

## McKinnon, James

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**From:** Julia Padach [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 17, 2026 5:59 PM  
**To:** McKinnon, James  
**Subject:** May 13th CGA Meeting  
**Attachments:** CEQA Letter.pdf

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Hello James.

Attached is a copy of my letter that I sent to the Irvine Bowl Policy Committee, and the members of the Laguna Beach City Council. The letter was sent April 16, 2026. I accidentally erased the date while working on it. Please include it in the May 13th, Coastal Greenbelt Authority member agenda packet.

Thanks Julie Padach

CEQA Section 15323 (Class 23) is a categorical exemption under the CEQA guidelines for the “Normal Operations of Facilities for Public Gatherings”. This exemption applies to the routine use of existing facilities where NO MAJOR EXPANSION OF USE IS PROPOSED.

1. The proposed increased intensity of use is clear and obvious. Expansion in the amount of events, frequency of events, duration of events and loudness of events is no longer “the same or similar usage” of the Irvine Bowl or FOA grounds. The proposed increased intensity in usage, frequency, loudness of events at the Irvine Bowl and the FOA grounds, IS MAJOR AND SIGNIFICANT, and therefore, CEQA Section 15323 (Class 23) is not applicable. These increased events will have a cumulative impact, and the unusual circumstances of the venues location adjacent to a designated wilderness area that is home to endangered, threatened, and protected animals, should easily classify it as a “sensitive environment”. The city’s attempt to bypass proper environmental review will not go unnoticed.

2. The City of Laguna cannot arbitrarily raise decibel (dB) levels next to a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) habitat, because such actions are strictly regulated and therefore CEQA Section 15323 (Class 23) is not applicable.

Increasing decibel levels and event frequency at a venue adjacent to the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park poses risks to the habitat of numerous state and Federal protected animals. The orange-throated whiptail lizard, the coast horned lizard, the red diamond rattlesnake and the California Mountain snake are all species in the LCWP, and protected under the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Program. Proposing a CEQA exemption for such an increase, which could introduce significant noise pollution and sound vibration to protected ecological areas, requires environmental review.

The orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*) is recognized for its sensitivity, and habitat destructions is a primary cause for the imperilment species in the area. The Laguna Canyon area supports a high diversity of native wildlife including sensitive reptiles.

Protected affected areas under the NCCP agreement, must adhere to strict guidelines intended to maintain biodiversity and protect threatened species. Increased noised activity can fragment habitats and disrupt species behavior.

Federally listed species in the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park include the Coastal California Gnatcatcher (threatened), the Pacific Pocket Mouse (endangered), the Coastal Cactus Wren (Migratory Bird Treaty Act, MBTA), and the Peregrine Falcon (protected under Federal law).

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is designed to evaluate potential adverse environmental impacts. The City of Laguna attempting to exempt its own amendments to policies and events that expand loud activities (such as increased concert decibels and concert frequency) near protected natural habitats from CEQA, is certain to be challenged due to potential significant impacts on the habitat.

Any proposal policy, event or project that increases sound levels near the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park requires careful consideration of its impact on the local ecosystem. Further investigation into the specific CEQA exemption request is needed.

The proposed actions by the City of Laguna Beach to significantly increase the use of the Irvine Bowl and the FOA grounds to an all year event venue radically changes its intensity of use and therefore requires CEQA review.



## McKinnon, James

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**From:** Julia Padach [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2026 1:54 PM  
**To:** McKinnon, James  
**Subject:** Letter to Laguna Beach  
**Attachments:** CITY CDP SOUND.pdf

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Hi James. Can you please include this letter in the May 13th member agenda packet. Thanks Julie

May 3, 2026

To whom it may concern.

The city of Laguna Beach appears to ignoring their own LCP and LUP policies and language, as well as the Coastal Act and the NCCP Act regarding Environmental Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA).

The City of Laguna is applying for a CDP “to change the intensity of the use of land as it relates to their update of the Irvine bowl Sound Policy to allow for an increase at the Neighborhood Sound Boundary at and around the Irvine Bowl located in the Downtown Specific Plan Area.”

- The project is in a non-appealable zone.
- CEQA: "Staff recommends the Community Development Director determine that the proposed project is categorically exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15304 - Minor Alterations to Land Consisting of "minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry operations of existing facilities for public gathering for which the facilities were design, where there is a past history of the facility being used for the same or similar kind of purpose.

- EXCEPTIONS TRIGGER IF LOCATED IN OR NEAR ESHA/NCCP HABITAT (Laguna Coast Wilderness Park, less than 200 feet away)

- EXCLUSION INVALID

-CEQA Guidelines exclusions apply to the exemption.

15300.2 (a) Sensitive Location Exception

15300.2 (b) Cumulative Impact

15300.2 (c) Significant Effect / Unusual Circumstances

Exception trigger if near ESHA/NCCP - Located in or near sensitive habitat - Exclusion Invalid

Additionally, the application includes 3 parcels located at 650 Laguna Canyon Road Laguna Beach. APNs 496-101-01, 496-101-02 and 496-111-27.

650 Laguna Canyon Road is the Festival of the Arts grounds, and the Irvine Bowl where the Pageant of the Masters its located. The Irvine Bowl Park, which is not a traditional park, consists of 6 acres of land. One of these parcels, APN 496-101-01 is the police shooting range. The police shooting range should not be included in the CDP application, as it has nothing to do with any sound policy for the FOA grounds or the Irvine Bowl.

A permit was approved 4/19/26 for minor repairs to the shooting range with a CEQA 15301 exemption. Is the inclusion of this parcel an oversight, or a deliberate and deceitful action to increase the gun fire noise to be even louder and more disruptive than it is now? Multiple neighbors have complained repeatedly about the gun fire noise, with no response from the city. The shooting often goes on all day and into the night, sometimes multiple times a week. It is very loud already!

All three parcels of 650 Laguna Canyon Road are located next to the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park, an NCCP habitat. This NCCP habitat is home to both federal and state endangered, threatened, and protected species.

May 3, 2026

Currently there is no new sound limit policy in place. The issue of a new policy won't be discussed until May 26 at the city council meeting. **NO CDP SHOULD BE APPROVED BEFORE AN ACTUAL POLICY WITH AN AGREED UPON INCREASE, IF ANY, IS IN PLACE.** The immediate neighbors adjacent to the Irvine Bowl and the two FOA board members who sit on the Irvine Bowl Policy Committee, are all opposed to the major and significant proposed increases in sound levels and event frequency. Most neighbors are not opposed to a slight increase in use, but are strongly opposed to any increase in the sound levels. What is currently being proposed is a major and significant, not minor or "the same". The proposed increase in event frequency, duration and sound level, will create both a public and a private nuisance. The proposed increases will have a detrimental cumulative effect on the habitants of the surrounding lands, both animal and human.

In February the city also recommended that the Irvine Bowl Policy Committee

1. Approve an amendment to the "Sound Policy" to create an exception for events that meet certain conditions (i.e. "minor events") and
2. Find the actions exempt from CEQA Act Guidelines Section 15323 (Class23) The vote was 2-2 .

Classifying all concerts as minor events does not change the fact that the FOA grounds and Irvine Bowl are next to an NCCP habitat, and exceptions to the exclusion will be triggered.

The current hard decibel level limit is 70 dBA at the Neighborhood Sound Boundary. This is a hard limit of 70 dBA, not an average (dBA<sub>Leq</sub>).

The revised and more complete Rincon report now includes, LZpk, LApk, and LCpk, measurements.

LZpk- Zero weighted PEAK

Z weight represents the raw or true noise levels, capturing the actual sound pressure, particularly at low (bass) and high frequencies that the human ear does not perceive. The human body can feel Z weighted frequencies. Animals that can hear ultrasoicly can hear Z weighted frequencies. Z weight is used to measure very loud short sounds.

LCpk - C weighted PEAK

Measures low frequency and high level noises that A weighing filters out.

LApk - A weighted PEAK

A weighting is the standard weight used for most human ear simulation measurements. This scale adjusts to how the human ear perceives intensity at different frequencies. The initial Rincon report only showed A weighted (Leq) AVERAGE NOT PEAK measurements.

SPL (pressure) of sound level doubles for every 6 dBA increase. It is important to note that small changes are more significant in real life, than they look on paper. This is true, because the scale is logarithmic and not linear.

A 5 dBA increase from 70-75, will result in everything sounding (perceived loudness) of 41%.

May 3, 2026

ANALYSIS for the LApk for the 104 minute Jack Johnson concert. 8:45 - 10:30 p.m.  
Locations are all adjacent and/or closest to ESHA/NCCP habitat

M8-

75-79.9 dBA - 11 minutes 10.57%  
80-84.9 dBA - 49 minutes 47%  
85- 89.9 dBA - 31 minutes 29.8%.  
90+ dBA - 13 minute 12.5%

M5

<70 dBA - 13 minutes 12.5 %  
70- 74.9 dBA - 3 minutes 50.96 %  
75-79.9 dBA - 37 minute 35.57%  
80+ dBA - 1 minute .96%

M4

75-79.9 dBA - 8 minutes 7.69%  
80-84.9 dBA - 37 minute 35.5%  
85-89.9 dBA - 51 minutes 49.03%  
>90 dBA - 8 minutes 7.69%

M3

80-84.9 dBA- 5 minutes 4.8%  
85-89.9 dBA - 22 minutes 21%  
90-94.9 dBA- 40 minutes 38%  
85-99 dBA - 14 minutes 13.46%  
>100 dBA - 23 minutes 22%

Of 22 the minutes above 100 dBA

100-104.9 - 10 minutes  
105-109.9 dBA - 9 minutes  
110- 114.9 - 2 minutes  
>115 one minute

As you can see from the accurate analysis of the minute by minute LApk (PEAK) breakdown. The overwhelming percentage of the concert was over the 75dBA proposed and not approve sound limit maximum at the Neighborhood Sound Boundary. M8, M5, M4 and M3 are all adjacent to ESHA/NCCP habitat.

Once again, the city appears to be ignoring their own LCP and LUP policies and language, as well as the Coastal Act and NCCP Act regarding ESHA.

Thank You  
Julie Padach



May 3, 2026

## MINOR CORRECTION TO CITY CDP SOUND LETTER

M3

80-84.9 dBA- 5 minutes 4.8%

85-89.9 dBA - 22 minutes 21%

90-94.9 dBA- 40 minutes 38%

\*95-99.9 dBA - 14 minutes 13.46% \*Correction made. Original said 85-99.

>100 dBA - 23 minutes 22%

22 minutes above 100 dBA

100-104.9 - 10 minutes

105-109.9 dBA - 9 minutes

110 - 114.9 - 2 minutes

>115 one minute

Julie Padach