prepare for healthy, safe outcomes.

We invite you or your representatives to visit the proposed WRSB site and the surrounding community to see for yourselves the actual geography and meet with our volunteers. We would be pleased to take you on a tour of our bluffs, hillsides, and community streets. We want to share with you the reality of our situation and our efforts to care for the housed and unhoused of our community.

Because the proposed WRSB housing is unsafe, inappropriate, endangers those with and without homes in our community and will not solve the Los Angeles wide homeless problem, only compound it, we urgently request that you decline to approve the use of WRSB for homeless housing.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and critically important decision.

Board of Directors, Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness

Sharon Browning: Co President, (310-459-7795)

Sharon Kilbride: Co-President, (310-399-0695)

Pam McGranahan: Vice President, Communications Chair. Helga Jessen: Treasurer.

David Peterson: Secretary. Lou Kamer: Director. Kim Clary: Director, Volunteer Chair.

Chris Eastland: Director. Carol Sanborn: Director, Fundraising Chair.

Bruce Schwartz: Director. Dede Vlietstra: Director

cc (via email):

Hon. Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California (via **Jason Elliott**, Senior Counselor for Housing & Homelessness)

Hon. Ben Allen, State Senator, SD 26

Hon. Henry Stern, State Senator, SD 27

Hon. Richard Bloom, State Assemblymember, AD 50

Jerry West, Angeles District (acting) Superintendent, Cal Parks

Rue Mapp, Chair, State Park and Recreation Commission

Jennifer Lucchesi, Executive Officer, State Lands Commission

Jack Ainsworth, Executive Director, and **Steve Hudson**, District Director, California Coastal Commission;

Sam Schuchat, Executive Director, California State Coastal Conservancy

Joseph T. Edmiston, Executive Director, Mountains, Recreation and Conservation Authority