

April 16, 2013

Cecil L. Pendergrass, Chairman
Lee County Board of County Commissioners
2115 Second Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Re: Personal Watercraft Tours at Port Sanibel Marina

Dear Chairman Pendergrass,

The City of Sanibel is opposed to amending Lee County Ordinances 08-14 and 95-13 to allow personal watercraft tours to operate out of the Port Sanibel Marina. We are very concerned about the precedent that approving this application would set by allowing personal watercraft vendors to operate in the environmentally sensitive back-bay waters of San Carlos Bay and the waters adjacent to Sanibel Island. These quiet back-bay waters provide critical habitat for the endangered Florida manatee and smalltooth sawfish, and are rookeries and roosting areas for several rare colonial nesting bird species.

Visitors from around the world come to Lee County to recreate, observe wildlife, and enjoy our pristine beaches. One of the major attractions to Lee County and Sanibel is our natural environment and the tranquility that our area offers over other destinations. Many Lee County residents have built their businesses in tandem with this natural setting—offering visitors opportunities to enjoy the waters and shores of Lee County through fishing, snorkeling, shelling, paddling, kayaking and other activities.

Personal watercrafts are very different from other types of recreational boats. They are fast, noisy, and have a very shallow draft, allowing them to operate in sensitive areas that other watercraft typically cannot access. This type of “active recreation” is not consistent with the goals of the Sanibel Plan and would be in direct conflict with existing Lee County businesses operating in the area that focus on promoting passive recreation, such as canoeing, kayaking and paddle boarding.

Allowing noisy, high-speed, personal watercraft to be used in the back-bay waters would likely result in direct impacts to our local bird rookeries and



City of Sanibel

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Sanibel, Florida 33957-4096

www.mysanibel.com

AREA CODE - 239

CITY COUNCIL	472-4135
ADMINISTRATIVE	472-3700
BUILDING	472-4555
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	472-3111
FINANCE	472-9615
LEGAL	472-4359
NATURAL RESOURCES	472-3700
RECREATION	472-0345
PLANNING	472-4136
POLICE	472-3111
PUBLIC WORKS	472-6397

roosting areas; increase potential for boat strikes with manatees foraging in the shallow grass beds; impact the enjoyment of our waters by kayakers, paddle boarders, and others passively recreating; and create noise concerns and a nuisance for property owners living on the back bay waters.

We urge the commission to retain the current language in Lee County Ordinances 08-14 and 95-13—to protect and preserve our natural environment, as well as our local economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

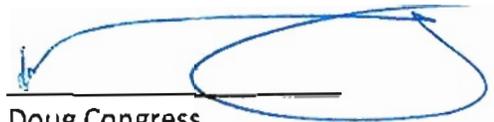
Sincerely,



Kevin Ruane
Mayor



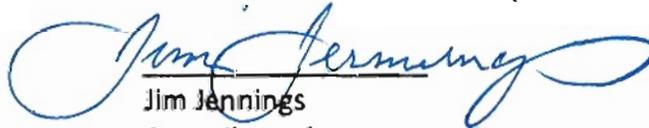
Mick Denham
Councilmember



Doug Congress
Vice Mayor



Marty Harrity
Councilmember



Jim Jennings
Councilmember

CC:

Commissioner John Manning
Commissioner Larry Kiker
Commissioner Tammy Hall
Commissioner Frank Mann