

Route 4, Box 33  
Santa Fe, N. M.  
87501

4 October 1968

Mr. Maynard Munger, Jr.  
Chairman S. F. Bay Chapter  
Sierra Club  
1050 Mills Tower  
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Munger:

The language of the S. F. Bay Chapter Executive Committee's resolutions of Sept. 25th and your letter of Sept. 30th are clear enough; what is difficult to comprehend is the rationale underlying these communications which are more emotional than reasonable.

The resolution concerning reorganization is particularly offensive in that it attempts to take control of the Sierra Club by ordering the Board of Directors, under threat of unspecified action, to carry out its responsibilities as the Executive Committee of the S. F. Bay Chapter interprets them. The Board of Directors is responsible to the whole membership of the Club, not to the Executive Committee of a single chapter. There are 23 other chapters some of which have expressed quite different views. In support of your command you say you represent a very united chapter, but you have not polled the membership of the chapter on the issue of reorganization. Nor could you do so if you tried in any meaningful form since the reorganization proposal has many facets which cannot be intelligently decided by a simple affirmative or negative vote.

Under the guise of being informed and concerned you presume to greater wisdom than the Board of Directors which is no less well- and conceivably better - informed and also equally concerned. The reorganization plan, which was first presented in final form to the Board at its September meeting, is a complicated proposal which should not be implemented even in its major provisions by a simple affirmative act. It requires careful study, consideration of alternative means of attaining the desired ends, and open debate.

The Board of Directors does not pretend to special prescience in its management of the affairs of the Sierra Club. It is a deliberative body composed of individuals of various persuasions. It cannot be all things to all men, but must ultimately affirm the convictions and most thoughtful determinations of its prevailing majority.

I consider the reorganization resolution of the S. F. Bay Chapter autocratic, illadvised,, disruptive in effect, and entirely disregardful of accepted democratic processes within the Club.

Yours sincerely,

Eliot Porter

cc Dr. Edgar Wayburn  
Board of Directors