



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

April 26, 2021

Hon. Ben Allen
California State Senator, SD 26

Via email

Hon. Richard Bloom
California State Assemblymember, AD 50

Via email

Re: Proposed Use of Public Beach Parking Lots for Homeless Housing

Dear Senator Allen and Assemblymember Bloom:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) is seriously concerned about recent proposals involving the use of State-owned, County-operated public beach parking lots, located within your respective Districts in Los Angeles, to house homeless individuals.¹

Los Angeles City Councilmember Mike Bonin (CD 11) has proposed a “study” for the use of Will Rogers State Beach (WRSB; within both of your Districts) and Dockweiler Beach (within Sen. Allen’s District). In connection with a quarterly MOU report in the federal homeless lawsuit, *Alliance for Human Rights v. City of Los Angeles, et al.* (the *Alliance* case), the City of Los Angeles has submitted a “Sheltering Plan” that includes both WRSB and Dockweiler Beach as proposed sites for homeless housing in CD 11.

At this writing, we do not know Los Angeles County’s position on these proposals; to our knowledge, neither Supervisor Sheila Kuehl (WRSB) nor Supervisor Janice Hahn (Dockweiler Beach) has publicly expressed an opinion on the use of public beach parking lots for homeless housing in their respective Districts.

Homeless individuals have for many years been drawn to WRSB as well to as our nearby bluffs and canyon areas. When encampments were mushrooming on the beach several years ago, PPCC initiated the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness (PPTFH), which soon afterward became a respected, independent volunteer non-profit organization. Over the years, with generous donations from the Palisades community, and working daily with our LAPD beach detail and outreach workers from The People Concern, PPTFH volunteers have had great success in helping the homeless find housing and services, eliminating encampments and reducing crime, debris and the ever-present fire risk.² PPCC thanks PPTFH volunteers, LAPD beach detail officers and the outreach workers for their tireless, ongoing efforts that keep the public beach and community safe.

¹ See PPCC letters to public officials expressing our opposition to the use of public beach parking lots for homeless housing:
4/19/21: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Letter-re-CF-21-0350-Sheltering-Plan.pdf>
4/23/21: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Letter-re-CF-21-0350-beach-parks-homeless-housing.pdf>
4/24/21: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Letter-re-Alliance-beach-housing.pdf>
4/26/21: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Letter-Kuehl-beach-homeless-housing.pdf>

² The Pacific Palisades community, in particular our nearby fire-prone bluffs and canyon areas, is at constant risk of fire due to dangerous homeless activities on the beach and in these bluffs and canyons, covered by wild coastal chaparral. Those areas, and all of Pacific Palisades, are located entirely within the LAFD-designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

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These State beaches are a public recreational trust. They are visited and enjoyed annually by millions of individuals and families from the entire Los Angeles region and beyond. The Coastal Act mandates protection and preservation of public access to these beaches. Housing the homeless at beach parking lots would impermissibly impede public access to these valuable recreational resources.

The proposal to use the public WRSB parking lot to house the homeless would deprive people who can't afford to live on or near the beach from enjoying the beach. The WRSB parking lot is regularly used by countless citizens of Los Angeles and the wider region, of all income levels, in order to access this beautiful and popular public beach. There is no parking on PCH at that location. Turning heavily-used beach parking lots into homeless housing would render the public beaches -- pivotal to citizens' quality of life, as expressed by Judge Carter in his recent preliminary injunction ruling in the *Alliance* case -- inaccessible and unavailable.

We believe that our local government officials should instead be proposing other suitable, government-owned locations for homeless housing that are not part of the public recreational trust as are beaches and parks.

PPCC has long-appreciated your strong leadership on environmental issues, including your efforts to protect and preserve our critical public resources. We hope and trust that you will exercise that same leadership in rejecting any proposal to use the public beach parking lots for homeless housing.

In light of swiftly-moving developments in both the *Alliance* case and in Los Angeles City Council, time is of the essence. We respectfully urge you, as our elected State representatives, to publicly oppose this proposed use of treasured State recreational resources.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

David Card, Chair David Kaplan, Vice-Chair
Richard Cohen, Treasurer Christina Spitz, Secretary
Pacific Palisades Community Council

cc (via email):

Hon. Sheila Kuehl, LA County Supervisor, CSD 3
Hon. Janice Hahn, LA County Supervisor, CSD 4
Hon. Eric Garcetti, LA City Mayor
Hon. Mike Bonin, LA City Councilmember, CD 11
Jack Ainsworth, CA Coastal Commission Executive Director
Steve Hudson, CA Coastal Commission District Director
Cris Liban, LA County Beach Commission Chair
Gary Jones, DBH Director
Tony Tavares, Caltrans District 7 Director