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October 28, 2021

Armando M. Quintero, Director
Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Dear Director Quintero:

In a letter dated August 26, 2021, pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) §5080.40, you notified the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) that the Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) is proposing an operating agreement with the Marconi Conference Center Operating Corporation (MCCOC) for the operation, development, and maintenance of the Marconi Conference Center State Historic Park.

Marconi State Historic Park showcases the natural and historic resources of Tomales Bay that have supported the livelihood of different cultures for thousands of years dating back to the first known inhabitants, the Coast Miwok and Tomales Bay Indians or Tamáls, who still inhabit the area and for whom the Bay holds sacred cultural significance. It is important that the future management and development of the park and the conference center be conducted in a manner that balances the protection of these resources with the need to serve the public.

The new operating agreement has some unique features including a 55-year term, a management agreement with a nonprofit organization that will subcontract with a private corporation to operate the conference center, renovation of historic structures and the development of new accommodations. With that in mind, Parks and MCCOC should work with the local community, local tribal leaders, the County of Marin and other interested groups to address issues as they arise.

In a letter to the JLBC dated September 15, 2021, the East Shore Planning Group, which represents residents and tenants along the east shore of Tomales Bay, proposed “ongoing dialogue and consultation” with the community on a number of items. The group specifically raised concerns about special events and rates charged to nonprofit organizations.

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In addition, the East Shore Planning Group also identified a number of other items for future consideration including:

- Development of a tertiary wastewater treatment that allows for a graywater system.
- Hiring a hydrologist to understand the watershed and water supply issues on the Barinaga Ranch, within which the park's spring resides.
- Prioritizing renovation of the historic Marconi Hotel.
- Development of an operations and water resources plan.
- A plan for on-site affordable housing units for employees.
- Ensuring that the normal day use of the park accommodates the needs of the community and the public-at-large.

I am in receipt of the response letter from Parks and appreciate the department's commitment to abide by the provisions of the park's General Plan for special events and the rates charged to nonprofit organizations.

As plans for the renovations and future development progress, I recommend that Parks and MCCOC work with local residents by providing an open and public forum so interested parties can offer input into the operation and development of the conference center. If the need arises, Senator Mike McGuire and Assemblymember Marc Levine have offered their assistance and I encourage Parks and MCCOC to work with their offices to help facilitate any future discussions.

In conclusion, I find the notification to be consistent with the requirements of PRC §5080.40 and look forward to seeing Parks and MCCOC manage, renovate and develop this unique resource in a manner that benefits the general public and the local community.

Sincerely,



Nancy Skinner
Chair

cc: Members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee
Senator Mike McGuire
Assemblymember Marc Levine
Dennis Rodoni, President, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Mary Halley, President, East Shore Planning Group
Thomas Lai, Director, Marin Community Development Agency
Hal Russek, Marconi Conference Center Operating Corporation
Rodney Fong, Marconi Hospitality, LLC
Greg Sarris, Tribal Chairman, The Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria
Dean Hoaglin, Chairman, Coast Miwok Tribal Council of Marin