



Board of Harbor Commissioners

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July 17, 2024

City of Half Moon Bay
Joaquin Jimenez, Mayor
501 Main Street
Half Moon Bay, Ca 94019

Dear Mayor Jimenez,

As President of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I am requesting a portion of the Transitory Occupancy Tax collected by the City of Half Moon Bay from the Pillar Point RV Park be allocated to the Harbor District for public safety.

The Coastside, with its exposure to the awesome power of the Pacific Ocean, poses several hazards to the maritime user, from the average beach goer to the most experienced fishermen/mariner. The coastline is exposed and ragged with wide sweeping beaches, large bluffs, remote coves, exposed rocks, and large surf. This environment, while beautiful, places a large demand for search and rescue up and down the coast from Grey Whale Cove in the north, to Pigeon Pt. in the south.

The San Mateo County Harbor District has been responding to emergency search and rescue/maritime assist on the Coastside for several decades. The public (Coastside residents and tourist), users of Pillar Point Harbor, and other governmental agencies (County, Sheriff, Coastside Fire) depend on the Harbor District to provide world-class search and rescue/maritime assists. The Pillar Point Harbor Deputy Harbormasters take great pride in their work as search and rescue professionals, as does the Harbor District. However, the program as it is currently staffed and funded, is placing the staff, the harbor, and those we rescue at risk.

In recent years, the Harbor District has had to reduce the excessive number of overtime hours as well as the dangerous shift length that were required for the Harbor District to maintain a ready search and rescue capability. This has resulted in the Coastside, including the beaches of Half Moon Bay, going without any immediate maritime response for extended hours each day (beyond that provided by the State lifeguards on State beaches). Neither CalFire, nor the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office maintain an immediate maritime response unit on the Coastside, both depend on the Harbor District to conduct maritime search and rescue and to transport their personnel in an emergency. The Harbor Patrol also provides waterside support for CalFire in all cliff rescues along the San Mateo County Coastline. Likewise, the U.S. Coast Guard also

relies heavily on the Harbor District to respond to distress calls off the Coastside as their closest lifesaving unit is located within the San Francisco Bay.

To improve the limited maritime search and rescue response capability for the Coastside, the Harbor District requires additional funding. As the Harbor District is not mandated by law to conduct maritime search and rescue beyond the breakwaters of the Harbor, it is not specifically funded to conduct the mission. As the City of Half Moon Bay receives a significant benefit from the Harbor District providing maritime search and rescue, the Harbor District is requesting the City assist us with funding.

On November 3, 2020, the voters of Half Moon Bay approved Measure U (City of Half Moon Bay Transitory Occupancy Tax Measure) which was placed on the ballot by Half Moon Bay Resolution No. C-2020-78. The measure resulted in the TOT increasing its current rate of 15%. As a basis in asking the voters to approved Measure U, the City of Half Moon stated the purposes of Measure U was to ensure public places were kept "healthy, safe and clean, maintaining 911 emergency response times..." As the only government agency on the Coastside that provides immediate maritime emergency response services, a portion of the TOT should be allocated to the Harbor District.

The Pillar Point Harbor RV Park, located on Harbor District property, is required by City Ordinance 3.12.030 to pay 15% in TOT based on the rent charge to each guest of the Park. It is this TOT the Harbor District is seeking. The TOT is collected from a tenant onboard Pillar Point Harbor, and the TOT collected from that tenant should be allocated to public safety initiatives and activities provided by the Harbor District, to include maritime search and rescue.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact General Manager Jim Pruett at jpruett@smharbor.com or (650) 583-4400.

Thank you in advance in supporting public safety on the Coastside.



Tom Mattusch
President,
San Mateo County Harbor Commission