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April 30, 2021

Chairman Do and Fellow Supervisors
Orange County Board of Supervisors
Hall of Administration
333 W. Santa Ana Blvd.
Santa Ana, CA 92701
Delivered via email

Re: Item 46 on the Supervisors’ May 11 Agenda: Proposed sale to homeowner, Buck Johns, of the 0.32 “surplus” acres of the Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve abutting 2600 Mesa Drive

BOARD MEMBERS

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Dear Chairman Do,

SPON supports the sentiments in the petition and asks that you vote “no” on this matter and direct County staff to take steps to see that the private fence encroaching into dedicated public parkland be promptly removed.

The preservation for nature and for future human generations of the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve and Nature Preserve was the result of a hard-fought battle over 30 years ago, which SPON supported and participated in. It seems obvious the public properties won in that struggle should not be lightly lost to the public, for all time.

It is our understanding from reviewing the video of the January 7 OC Parks Commission hearing that County staff feels this parcel is “not needed” for park purposes. SPON strongly disagrees. The parcel proposed for abandonment intrudes very significantly into the open space buffer separating the main paved



A 501(c)(3) non-profit public education organization working to protect and preserve the residential and environmental qualities of Newport Beach.

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park trail from the estates on Mesa Drive. As it is, the fence impairs the public's enjoyment, complicates conservation efforts and blocks the flow of wildlife. Part of the area it encloses would be an ideal location for a public outlook, or even picnic tables. The fact that a private fence has been allowed to stand on this area dedicated to the public for the past 30 years, allowing access to and enjoyment of it only by the private homeowner, is troubling. The idea that the County would even consider selling the public land it encloses, is even more troubling.

Even supposing there is a reason to sell a piece of the Nature Preserve, which SPON does not believe there is -- certainly not here -- the homeowner-determined price of \$13,000 being recommended for acceptance by the Supervisors is vastly undervalued. The County itself assesses the land value of the extremely similar adjacent landlocked 0.36 acre APN 439-051-10 at \$1,186,852. If this homeowner through this sale were able to establish a "fair market" value of \$13,000 for "his" nearly identical parcel, it looks like he would be adding roughly \$1 million to the future resale value of his land for an annual property tax payment to the County of just \$130. That does not seem right.

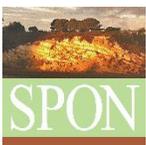
Please vote "no" to the park abandonment and see that the fence is removed from public land.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Bartram

President, SPON

cc:	Lisa Bartlett	Lisa.Bartlett@ocgov.com
	Doug Chaffee	Doug.Chaffee@ocgov.com
	Katrina Foley	Katrina.Foley@ocgov.com
	Donald Wagner	Donald.Wagner@ocgov.com



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