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Chair Shallenberger and Members of the California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219

RE: Agenda Item F12c Comments regarding geotechnical and hydrogeologic feasibility study for proposed desalination facility intake wells

Dear Chair Shallenberger and Members of the California Coastal Commission,

I want to thank you so much for undertaking the profound work you do to safeguard our amazing California coast, such a large and complex area. My great grandfather Swepson Earle was one of the very first commissioners of conservation in the United States and did significant work to protect the oyster and softshell crab from extinction in the Chesapeake Bay. So successful was he in creating a long term program for this area that he was invited to establish eleven more such conservation programs throughout the U.S. I believe that he would be happy to see you carry forward this much-needed legacy of farsightedness and integrity.

Therefore in honor of him, I must offer comments about the proposed studies whose ultimate goal is the creation of a desalination plant in Cambria. To be blunt, it is a terrible idea. I know many experts will be presenting detailed analyses, but one simple look at the area will reveal to even a casual observer its rarity as part of an unbroken coastal area free of development. It would simply be unethical to place a large industrial monstrosity in the middle of such beauty, with its delicate ecosystems and modest recovery. To build this plant would be a slap in the face of the hard work and sacrifice of so many, including the fishermen who are now reaping the benefits of a wise conservation program that is finally in place around this stunning location. One has to travel hundreds, if not a thousand or more miles up the West coast to see another such untrammled and well protected spot. We, the American people, deserve to have at least a few such special places. I urge you to remember your bureaucratic roots and protect this rare and fruitful place.

Two more points: 1) all appeals to virtue aside, it does not make good economic sense: we truly need biodiversity – in genetic terms, it is the gold mine, the savings account, the savings bonds as it were of our future generations. The kind of eco-damage this plant will create will deprive our children of a potentially lucrative spot of wilderness, as well as damaging many current businesses which rely on tourism. 2) There is a report from 1994 which identifies a Native American burial site at Shamel Park, discovered in the 1930's. The laws governing Native American remains are very clear and local indigenous communities will become involved if this area is tampered with in an inappropriate manner – ie: with ground disturbances, drilling tests, studies, etc. I am a member of such a community and I will personally bring this issue to the fore if it becomes necessary.

In closing, thank you once again for all the good things you do and peace be with you,

