

Martha's Vineyard Commissioners,

First I would like to reiterate the salient points which I made at the public hearing for why I feel the proposed fishing pier would be better located south of the SSA Pier rather than to the north. South of the SSA is unused waterfront for 500 feet whereas north it is currently used for swimming and anchorage. South of the SSA pier would have minimal impact on a residential neighborhood whereas north it could have a negative impact. South of the SSA it would be across the street from the Police and directly adjacent to transit and plenty of parking. As noted, others have suggested additional alternative sites which may very well be more viable.

Doug Cameron has said that the reasons the pier was proposed on the north side of the SSA was that surveys show the landside elevation to be lower on the north side; that studies show the storms to protect against are those coming from the south east; and that the Island Plan designates the area immediately south of the SSA Pier as a public beach. With all due respect, these assumptions do not add up, and if you have faulty assumptions you are likely to have a flawed conclusion.

The existing landside elevation 200 feet in either direction from the SSA Pier is clearly lower on the south, not the north. Use your eyes. The applicant's statement that it is lower on the north relies on two other proposed multi-million dollar projects getting done first. Dangerous storms can come from any direction but this area is often battered by the well known Nor'easter. There is no beach south of the SSA Pier for at least 500 feet. To the north there is an existing swimming beach and anchorage that with a modest investment could be much better. The two sides of the SSA Pier are fundamentally and qualitatively different. On the south it is unused for a reason: there is no access for over 500 feet; the water is considerably deeper and there is a huge wall with no mezzanine level for 500 feet. On the north it is currently used because there are two access points and a mezzanine level bringing you closer to the water, it is in view of the waiting areas of several ferries, and the water is very shallow, almost like a swimming pool. So why does this matter? Well if you want to protect your pier from Nor'easters it would be better protected by the SSA Pier if it was to the south. Mr. Cameron has said it would be more expensive to build to the south based on the landside elevations, which I believe is incorrect. And finally the public beach they would be displacing is to the immediate north not the south.

The first 225 feet of the proposed fishing pier on the north side is in very shallow water. In other words, a good chunk of the expense of this \$750,000 - \$1,000,000 project would be spent in getting to deeper water. Mr. Cameron said earlier that the a pier on the south side would be more expensive but then in the public hearing said it would be in the same ballpark because it would be shorter but the ramping would cost more because of the higher landside elevation. Since I think he is wrong about the landside elevation and because a pier on the south side would necessarily be about 100 feet shorter it seems to me that a pier on the south side would be significantly less expensive.

I am not a fisherman and don't presume to know where the fishing would be best, although I find it hard to believe that the fishing would be any worse south of the SSA Pier where the water is deeper, the eel grass beds are larger and healthier, and there is less human and boat activity for at least 500 feet. I also have my own personal observations in the water with a mask for five months a year where I know that there are rarely ever fish during the day within 150 feet of shore on the north side of the SSA. Maybe they do come out at night but during the day they are not to be seen.

I have faith that the Martha's Vineyard Commission will differentiate between the facts and fish stories and will faithfully weigh the benefits and detriments. Since the first thing the Commission is asked to do when it weighs the benefits and detriments of a project are to decide whether the proposal is "appropriate and essential in view of the alternatives" and since there has been no real objective analysis of alternative sites I would think that would be an area the Commission would want to explore further. Frankly I must say I thought the public hearing was abruptly closed without any discussion or questions about alternative sites, streetscape impacts, or gateway issues, among others. Also, it seems to me that if all of these projects are being designed around one another it would make sense, especially given recent discussions and concern at the MVC about segmentation, that the MVC should more thoroughly review all of these projects together.

Paul H. Foley, Citizen  
Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts