

October 16, 2026

San Francisco Arts Commission
Civic Design Review Committee
art-info@sfgov.org

For Meeting of Oct 19, 2026

Agenda item: Embarcadero Plaza & Sue Bierman Park Renovation

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to urge the committee to retain the National Monument to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Embarcadero Plaza and Sue Bierman Park Renovation Project.

As you may know, this monument is the only national monument to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, in which 4000 plus men and women volunteered in 1936-1939 to defend the Spanish Republic against fascist forces supported by Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

This remarkable memorial is located on the San Francisco Waterfront because of its significance to the labor unions that won their existence on this ground. The impact of those battles ranged far beyond the West Coast, to the mines, cotton fields, steel mills and auto plants where working people in the US built their labor movement.

It was that labor movement (and many of the participants in the Waterfront strikes) that schooled and motivated the Lincolns to foresee that that the war in Spain was about self determination and that the fascist threat was world wide.

I bring this up not as interesting fact, but because conceptualizing the new park without acknowledging its historical significance is essentially effacing that history. That erasure is particularly dangerous now.

I do not think considerations such as length of the structure, or design problems incorporating maintenance and emergency access is enough to make what is essentially a political decision: that the new park has no room to recognize the historical and political roots of the space it occupies.

Thank you for your consideration.

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