

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2012

The Honorable Daniel Tangherlini
Acting Administrator, U.S. General Services Administration
One Constitution Square
1275 First Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20417

RE: General Services Administration Property, McKay Avenue in Alameda, California

Dear Administrator Tangherlini:

Thank you for your service with the General Services Administration (GSA), and we appreciate your leadership during this difficult time. We would like to bring to your attention a pending federal surplus property sale by the GSA in the San Francisco Bay Area located in the City of Alameda, California. The property is 3.75 acres located on McKay Avenue, immediately adjacent to Crown Memorial State Beach which is operated by the East Bay Regional Park District ("District"). We support the District's request that the GSA provide a full explanation of its refusal to consider either (1) a beneficial conveyance through the National Park Service to the District or (2) a direct sale to the District at the property's appraised fair market value, as determined by an independent, fully-qualified appraiser. We also support the District's request of an explanation about the circumstances leading to the last-minute change in the terms of the on-line auction which were very favorable to a prospective private developer. Below are additional details about this situation.

Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach is a 383-acre recreation area on Alameda's San Francisco Bay shoreline. During World War II, the Federal government purchased the shoreline and developed it as a training facility for maritime officers. In 1959, most of the federal land was conveyed to the State of California. In 1967, the park was dedicated as Alameda Memorial State and Regional Beaches, later renamed to honor the late California Assemblymember Robert W. Crown. The land that still remains in Federal ownership is located adjacent to the park's visitor center, office and service yard, all of which are accessed via a state-owned road called McKay Avenue.

We understand that GSA officials informed the District in 2008 they were planning to subdivide and sell off a 3.75-acre portion of the site at auction for high-density residential development. Concerned about the foreseeable conflicts with the operation of the park, the District initially tried to persuade GSA to consider a beneficial conveyance through the National Park Service, but local GSA officials declined. When the District suggested that GSA was required to first offer the surplus property to other public

agencies, GSA responded they were not required to do so. The District then offered to purchase the property directly at its appraised fair market value. Once again, the GSA declined this offer. We also understand that District staff met with GSA officials in Washington, D.C., but to no avail.

Ultimately, the District participated with other anonymous bidders in an on-line auction. The District has informed us that they were prepared to make a bona fide offer under the terms of sale, but the day before the auction, GSA changed the terms of the sale, substituting an 18-month escrow period for what had been the advertised closing date of 60 days after the acceptance of the bid. The District believes this change was meant to accommodate the ultimately successful bidder, private developer Tim Lewis Communities (TLC), by allowing additional time to obtain the necessary entitlements.

Both the California Department of Parks and the District believe that it is in the best interest of Crown Beach to work to preserve the park and its boundaries and protect this unique resource.

As representatives of thousands of constituents who enjoy Crown Memorial State Beach, we know it is an important asset for residents of the City of Alameda and the greater San Francisco Bay Area and share the District's concern about the possible negative impact of a large private development immediately adjacent to an existing State Park.

We request that you address the concerns raised by the District concerning the sale of the federal land adjacent to the park. In particular, we would request that GSA provide a detailed explanation for why the 60 day term was changed to an 18 month escrow after the terms of the auction were listed.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jirair Ratevosian with Rep. Lee (jirair.ratevosian@mail.house.gov) or Jeff Hild with Rep. Stark (jeff.hild@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Pete Stark
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, United States Senate
The Honorable Barbara Boxer, United States Senate