

January 11, 2010

Ms. Nancy Bechtle
Chair, Presidio Trust Board of Directors
Presidio Trust
34 Graham Street
P.O. Box 29052
San Francisco, CA 94129-0052

Re: Disturbing Trends in the Presidio Trust Environmental Remediation Program

Dear Ms. Bechtle:

We write to inform you of two ongoing deficiencies in the Presidio Trust's Environmental Remediation Program. These problems can be described as 1) a risk of serious adverse environmental impacts resulting from inadequate development and implementation of remediation plans and 2) conflict with agency stakeholders. As members of citizens' groups connected with the Presidio, we are concerned that these new actions may be wasting time and taxpayer dollars and result in an inferior cleanup of Presidio contamination.

With respect to the first problem, the Trust proposed an inadequate cleanup remedy for Landfill 10 (the parking area for the Public Health Service Hospital) that did not meet regulatory standards. It continued with the proposal for many months, despite opposition from government agency stakeholders and community groups, until it was rejected by regulators and required to be revised. We have also seen insufficient protections against storm-related erosion during construction at Landfill 10. The failure of erosion controls during two storms in October resulted in possibly permanent damage to endangered natural resources near Lobos Creek and a "Notice of Violation" from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board on November 12, 2009. The violations included discharge of sediment into Lobos Creek, a drinking water supply, and failure to prepare and maintain an adequate Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. Improper drainage controls from construction at Landfill 10 continue to create flooding problems at the 15th Avenue gate.

The second problem is unresolved conflicts between the Trust and other government agencies (including the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans). We respectfully submit that some of these conflicts are related to a lower priority being given by the Trust to resource protection. At the same time, the Trust has significantly reduced regularly scheduled stakeholder meetings and discussions. The public process has become limited because of a decrease in timely and detailed information. While providing oversight for Trust proposals (at Trust expense), the state agency regulators also try to referee Trust conflicts with other agencies. This is expensive and is neither a good use of their reduced manpower nor their primary role as technical regulators.

The Presidio Trust Environmental Remediation Program has been one of the most successful cleanup programs in the nation, removing tens of thousands of tons of hazardous waste from dozens of Presidio sites and making much of our national park available for unrestricted use.

We are concerned that this record of success is being undermined by the recent trends described above.

To help resolve these conflicts, we propose that a meeting of senior management of the Trust and stakeholder agencies be convened in February 2010 to discuss the issues and seek mutually agreeable action plans. In the past, such meetings, known as summit meetings, have served to address concerns and strengthen coordination among agency senior management. We hope that you and/or other Board members will consider attending this meeting.

If you would like more information about our concerns, please contact our representative regarding Presidio contamination issues, Mark Youngkin, Co-Chair, of the Presidio Restoration Advisory Board. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
The undersigned members of the public:

(Note: affiliations are listed for identification purposes only)

Mark Youngkin, Presidio Restoration Advisory Board
Ruth Gravanis, Sustainable Watersheds Alliance
Michelle Passero, Presidio Restoration Advisory Board
Kate Scanlan, Friends of Mountain Lake Park
Steven Krefting, Presidio Environmental Council
Sharon Tsui, Dune Ecological Restoration Team
Jan Blum, Presidio Restoration Advisory Board
Becky Evans
Doug Kern, Presidio Restoration Advisory Board
Mark Weinstock, Richmond Presidio Neighbors
Peter O'Hara, Presidio Restoration Advisory Board
Peter Brastow, Nature In The City
Jan Monaghan, Presidio Restoration Advisory Board
Jake Sigg, California Native Plants Society
John Budroe, Presidio Restoration Advisory Board
Ann Weinstock, Lake Street Residents Association
Toni Kramer, Presidio Restoration Advisory Board

Cc Presidio Trust Board of Directors William Wilson
 Nancy Conner
 Curtis Feeney
 John Reynolds
 T. Robert Burke
 J. Michael Shepherd

Craig Middleton, Executive Director
Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
Hon. Diane Feinstein, United States Senator
Hon. Barbara Boxer, United States Senator