

From: [Jaime Ries](#)
To: [Lemos, June](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Comment- 6/14/23 Finance & Administration Committee Meeting; Agenda Item # 3C
Date: Tuesday, June 13, 2023 2:50:37 AM

Committee Members,

My name is Jaime Ries. I'm the Board President of the Mendocino Coast Sea Dragons youth swim team, the parent of three swimmers, and a community member who frequently utilizes the CV Star Community Center facilities. I've appeared before the City Council previously (in December and January) and provided public comment on this issue, strongly urging the council not to increase pool lane rental fees, which will almost exclusively impact the Sea Dragons—the only year-round user group on the coast.

The proposed fee schedule will increase our cost to rent pool lanes for practice by 24% and 59% during “prime time hours” (between 5:30 and 6:00 for every afternoon practice). While I understand the financial issues the council is seeking to address by way of this proposed fee schedule adjustment, I will reiterate that our small non-profit swim club serving 50 youth swimmers here on the coast will suffer financial hardship severe enough to threaten our continued ability to operate. And I will also note that no one from CV Starr has reached out to our organization to discuss the potential impact of a fee increase or to seek our input at any time.

CV Starr appears to have also provided you with a survey that purports to provide a comparison of lane rental fees paid by other swim teams. I would like to point out that with the exception of the Mendocino Sports Club (which no longer has a pool) none of the facilities listed in the survey are in similarly-situated communities.

For one, no input was provided by other facilities in Mendocino county, Humboldt county, or Sonoma county. There are, in fact, swimming facilities in Ukiah, Willits, Arcata, Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol, and Petaluma. These facilities rent lanes to swim teams that we regularly visit for away meets. Yet none of them were included in the survey. Instead the survey contains incomplete (“unspecified”) information from affluent communities in the East Bay, Palo Alto, and Marin county.

Which leads to my second point: 60% of the kids in Fort Bragg Unified School District are socio-economically disadvantaged, thereby qualifying the entire school district for free breakfast and lunch grants from the State. I wonder if even one of the facilities listed in the survey serves a similar youth demographic.

In summary, the proposed fee schedule will be catastrophic for youth swimming on the coast. The information provided to you as support for the fee schedule is irrelevant and unhelpful. I strongly urge you to reject the proposed fee schedule or to at least gather better information before adopting CV Starr's proposal.

Sincerely,
Jaime Ries
Mendocino Coast Sea Dragons