

1039 Chestnut Street  
Paso Robles, California  
April 30, 1965

Major Robert T. Ojendyk, District Engineer  
Corps of Engineers,  
U. S. Army Engineering District  
751 South Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles, California 90017

RE: Collier Carbon and Chemical Corporation  
Application for Permit for construction  
of shiploading facility at the Mipomo Dunes.  
(Santa Maria Dunes) (Oceano Dunes).

Dear Major Ojendyk:

Please enter this letter as protest against the development sought by Collier Carbon and Chemical Corporation in their application to your office for a permit to construct an ocean pier, shiploading equipment and a conveyor in the beach area of the Mipomo Dunes (also known as the Santa Maria Dunes, the Oceano Dunes, and the Oso Place Dunes).

I am a full-time volunteer working in the conservation field for the Sierra Club. At present, with a group of volunteers called the Mipomo Dunes Advisory Committee -- and others in different areas of the national Sierra Club -- an effort is being made, under advice from Sierra Club President, Dr. William E. Skrl, to implement the Sierra Club resolution of June 9, 1963, to preserve the Mipomo Dunes in their natural state, with no further industrial development.

Although we can understand that your concern in the above matter may appear to you to be with the proposed pier as a national facility, nevertheless, may we suggest that it may not have come to your attention that there is at this location the involvement of a much larger aspect than only navigation, shiploading and the conveyor across the beach.

The ocean, the surf, the beach and the upland on this whole stretch of coast, from Pismo to Point Sal, are an extraordinary shore complex, which requires consideration as a whole. Isolation of one factor, such as navigation potential, imposes a limitation on studying the area toward fulfilling its highest potential. The navigation facility can not stand alone. Its impact impinges on a wide arc of other considerations.

We would like particularly first of all to urge that you postpone

Ojendyk  
Apr. 30 '65  
Collier - Nipomo Dunes

action on the application of Collier Carbon and Chemical Corporation until implementation of Senator Vernon L. Sturgeon's Senate Resolution #53, passed by the California State Senate April 32nd, 1964. In brief, this resolution states that:

"WHEREAS, the Santa Maria Dunes area is unexcelled, both in scenic quality and in extent, by any similar area on the California coast; now, therefore, be it resolved... that the Department of Parks and Recreation is directed to undertake a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a state park or recreation area at the Santa Maria Dunes"... - in compliance with the provisions of the Bond Act of 1964.

We are informed informally by Mr. Fred L. Jones, Director of the California State Department of Parks and Recreation, that it is expected this feasibility study will be made sometime this summer of 1965.

The highest use of this shoreline area has been evaluated by Federal, state and local bodies as:

- {1} A unique scenic resource.
- {2} An unusual recreation resource.
- {3} A scientific research resource.

On the national level, from the Department of the Interior's National Park Service, is the Pacific Coast Recreation Area Survey, 1958, which states:

"This sand dune area is unexcelled. Nowhere along the California coast do sand dunes of comparable scenic quality, extent and height occur. . . . This area is on the Division of Beaches and Parks' long-range acquisition program."

On the state level, the California Park System's Five Year Master Plan, 1956-61, lists and describes the proposed acquisition thus:

"A beautiful portion of San Luis Obispo coastline, including Oso Flaco Lake, a fresh water lake. Excellent clamming; surf fishing; beach ideally suited to shoreline use. Minimum developments required. Is in the Master Plan of Shoreline Development for San Luis Obispo County as Priority I."

On the county level, the San Luis Obispo County Master Plan



Apr. 20 '65

Culler - Nipomo Dunes

of Shoreline Development, as amended and adopted by the County Board of Supervisors, July 1959, states, page 31:

"Those parcels which are adjacent to and become part of existing parks (in this case, Pismo Beach State Park) should be acquired first."

Also on the county level, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors' report to the California Public Outdoor Recreation Plan Committee in 1958, states:

"At present we need greatly expanded facilities in the south portion of the county. The most important of these areas is that surrounding Oso Flaco Lake..... These coastal areas consist of ten miles of beautiful sand dunes - the last remaining on the Pacific Coast: bathing beaches, clamming beaches, fishing waters, skin-diving waters, picnic areas, and scenic coastal drives."

The county supervisors' 1958 report points out, further, that San Luis Obispo beach areas are a prime asset to county, state and nation. . . that San Luis Obispo County is a last frontier, situated in the center of the two large metropolitan areas of California, and can be reached over good highways in a very few hours by over nine million people." (And the nine million of 1958 has become the twelve million of 1965).

The California Public Outdoor Recreation Plan, p. 18, further remarks:

"The entire coastline is by way of being a scarcity item. The major portion of the Pacific shore should be in public ownership or permanently available for public use."

"It is exceedingly important to acquire lands that have unusual scenic values or ecological communities that are rare or limited."

Research scientists from the Biological Sciences Departments of the University of California and from California Polytechnic College have conducted advanced studies of the astonishing ecological situation in the Nipomo Dunes for some years.

A whole scientifically significant region is involved here.

A shiploading facility portends damage to present shore and surf values:

(1) even well-kept ships reputedly spill or leak oil. Petro-

Ojendyk  
Apr. 20, 1965  
Collier - Nipomo Dunes

leum pollution has an adverse effect on surf fish and sea creatures on which surf fish feed. This would damage the commercial surf-fishing now done there.

The most significant pollution could possibly affect the Pismo Clam, which nets the county hundreds of thousands of tourist dollars per year, as well as a great deal of recreation pleasure.

- (2) ships are, I believe, required to pump bilge not closer to shore than twelve miles, but bilge reputedly washes in to shore areas.

Bilge and oil on recreation beaches are unsightly, hazardous and have an offensive odor.

- (3) the character of coke is of especial interest in reviewing all the factors of this proposed shiploading facility. Coke reputedly gives off a fine, extremely lightweight dust that can only be partially controlled by wetting-down. The slightest movement of coke causes smoke-like dust. It is expected that coke-dust will sift out from even well-built covered conveyors. Coke being a petroleum product, emits an oily, rather sticky component in its coke dust, which is observable on houses and eucalyptus groves in the line of wind-drift, even as far as half a mile away from the present Collier Carbon and Chemical Corporation plant. Also, workers in the coking plant state that on the job their skin and clothing pick up dust of an oily stickiness, difficult to remove in bathing.

Such oily, sticky coke dust, sifting and drifting around the proposed conveyor, shiploading facility and pier, will undoubtedly cause a disagreeable and unsightly film of black in the immediate area.

But a more serious question is what its effect will be on the surf fish, the popular Pismo Clam and other marine biology nearby?

For some years, residents along the Southern Pacific Railroad are reported to complain about trainloads of coke giving off a peculiarly persistent dust.

The combination of recreation uses appropriate in the Nipomo Dunes is unusual:

- (1) seashore water-oriented recreation:

- clamming, surf-fishing, bathing, skin diving, beach pleasures.
- (2) fresh water-oriented recreation:  
-in the lakes and creek systems: fishing, duck hunting, canoeing, rowing.
- (3) upland recreation:  
-a wide variety, probably found all together in no other single outdoor area: dune buggy sport, horse-back riding, hiking and picnicking, extensive nature study of both seashore and inland ecologies, archaeological exploration, and the aesthetic enjoyment of a rare type of scenery.
- (4) recreation impact on the area is at present negligible, even though use has climbed to a million a year. The terrain can carry heavy impact with careful recreation zoning.

Such qualities and characteristics in recreation areas as above puts them in great demand, because in California recreation is growing by leaps and bounds.

The powerful surf along the Nipomo Dunes shore would incline belief that even a substantial pier would probably need the protection of a breakwater in this area. Rather than clutter a unique and scenic shoreline with one more pier and breakwater along our coast, it would seem more economically feasible to save the scenery for recreation income and concentrate industrial ocean needs in the already developing Port San Luis Harbor plans. The rail haul from Collier Carbon's coke plant to Port San Luis would cost less than their present rail haul to Stockton or the Los Angeles Harbor complex.

Rather than exploitation by further industrial development, the unique shore complex of the Nipomo Dunes area needs environmental protection. To this end, the national Sierra Club passed a resolution June 9, 1963, recommending preservation of this unusual area (variously called the Nipomo Dunes, the Santa Maria Dunes, the Oceano Dunes, or the Oso Flaco Dunes). The Sierra Club resolution recommends preservation of the shoreline and considerable upland areas, located in general between Arroyo Grande Creek and Point Sal...for scenic recreation purposes, under the management of the California Division of Beaches and Parks.

Construction of a pier and/or conveyor, no matter how adapted to recreation uses now established in the area, or adapted to present scientific investigation, would serve only to contribute further to encourage industrial encroachment in an area that has a much higher potential than industrial zoning....as

Ojendyk

Apr. 30 '65

Collier - Nipomo Dunes

evaluated at federal, state and county levels.

IN CONCLUSION, the endeavor of this letter of protest has been to draw to your attention the wide range of factors inter-related with the proposed navigation facility at the Nipomo Dunes shore; for the construction of which facility, application for a permit has been made to you by Collier Carbon and Chemical Corporation. The effort in writing to you at this length has not been to oppose navigational expansion, nor to discount the integrity and experience which your Corps brings to consideration of a project, nor to oppose industrial development.

All that is sought is a better, a more appropriate location for the development, or a more suitable solution to Collier Carbon's coke shipping problem.

Collier Carbon is seeking economic survival. It can be found in another location. The Sierra Club is seeking survival of a unique and beautiful kind of natural land complex that is irreplaceable, that cannot be found in another location, and that, in its own individual way may actually be contributing to the survival of the spirit of man.

The Sierra Club is not opposed to industry or to the Army Corps of Engineers or to economic growth. It is concerned with the highest quality of land use, and is concerned with the quality of living. To project these concerns specifically toward the Nipomo Dunes, the following questions are pertinent:

First, concerning the scenic resource aspect:

Who knows what human thirst for beauty may be assuaged by walking in the solitude and soft winds of white, wind-sculptured sand dunes?

Who knows what longing for silence and space, what urgency for relief from home and business pressures, may be supplied by the serenity, clear air and scenic beauty in these sand dunes?

Second, concerning the recreation resource aspect:

Who knows what family is bound closer by free clam digging together on these wide, clean beaches; what teenager driving his dune buggy with fury and fun, gets the lid off his frustrations; what amateur archaeologist finds here his first Chumash Indian arrowhead?

Third, concerning the scientific resource aspect:

Who knows what miracle drug, what new industrial process, what chemical aid to agriculture, will emerge from the test tubes where the collected plants and dissected small



Ojendyk

Apr. 30 '65

Cellier - Nipomo Dunes

Page 7

creatures from the sand dunes are examined in laboratory  
crucibles?

Re importance, sir, your most conscientious scrutiny of all these  
and any other factors fringing the proposed navigation facility.  
And we urge your primary consideration for the intrinsic values  
of the Nipomo Dunes.

Very sincerely,

Mrs. Duncan P. Jackson  
Sierra Club Coordinator  
Nipomo Dunes Preservation

cc Dr. William E. Siri  
President, Sierra Club