

PETITION IN SUPPORT OF VOICE CONTROL DOG WALKING ON THE PILLAR POINT BLUFFTOP

TO: SAN MATEO COUNTY PARKS & THE DOG WORK GROUP

Submitted via email to EDallman@smcgov.org and ParksandRecreation@smcgov.org on November 3, 2019

For decades, the Pillar Point Blufftop has been a valuable community resource, serving as a popular voice control dog walking area on the coast. Our community of dog lovers has been the primary steward of this land, including working with POST to protect it from development, keeping the Bluffs clean by always picking up after our dogs, and picking up after others who leave trash behind.

In April 2018, a tragic and extremely rare incident occurred when an off-leash dog killed a seal at Ross Cove beach in the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. While heartbreaking, the incident had nothing to do with people walking their dogs under voice control up on the Pillar Point Blufftop. The Marine Reserve beaches are largely inaccessible from the Bluffs due to an 80-foot cliff.

As animal lovers, we all want to protect the Marine Reserve beaches. However, banning the long-time practice of voice control dog walking way up on the Blufftop does not accomplish this goal. It only results in alienating a large segment of the community and in pulling ranger resources away from the Marine Reserve beaches where they are needed most.

The best way to protect the Marine Reserve beaches is to work with our community and allow the already institutionalized practice of voice control dog walking to continue up on the Blufftop, while having a zero-tolerance policy for people who bring their dogs down to the Marine Reserve's no-dog beaches. As a community, we believe that irresponsible dog owners who ignore the no-dog rule on Fitzgerald Marine Reserve beaches should be heavily fined and the fine amount should be posted on all County Park signs to the beaches. Our community can help lighten County Parks ranger workload by helping to educate dog owners about the no dogs on the beaches rule, and reporting any dogs we see down at the Reserve.

We hope to work with County Parks in order to make the Pillar Point Bluffs off-leash pilot a great success, while providing greater protection for the Marine Reserve beaches. The

Bluffs—with its wide trails, long history of voice control dog walking, and physical separation from the Marine Reserve beaches—is the perfect place for sanctioned voice control dog walking.

Thank you for your consideration.

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