

We just won the fight for Equal Pay in professional surfing.

Gender-based discrimination in pro surfing first caught my attention in 1999 when Jeff Clark founded the Mavericks big wave surf competition in Half Moon Bay. The event was named, "Men Who Ride Mountains." Now it's two decades later, and women athletes have still not had an opportunity to compete in the Mavericks surf contest, however that will change when the next event is held near Half Moon Bay.

Let me provide a little background: Women big wave surfers ride 25-to 68-foot waves at the most dangerous spots on earth. The largest wave ever surfed by a woman is the height of a 7-story building.

In 2015, I asked the California Coastal Commission to require that women be allowed to compete in the Mavericks surf contest. My request was supported in a 7-4 vote.

That success got the attention of professional big wave surfers Bianca Valenti, Paige Alms, Keala Kennelly, and Andrea Moller. Together we formed the Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing with founding counsel Karen Tynan.

In 2016, Paige Alms made history as the first Women's Big Wave Champion at Pe'ahi, Hawaii. The WSL paid Alms \$15,000 in prize money and they paid the men's division winner \$25,000. What do you think of that?

A year ago, in Oct 2017, Alms successfully defended her title and again was paid 40% less money than a man.

Last summer, San Francisco big wave surfer Bianca Valenti made history as the first Women's Big Wave Champion in Latin America at the Puerto Escondido Cup. The WSL paid Valenti 75% less than her male counterpart surfing the same wave on the same day.

Six month ago, the Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing met with the World Surf League in Redwood City and presented a proposal for equal prize money. We told the WSL to end gender-based discrimination. CEO Sophie Goldschmidt said NO, and threatened to cancel the entire Mavericks surf competition rather than pay women equally.

What did we do? Back down? Accept less? Hell NO! We stood our ground and went back to the Coastal Commission and demanded equal pay and equal access at Mavericks. We also got help from Betty Yee and Gavin Newsom and the California State Lands Commission staff.

Here's what happened next: In Sept, the WSL announced global equal prize money for every WSL event, including the Mavericks Challenge, which may be held next month depending on surf conditions.

Four women surfers, an activist, a lawyer and our supporters stood together, united in our demand for equality and pay equity.

And here we are today: State legislators have taken an interest in the precedent our work has set and they are pursuing a gender equity in sports bill. Please stay tuned because we need your help educating state lawmakers about why they must pass legislation that requires equal pay!