

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER


NO. 04-270

DATE September 1, 2004

CD 15

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: CABRILLO MARINE AQUARIUM: LETTER OF AGREEMENT WITH ROYAL POLARIS SPORTFISHING INC. TO RETAIN THE ROYAL POLARIS FISHING VESSEL FOR A WHALEWATCHING EXCURSION TO BAJA, CALIFORNIA- MARCH 13 THROUGH MARCH 21, 2005

J. Combs		H. Fujita	___
*G. Stigile		K. Chan	___
F. Mok	___	J. Kolb	___



 General Manager

Approved _____

Disapproved _____

Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Approve the attached Letter of Agreement allowing Cabrillo Marine Aquarium to charter the Royal Polaris for the 31st annual sea-going expedition to San Ignacio Lagoon to view Pacific gray whales on the southernmost leg of their migration from the Alaskan Bering Sea;
2. Obligate Cabrillo Marine Aquarium to pay the vendor a total sum of \$52,245.00 for chartering the Royal Polaris from March 13 through March 21, 2005, to be reimbursed to the Department as patrons register and pay for participation in the excursion;
3. Find that in accordance with Charter Section 1022, the work can be performed more economically or feasibly by independent contractors than by City employees, and that the aforementioned services can only be provided by a Captain and crew with proper credentials, experience, and bonding (Royal Polaris carries a \$1 million insurance policy);
4. Direct the Board Secretary to transmit the Letter of Agreement to the Mayor's Office for review in accordance with Executive Directive No. 16, and to the City Attorney for review and approval as to form; and,
5. Authorize the General Manager to execute the Letter of Agreement on behalf of the Department subsequent to receiving necessary approvals.

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SUMMARY:

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium has sponsored the Annual "Meet the Friendly Whales of Baja" trip for the past thirty years. For more than twenty-five years, the vessel chartered for this trip has been The Royal Polaris berthed at Fisherman's Landing in San Diego, California. The Royal Polaris can accommodate 30 passengers in addition to the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium team of professional guides. The Team Leader for this trip is the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium Program Director and he is assisted by the aquarium's Education Curator. Also on the passenger manifest are three to four volunteers who possess expertise in the fields of geology, botany, ornithology and marine biology. Cabrillo Marine Aquarium employees will be paid their normal salary and will be provided with food and accommodations throughout the nine-day trip. The volunteer experts will not receive financial remuneration but will be provided room and board.

After departing Cabrillo Marine Aquarium by bus, passengers are taken to San Diego to board the 113-foot Royal Polaris and begin the experience of a lifetime. During their nine day trip, passengers will explore the pristine coastal environments, diverse geological formations and native vegetation of Baja. Elephant seals, sea lions, dolphins and marine birds will be within close up camera range. The highlight of the trip for many is viewing whales at arms' length from skiffs in San Ignacio Lagoon. Each year, a limited number of adventurers are permitted by the Mexican government to enter San Ignacio Lagoon on special tours.

Funds to pay for the charter are advanced from and reimbursed to MRP account #1703. The Baja trip is offered to the public at \$2,075 per person. Last year's Baja trip netted the Aquarium \$6,159.94. The primary goal in sponsoring the Baja trip is to further Cabrillo Marine Aquarium's mission of promoting knowledge, appreciation and conservation of the marine life of Southern California. The Cabrillo Marine Aquarium Baja trip attracts passengers from across the country and furthers the Aquarium's international reputation as one of the finest teaching aquariums.

This report was prepared by Susanne Lawrenz-Miller, Director, Cabrillo Marine Aquarium.