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S/R

4 January 1967

Mr. Fred Simpich Jr.
President,
Oceanic Properties Inc.
PO Box 2780
Honolulu, Hawaii

Dear Fred:

The recent Governor's Award Program premiated the Sea Ranch more than any other project in the State. As you perhaps know it received the highest award possible for Master Planning--the Award for Exceptional Distinction. In addition it received awards for the houses (Esherick), the store (also Esherick), the condominiums (Moore), the graphics (Stauffacher).

I am pleased, of course, as I know you must be. But that is not the point of this letter. I have been up at the ranch during Christmas and while I was there I kept thinking of what the Sea Ranch has come to mean to many, many people. It has become a symbol of an attitude and an approach. The attitude is that quality is worthwhile in itself but that it also makes great economic sense. The approach is that it is possible for human beings to occupy and live in a piece of land without destroying the very values which brought them there in the first place.

The Sea Ranch has become a symbol for conservationists everywhere of the potential of living with the land rather than against it. When I say everywhere I mean just that. I am not sure you realize how widely the ranch is known, particularly in professional circles, throughout the world for what it has come to stand for. Here in this country Secretary Udall is vitally interested; all levels of government people are. They are interested--as are most architects, planners, landscape architects, conservationists--because the Sea Ranch is a symbol of the private rather than the public sector dealing with land on a sensitive level. They believe we are doing what we have been telling them. And stand for!

LH/H

Idealism aside, these convinced people mean sales as well-- sales by word of mouth throughout the country based on conservation-minded people wanting to buy land at Sea Ranch.

It would be a terrible blow if all this were to change. I can't tell you how many high hopes would be dashed, how many ideals would be broken, how many important people would be disillusioned; quite aside from these of us to whom the Sea Ranch means so much personally.

I write all this because I get rumors of all kinds which imply disenchantment, high-pressure sales tactics, changes in policy, modifications to basic planning. In fact, as you know, neither I nor any of my colleagues seem any longer to be involved in any planning. And I have been informed that neither are Al Boeke nor Geoff Fairfax.

If the approach changes or deteriorates I am firmly convinced that this will mean less in sales particularly amongst the type of people who have been buying because of Sea Ranch planning. As you remember the first reason given by ninety percent of initial purchasers was because of the high standards of planning and development.

Is there any way to insure continued adherence to planning and quality standards in which we and you have invested so much money and energy to prevent the destruction of something so important?

Best regards and a Happy New Year,

Lawrence Halprin

cc: Al Boeke