

Keener writes a letter

SAYS HE TRUSTS COASTAL PANEL ON MANAGED RETREAT

This letter popped up on the California Coastal Commission website. It appears to be an email rather than on formal city stationery and was sent on Aug. 6, 2018, at 4:48 p.m. from Pacifica Mayor John Keener to Carol Groom, a member of the California Coastal Commission.

Hi Carole, As you know, Pacifica is formulating a SLR plan for incorporation into its LCP update.

It is funded in large part by a grant from the Coastal Commission. We've had considerable controversy already (mainly from Realtors and folks stirred up by them) about managed retreat.

The Coastal Commission staff strongly suggests we should consider it, and we are.

The resolution before you this month has raised further controversy, in that some are interpreting it as a loss of local control, and a lack of sympathy from the commission staff for cities that have urban areas next to the ocean, like Pacifica.

Myself, I wonder, why are staff bringing this resolution forward. It seems to me to be a statement of existing policy. Perhaps that policy is unwritten? Perhaps it's a prelude to something else?

These 2 clauses about armoring and sand replenishment seem true to me, I can't argue with them: "Whereas, the use of shoreline armoring to protect threatened development, including public infrastructure, as well as the presence of the armoring structures themselves, prevents the landward migration of the shoreline and coastal habitats, causing further degradation and loss of beaches, shorelines, and related coastal habitats, and these effects, in concert with sea level rise, will further degrade the public's ability to access and recreate along the coast;" "Whereas, beach replenishment is one alternative to shoreline armoring, but replenishing beaches with sand is replete with challenges, including

high costs, impacts to natural resources, limited sand sources, and the temporary nature of the replenishment."

Agreed that sand replenishment, which could play a big part in Pacifica's proposed adaptation strategy, but will probably not be actually performed for the reasons given, is not a very realistic alternative.

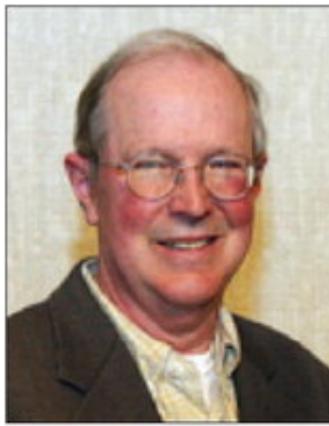
The resolution part of this: "Ensuring that shoreline armoring is only permitted if necessary and if no less environmentally damaging feasible alternative is available" I think should be modified to: "Ensuring that shoreline armoring is only permitted if necessary to save existing structures or infrastructure and if no less environmentally damaging economically feasible alternative is available."

Saving existing structures or infrastructure, it could be argued, makes the statement more stringent, but it also targets the armoring to 1 or 2 conditions.

On the other hand, adding the word economically makes it much more a realistic policy. I wonder about the legal implications of "takings" also, but I am not a lawyer.

I also worry about unfunded liability of the potential "takings." I think that the law is undeveloped in this area, to say the least. Certainly legislation is undeveloped. Another way of saying what's on my mind, is that an urban area with existing development right up to the bluff edge needs a different policy than an area without development.

I've tried to give you my concerns, which I think are not as distrustful of commission staff as most in my city. I think you can sort out what my concerns are. And of course I trust you to do the right thing, whatever you decide that is. Best regards, John



Mayor John Keener

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