



Newport Mooring Association

Statement of Opposition to Draft Proposal For Reducing of the Size of Existing Moorings (Being submitted as part of proposed Mooring Extensions Policy)

To the honorable members of the Newport Beach Harbor Commission:

Moorings in Newport Harbor have been a historic part of the City and has made sailing, boating and boat ownership available to thousands of sailors, fishermen, and boaters for almost 100 years. Opening the tidelands to everyone has resulted in an incredible diversity of marine activities that has significantly contributed to historic character of Newport Beach. We thank the Harbor Commissioners for their hard work in preserving this heritage.

The Newport Mooring Association wishes to address the current proposal regarding possible adjustments to the size of moorings. After a full review of the draft proposal regarding procedures for requests to extend the size of moorings, it was discovered that hidden within these procedures was an additional proposal to reduce the size of a much greater number of existing moorings. This additional hidden “add-on” proposal was only brought to the Association’s attention within the last 30 to 60 days, and only after the association asked for additional clarification of the proposal. In the short time allotted, the Newport Mooring Association has studied this additional proposal to reduce the size of exiting moorings, has sought input from its members who are mooring permittees with years of experience with navigation of the mooring fields, and has sought and obtained input from companies who design, layout, and service the Newport Beach mooring fields.

The Newport Mooring Association findings are as follows:

1. There is no need for the reduction of the size of currently existing moorings, let alone a full 20% of all offshore moorings.
2. There has been no history of navigational difficulties for mooring permittees to get on or off their mooring or enter or exit mooring fields.
3. The Association has been unable to obtain from any source the methodology used to suggest that some, or most, of the mooring rows are out of conformity with some national or state standard, be it a standard used for the layout of marina slips or some other nationally accepted standard or mythology. After repeated request for the methodology, none has been provided from the City.
4. Mooring a vessel be it on a single mooring, double mooring or a slip can have its challenges at times due to wind, currents, tides, boat traffic and time of day, this has not changed in the almost 100 years that boaters have been mooring boats in Newport Harbor. This is true regardless of the mooring being a slip or an offshore buoy. Over this long history, the occasional minor adjustments have been made to virtually eliminate the occasional problem that might arise, such as a lose mooring buoy. In the history of the Newport Mooring Association, we have received no reports of problems which would be reduced by reducing the size of existing moorings. After consultation with South Mooring Company, which has historically serviced and assisted with the design and layout of most of the Newport moorings, it was determined that there were no historical or reported problems related to the navigation on or off moorings that would be reduced by reducing the size of moorings.
5. The permittees have spent vast amounts of time and resources in maintaining, adjusting, and acquiring their moorings. The current “add-on” proposal for reductions in mooring size will significantly impact the hard work and effort of generations of sailors, fishermen and boaters. This negative impact will result not just from the actual reduction of size of moorings, but also from the ongoing threat of a future reduction in size, be it from the current proposal (which affects approximately 20% of off-shore mooring) or from setting a precedent which might affect all moorings.

6. The current “add-on” reduction proposal would result in an owner of a historic vessel of a certain size to be unable to sell his boat in cases where the vessel owner is selling both his vessel and mooring together. It is often that case that certain boats because of their size or shape are difficult or impossible or cost prohibited to move to a slip. For example, an historic beautiful schooner will often have a very large bowsprit which extends from the bow. This sprit is needed to off-set the smaller foremast. It is very difficult to accommodate a large bowsprit on a slip. Certain catamarans and trimarans are hard to accommodate on a slip. In these examples, a sale of these vessels would likely be made impossible if their mooring were reduced in size.
7. The current “add-on” reduction in size proposal would eliminate the possibility of a sale to a person who wanted to bring the same size, but different vessel onto the mooring, even if the transfer was not as a result of a sale, but instead a gift to a life-long friend, boat partner, or to the nephew or niece of the current permittee.
8. The Newport Mooring Association has found that little or no study has been made to identify the number of moorings that are likely to cause a current or future problem due to the current size of the mooring. Examples of only a handful – 4 or 5 have be brought to our attention by one commissioner and only as a “theoretical” possibility, yet the proposal as written identifies over 120 moorings that would be caught in the extraordinary large net.
9. The Newport Mooring Association has also found that if there were to be problems with just a handful of moorings, other solutions should be looked at in each individual case. Other solutions would include increasing the size and weight of the mooring chain and equipment resulting in most cases with shorting the distance to the front and rear mooring buoy, thus increasing the navigational size of the fairway (a solution suggested by South Mooring Company), or a voluntary trade of moorings so larger vessels might be relocated to a larger mooring currently being occupied by a smaller vessel, on a voluntary basis. The first step in this study would be to identify a truly problematic situation, which currently the Newport Mooring Association is unaware of.

Following the Newport Mooring Association investigation, study, and findings, It is the Associations' strong request and recommendation that:

1. The provisions in the proposal to reduce the size of a moorings on transfer of moorings be eliminated from the current proposal, and allow the remainder of the proposed resolution, primarily concerned with procedures to approve mooring size increases, to go forward. Specifically, the elimination of this "add-on" part of the proposal would not allow the City or Harbormaster to reduce in size a mooring which is currently permitted for a certain size, to a smaller size that conforms to what the City or Harbormaster would prefer as set forth in a map of mooring fields and row sizes or for other reasons.
2. Alternatively, this "add-on" reduction in size proposal be eliminated from the current proposal, but made part of a separate future study which would include identifying past complaints or problems that are a direct result of the size of a mooring, review of which specific moorings currently present a clear danger and obstacle to navigation after input from mooring permittees who in fact navigate in that row, and explore other alternatives for the particular moorings in question, if such the moorings are found to present clear navigational problems.
3. The methodology used for the recommended size of moorings, along with any nationally accepted standards utilized be made transparent and available to the Association and to the public, with time to review and study the methodology and standards.

The Newport Mooring Association wishes to thank the Harbor Commission for all if its hard work over the years and hopes that the association's recommendation will be duly considered.

Respectfully,

THE NEWPORT MOORING ASSOICATION