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A Head for Business, A Heart for the Community

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November 16, 2007

Supervisor Joni Gray
County Administration Building
105 E. Anapamu St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

SUBJECT: Support Beach Stabilization for Goleta Beach Park

Dear Supervisor Gray,

Goleta Beach Park is a community treasure at a critical crossroads. Seasonal storm surges, wave activity, and natural sand erosion pose an imminent threat to the wonderful recreational facilities along the beach and the critical utility lines buried beneath the park. After years of study and community input, the fate of Goleta Beach Park is now in your hands.

Community groups, private citizens, and other organizations, including the Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce have studied the history, geography, and environmental context of the Park for many years to help determine the best course of action to protect the Park and minimize any adverse impact on the coastal ecosystem. The Goleta Valley Chamber strongly believes that the only acceptable proposal for protecting the long-term future of the Park is stabilizing the beach, most likely by installing an innovative permeable groin.

The permeable groin would serve as a natural barrier, slowing the movement of sand down the coastline and allowing the gradual buildup of protective sand at the park. The alternative, "managed retreat," would involve the costly removal of the current protective infrastructure, permitting natural erosion to occur over time and essentially allowing the ocean to reclaim the sandbar on which Goleta Beach Park sits. The consequences of such erosion could be devastating.

Far more than top-notch recreational facilities are at risk should erosion be allowed to continue along the beach. The Park serves as a critical shield protecting the Santa Barbara Airport, Goleta Sanitary District facilities, and vital underground gas and electric conduits and pipelines. Evidence also supports the theory that Goleta's fresh groundwater supply would be threatened with the increased seawater intrusion into the slough. Additionally, historical maps and old photos suggest that, should Goleta Beach Park disappear, Old Town Goleta could, once again, be at great risk of catastrophic flooding.

The Goleta Valley Chamber urges you and your fellow Supervisors to stand united in support of beach stabilization to protect Goleta Beach Park.

Please vote to ensure that important infrastructure is protected and that Goleta Beach Park can continue to serve as a valuable community recreational resource, enjoyed daily by young and old, families and students, fishermen and surfers, out-of-town visitors and longtime residents alike.

Sincerely,

Kristen Amyx
President/CEO