



**Written Public Comments Submitted For:
Harbor Commission Meeting Of July 21, 2022**



Date: July 21, 2022

Written Public Comment #1

Dear Harbor Commissioners,

I write to you as a business harbor tenant of 20 years. I am the owner of Paddle Sports Center on the West end of the harbor and co-owner of Channel Islands Expeditions (Truth and Vision) and most recently a partner in the new lease awarded to the Santa Barbara Landing.

I have seen the changes in the harbor as the popularity of kayaking and Stand-up Paddleboarding have increased and I have worked closely with the City to develop an informational video that is currently played at the Harbor Patrol Office.

(<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/148421411>) I spoke over a decade ago about the grandfathering of the Business Activity Permits (BAP) voicing my concern over allowing an operator without limits to further congest an already busy waterway. The existing BAPs were initially established at a different time for a much different purpose than they are currently being used for. There are several permits available in the Waterfront area that can be used by the BAP holders to continue operating in a less congested area that do not conflict with City leases.

I am writing to you now to strongly oppose the renewal of the existing BAPs in the Santa Barbara Harbor for the following reasons:

1. The City has 3 leases that permit the operator to run kayak and paddleboard rentals and tours. Each of these pays base rent in addition to percentage rent for those services. The Santa Barbara Harbor is not large enough to sustain additional businesses that do not have limitations on operating area and that do not have to pay equally to use the area.
2. The BAP permit is an annual fee that is less than \$300. It does not require the holder to pay a portion of their gross sales to the City. All of my City leases stipulate terms such as what I can provide as services, how much I must pay to the City for those services, and the area I am permitted to occupy and run my business from. BAPs, from my knowledge, do not stipulate any of these conditions.
3. To that point, the BAP does not limit the holder to any threshold limit number of kayaks (either by enumeration or via a space to be occupied) to be launched from the boat launch. With congestion issues in the harbor already an issue, having an operator launch from a congested area, adjacent to two existing lease holders, with an unlimited number of kayaks is objectively poor management of the space. Lease holders should have exclusive commercial access to these limited spaces, leaving the public launch areas open for the public.
4. Paddle Sports (and the Harbor Commission body) have dealt with issues in the past where concerned citizens voiced complaints about the paddler congestion in the main channel. The City printed placards which we have on our PFDs and placed signs throughout the harbor to help keep the main channel clear. When a BAP operator launches dozens of kayaks into a congested fairway, it reflects poorly on all operators in the general optics of the harbor and I fear it places our operations, which we work very hard to control, at jeopardy.

5. As an operator of two large passenger dive vessels from the Santa Barbara Landing, additional congestion in the area between West Beach and Marina 4 is not needed. The space should be limited to the leased operators and the public.
6. One of the BAP holders regularly launches kayakers from the small boat launch and the kayakers run directly into equipment at the Santa Barbara Landing such as Jet Skis and the Vision. We have brought this concern up to the guides and we have been met with disregard and disrespect and it continues to occur.
7. One of the BAP holders has a long history of disregarding rules and violating conditions of their permit/s and seemingly without consequence. Since this operator has been cited at the boat launch earlier this summer by the City they have moved the same operational issues to the City Parks and Recreation portion of West Beach. West Beach has a permitted concessionaire that also pays to have exclusive access to the beach for kayak and SUP activities. Below are pictures taken on July 20th of one of the BAP holders using West Beach to launch a large group. I contacted the City and they investigated, yet this group was allowed to launch without hindrance or incident. This is a clear violation of the rules set by City Parks and Recreation (unless a special permit was awarded, and I'm not aware that they offer that).





This is not a one-off situation. We have been notifying the City of multiple instances where a BAP holder was occupying West Beach and hindering access to the beach adjacent to the boat launch. This picture below was taken on June 14th.



This picture was taken on July 8th where kayaks were being stored unattended on West Beach.



8. Parking is already an issue at the East end of the harbor parking lot. BAP holders take up valuable space for lease holders' clients and visitors to the harbor. Since the BAP holders don't have an actual address, they send their clients to check-in at the Santa Barbara Landing. This places the Landing in a position of liability if the client thinks that we are somehow related to another company's tour.

Additionally, as previously mentioned, City Parks and Recreation has several permits still available for kayak operations. One at Leadbetter and the other at East Beach. Those are existing opportunities that do not conflict with any other operators.

Thank you for your time considering this matter. I am available to answer any questions. My contact information is below.

Warmly,

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