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March 11, 2015

Eric Endersby  
Morro Bay Harbor Director  
1275 Embarcadero  
Morro Bay, CA 93442

Dear Director Endersby and Harbor Advisory Board Members,

The Sierra Club is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots environmental group. On behalf of our 2,000 members in San Luis Obispo County, we urge you to work with wildlife experts from Pacific Wildlife Care, Morro Coast Audubon Society and Willow Tree Wildlife in designing a new enclosed fish cleaning station for Tidelands Park.

The current cleaning station should be modified in order to protect our wildlife and fishermen from injury. The current cleaning station and dumpster design is problematic. In spite of signage, fishermen routinely toss large, bony fish carcasses to the waiting birds instead of disposing of them properly in the nearby dumpster. These large carcasses can injure the pouches and internal organs of Brown Pelicans, which normally eat small, soft-boned fish such as sardines and anchovies.

The placement of the dumpster is too far from the cleaning station. Fishermen often throw fish carcasses toward the dumpster to avoid leaving their catch unprotected from sea birds. The dumpster also allows birds to access the dumpster's contents. These birds can easily become contaminated in fish-oil while scavenging inside the dumpster, destroying the insulation of their feathers. Sea birds contaminated with fish-oil are in danger of hypothermia and starvation. Waste bins or a fully enclosed dumpster will benefit our wildlife while protecting our fishermen from injuries and disease.

We will support any efforts by the Morro Bay Harbor Department to seek grant funding for this necessary project. We will encourage grant providers to recognize this problem and approve funding to protect our wildlife.

We urge Morro Bay to uphold its status as a bird sanctuary and take action to protect our iconic Brown Pelicans from unnecessary harm.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Jencks, Chair  
Santa Lucia Chapter