



Fred C. Sandquist

President, Batiqitos Lagoon Foundation and City of Carlsbad Resident

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Thank you for arranging for this opportunity to address and, hopefully, educate the citizens of Carlsbad about the Caruso Affiliated 85/15 Project and associated plan and documentation.

I want to first make it clear that specific plans such as engineering-type drawings with associated back-up documentation for the proposed mall, trails, amphitheater, restoration work including lists of proposed trees and plants, have not been made public! All we have to date are well-prepared artist renderings of what the site may look like, nothing definitive. Without this information, subject-area experts have said in their review of the large volume of project documents submitted to date, they cannot provide a detailed assessment whether the information is factual from an engineering or scientific perspective. This says to me that more time and detail is needed before making a decision as to whether to approve the development project.

The City of Carlsbad is blessed with three lagoons. There are similarities, but also many differences. Batiqitos and Agua Hedionda lagoons are tidally-flushed, while Buena Vista Lagoon is a closed freshwater lagoon. Batiqitos Lagoon is an Ecological Reserve and State Marine Conservation Area (No Take), while Agua Hedionda Lagoon is generally open with only a small section at the east end that is a reserve managed by CDFW. Agua Hedionda Lagoon also has commercial and business-serving use while Batiqitos and Buena Vista Lagoons do not allow public use, other than some fishing in designated areas.

Public access to lagoons is a key issue. Batiqitos Lagoon has a trail system designed to manage public access and restrict our visitors to the trails and designate area. A buffer from the trails has been established to ensure the public does not damage the wetlands and also allows separation from our plants and animals, including marine life. CDFW and other key partners have gone to great lengths to address wildlife movement by ensuring east, west, north and south wildlife corridors. We have been doing restoration projects for many years to manage invasive plants and ensure that only native trees and plants are used that are appropriate for our area. Without any detail in the 85/15 Plan and the plan's generalities, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the plan. Free and open public access to a lagoon is not necessarily a good thing. We are told that there will be trails, an amphitheater, overlooks, playgrounds, educational signage, and picnic areas, but only artist renditions as to what they will look like. Will fishing and swimming be permitted? Will floatation devices and watercraft be allowed to be launched from the south shore? Will some beach areas be created? Again, how are we to make any informed fact-based decision as to whether the project is good or bad?

Finally, the focus of the plan is Doing Open Space the Right Way. We have had a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and process in place for many years. The City of Carlsbad has a Planning Commission and a City Planner and staff to review development projects and make recommendations to the Carlsbad City Council. Why, through the proposed initiative process and exploitation of a loop-hole, do we want to allow the established process to be by-passed by a developer? This would set, in my view, a very bad precedent for Carlsbad, San Diego County, California and nationally.

In summary, correct the highly misleading initiative process and simply let the Citizens of Carlsbad vote. This will give everyone the opportunity to further study the project and make an educated and informed decision based on the facts provided by independent subject area experts.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak today.

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