



San Francisco Water Power Sewer

Services of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Office of the General Manager
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
525 Golden Gate Avenue, 13th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

San Francisco Arts Commission
Tom DeCaigny, Director of Cultural Affairs
San Francisco Arts Commission
401 Van Ness Ave, Suite 325
San Francisco, CA 94102

September 24th, 2018

Dear Mr. DeCaigny,

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) recognizes the inimitable and powerful contribution which artists and artworks can make in the service of fulfilling our mission. The SFPUC is proud of its ongoing partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC). Together we are working to align our agency's compliance with San Francisco's 2% for the arts ordinance with the priorities and values of the SFPUC's mission and Community Benefits Policy (2011).

The SFPUC was pleased to partner with SFAC for the commissioning and purchase of artworks during the planning and construction of our headquarters at 525 Golden Gate Ave in San Francisco. Among the artworks commissioned were two large integrated artworks by artist Ned Kahn, 'Rain Portal' and 'Firefly'. While the 'Firefly' artwork has succeeded in establishing 525 Golden Gate Ave as a place of destination, the 'Rain Portal' artwork has consistently failed to perform as originally intended.

Over the course of several years SFPUC staff worked closely with SFAC staff to operate, maintain and repair the 'Rain Portal' artwork. In April of 2017, after months of costly repairs, SFAC worked with ARG Conservation Services and Aquatic Environments, Inc. to inspect the artwork, and to provide an estimate of the costs to return the artwork to its original working condition. The subsequent report observed foaming, stains, bubbles, inconsistent flows, algae and multiple leaks within the panels of the artwork. The report detailed numerous construction and electrical flaws concluding persistent leakage which could be both dangerous and a health risk (noting that standing water, even in small amounts, can give rise to mold and mildew growth). Upon receipt of this report the SFPUC requested that the artwork be drained of the water remaining in the polycarbonate panels.

The April 2017 report from ARG estimated the costs to repair the artwork at nearly \$100,000. Once repaired the artwork would require weekly check-ins for leakage and monthly technical repairs, estimated at \$1,750 each month. Over time, maintenance costs will accelerate as the functional components of the artwork wear-out.

The SFPUC recognizes that it is the policy and practice of SFAC to acquire works of art of the highest quality and to maintain these works to the highest

London Breed
Mayor

Ike Kwon
President

Vince Courtney
Vice President

Ann Moller Caen
Commissioner

Francesca Vietor
Commissioner

Anson Moran
Commissioner

Harlan L. Kelly, Jr.
General Manager

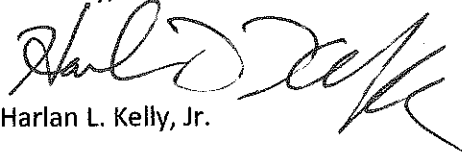
OUR MISSION: To provide our customers with high-quality, efficient and reliable water, power and sewer services in a manner that values environmental and community interests and sustains the resources entrusted to our care.



aesthetic standards. The SFPUC also recognizes that restoration of the 'Rain Portal' artwork is impractical considering the high cost of repair and the ongoing maintenance. With due consideration given to the SFAC's Civic Art Collection Guidelines and de-accession Policies, the SFPUC wishes to request that the Commissioners of the San Francisco Arts Commission consider the de-accession and removal from public display of Ned Kahn's 'Rain Portal' artwork located at the SFPUC headquarters at 525 Golden Gate Ave in San Francisco, California.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harlan L. Kelly, Jr.", with a stylized, flowing script.

Harlan L. Kelly, Jr.