
Bill (William M.) Kortum papers

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Sonoma State University Library

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2018

Descriptive Summary

Title: Bill (William M.) Kortum papers

Dates: 1954-2014

Collection Number: Consult repository

Creator/Collector: Kortum, Bill (William M.), 1927-2014.

Extent: 38 boxes

Repository: Sonoma State University Library

Rohnert Park, California 94928

Abstract: The Kortum papers, dating from 1954 to 2014, include correspondence, documents, maps, clippings, photographs, and ephemera on national and local environmental and political topics.

Language of Material: English

Access

Collection is open for research by appointment.

Publication Rights

The library can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property.

Preferred Citation

Bill (William M.) Kortum papers. Sonoma State University Library

Biography/Administrative History

Bill Kortum was a longtime Sonoma County environmental activist involved in many of California's most important land-use campaigns. A veterinarian specializing in dairy cows, he was well acquainted with the county's rural and coastal agricultural open spaces and was determined to save them. Dr. Kortum worked to pass Proposition 20, a measure that established the California Coastal Commission. He advocated through public office (Petaluma School Board, Democratic Central Committee, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors), though he and another supervisor were later recalled during county turmoil over a building moratorium and property taxes. Nevertheless, the policies he advocated were ultimately adopted countywide. He continued his environmental advocacy, co-founded Sonoma County Conservation Action which educates the public on environmental issues, and helped to establish the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District. Dr. Kortum promoted visionary anti-sprawl policies such as urban growth boundaries around cities and greenbelt protections between cities, both adopted. Most recently, he successfully fought for voter approval on the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART), a commuter train that connects Sonoma and Marin counties. As a founding member of the California League of Conservation voters, he served as its chairman for many years. He was a 20-year board member of the Sonoma Land Trust, and co-founded Coastwalk which provides coastal hiking experiences and, as California Coastwalk, promotes the completion of the California Coastal Trail.

Scope and Content of Collection

The materials are organized into 38 boxes and 8 Record Groups: Coastal Issues, Transportation, Water, Wastewater, Petaluma, Open Space, General Topics, and Bill Kortum (biographical and political career). The collection includes correspondence, documents, maps, clippings, photographs, and ephemera.

Indexing Terms

Environmentalists -- California -- Sonoma County.

Nuclear power plants -- California -- Sonoma County.

Political activism -- Sonoma County (Calif) -- History -- Sources.

Land use -- California -- Sonoma County.

Public lands -- California -- Sonoma County.

Conservation of natural resources -- California -- Sonoma County.

Shoreline protection -- California.

Environmental policy -- California -- Sonoma County.

Coastal zone management -- California.

Environmental protection -- California.

Sonoma County (Calif) -- History -- 20th century -- Sources.

Water reuse -- California -- Sonoma County.

COAAST (Organization).

Committee to Preserve Bodega Head (Organization).

Northern California Association to Preserve Bodega Head (Organization).

Bodega Head (Calif.).

Bodega Bay (Calif.).

Sea Ranch (Calif.).

[Bill \(William M.\) Kortum Papers Inventory](#)
