

June 17, 2014

Mayor Claudia Balducci  
450 110th Ave. NE  
P.O. Box 90012  
Bellevue, WA 98009

Dear Mayor,

I am writing to you to urge your support, and that of the Council, for funding the final piece of the Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center in Bellevue – the construction of the remaining classroom building. I am aware that Patrick Foran has submitted a request for \$1,500,000 through your internal capital funding process. My letter is to make clear how much Pacific Science Center believes this is a wise investment.

The partnership between the City of Bellevue and Pacific Science Center goes back many years now. It stands as one of the finest public/private partnership of which I am aware. We have worked hand in hand from the time of the first programs at the Sullivan House through the complex planning, fundraising and construction of the current facilities.

Over that time, the diversity and richness of site programming has continued to develop. As a result, the public participation in formal and informal programs sponsored by the Science Center and the City has been on an upward trajectory. We serve between 11,000 to 12,000 people annually in programs that include weeklong camps, youth career practicum programs, the highly regarded Lake Washington Watershed Intern Program (LWWIP) that has regularly yielded state champions or runners-up in the annual statewide Envirothon, holiday events, preschool activities and special toddlers programs. Programs are consistently fully booked. We have reached the practical limit in terms of numbers of people served at the high quality they have come to expect. I know Bellevue's staff has also booked increasing numbers of programs and events, making the facility a very well-used place.

Of course, when a family enrolls in one of the formal programs for the first time, they become aware, often for the first time, of the wonderful asset of Mercer Slough. It becomes a place they choose to enjoy into the future whether or not participating in a formal program.

I hope you find it gratifying that Bellevue Schools participates in our programs and makes use of the exceptional facilities, including the wetlab that we were able to equip with state-of-the-art instrumentation as a result of a significant grant from a private foundation a couple of years ago. We work with Bellevue Schools directly for LWWIP Interns to mentor Bellevue elementary students with after school science education programming focused on watershed concepts and environmental stewardship. In this aspect of LWWIP, we mentor and teach over 200 Bellevue elementary students each year. We also coordinate regularly with Bellevue School District regarding our preschool programming and kindergarten readiness as well as STEM career development for older students via Eastside Pathways collaboration and initiatives. And, of course, we reach



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Pacific Science Center is an independent not-for-profit educational institution that inspires lifelong interest in science, math and technology by engaging diverse communities through interactive and innovative exhibits and programs.

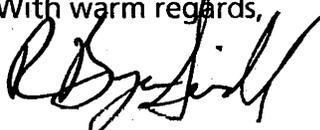
thousands of Bellevue and greater surrounding area students each year through our comprehensive field study programs for preschool through eighth grade classes who visit the Mercer Slough.

The limitation on serving more people at Mercer Slough is lack of facility space. Now is the time to build the final double classroom building, allowing us to reach our full capacity or nearly 20,000 students each year from throughout the region. This is a "shovel ready project." In the last round of construction, the underground work and foundation for this building were put in place and the working drawings to complete the building are already done. Your team of construction folks did a fine job of project management last time and can surely match that good performance with the final building.

My intention is to inform the various people who partnered with Bellevue and Pacific Science Center on the last phase to invite them to weigh in on completing this elegant facility. My expectation is they will all provide encouragement – and perhaps additional support.

Mercer Slough draws admiration not only from local and regional residents, but is admired by people from around the nation, for the vision of former elected officials and community leaders who set the site aside in perpetuity for public use. Completing the site build out will allow the City of Bellevue, with the continuing partnership with Pacific Science Center, to fully recognize the power and potential of the site for the benefit of our region.

With warm regards,



R. Bryce Seidl  
President and CEO  
Pacific Science Center

cc:

Brad Miyake, City Manager  
Patrick Foran, Parks & Community Services Director  
Bellevue City Council  
Parks & Community Services Board