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January 11, 2002

Attn: Editor
Bay City Times
311 Fifth Street
Bay City, Michigan 48708

Re: Save Our Shoreline, Inc.

Dear Editor:

We write in an effort to correct an error made by your paper, which has seriously misled the public. Specifically, you have reported that beachowners sought a regional permit from the Army Corps of Engineers, that the request was denied, and that beachowners were therefore the “losers.” In your editorial of Wednesday, January 9, 2002, you state that “Beach dwellers had sought a regional permit” so they could make a path to the water and plow the weeds under up to 30 feet from shore. In fact, we have learned that it was the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and not beachowners, that requested the permit. Our organization which represents approximately 500 shoreline households, did not request the permit, and did not support the permit request. That fact should have been evident to you when you reported that only (18?) letters were received in favor of the request, when in the same article you reported that SOS has 500 members. In fact, in a recent phone conversation with a Corps official, we learned that one of the reasons the request failed was because it did not have the support of shoreline owners. And that was for good reason: as owners to the water’s edge, we view regulations that require us to allow weeds to grow on any portion of our beaches as unreasonable and unacceptable. Even before your editorial, your view on the topic was evident when you reported on the denial of the permit request and deemed beachowners the “losers” in their effort to maintain their beaches.

Because beachowners neither sought nor supported the permit request, your characterization of beachowners as the losers as a result of its denial is simply wrong. But your characterization does show the power of the media: you can manufacture beachowners and SOS as “losers” in a battle they did not wage, and did not support. You owe it to your readers to do a better job of investigating the facts, and to leave the editorializing to the editorial page.

Respectfully,

SAVE OUR SHORELINE, INC.
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