



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The California Coastal Commission Celebrates the  
20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> License Plate**

**- Program Generated \$95 Million in License Plate Sales and Renewals  
for Coastal Education and Conservation -**

**- Heal the Bay Celebrates Anniversary with Beach Cleanup on Oct. 21 -**

LOS ANGELES (Sept. 13, 2017) - One of California's most impactful programs, the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> License Plate celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. What started out in 1997 as an effort to give drivers a way to help protect and restore the golden state's magnificent coast and ocean has grown into a vital and successful campaign with Californians purchasing nearly a quarter of a million license plates and generating more than \$95 million in sales over the last two decades.

"The support for the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> License Plate has been tremendous," said Christiane Parry, director of education for the California Coastal Commission – the agency that administers funds collected from the license plate purchases. "Californians have great respect for the environment and value the importance of taking care of marine wildlife, while educating the next generation about preserving our coast."

To heighten awareness and generate excitement for the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> License Plate, Heal the Bay will honor its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the **Nothin' But Sand Beach and Creek Cleanup on Oct. 21, 2017 from 10 a.m. – 12 Noon at Playa del Rey's Toe's Beach, Tower 41**. A Los Angeles-based environmental organization, Heal the Bay receives funds generated from the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> License Plate to support its educational and conservation programs. The community is invited to participate and the event will host raffles and offer prizes to attendees, while creating opportunities for new license plate sales.

"We are forever grateful for the proceeds raised from the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> License Plate program," said Meredith McCarthy, Heal the Bay's Director of Programs. "As a non-profit organization, we wouldn't be able to educate the community about protecting the environment without the support of California drivers who care about the health of our coasts."

Supporting the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> License Plate program and the organizations it assists is more important than ever. Scientists estimate that more than 18 billion pounds of plastic enters the world's oceans annually. That is the equivalent to contents of one garbage truck filled with plastic dumped into the ocean every minute. Studies have shown that people are ingesting plastic fragments as folks consume many different forms of fish and shellfish and even table salt!

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WHALE TAIL

### ***How the WHALE TAIL® License Plate Program Has Made a Difference Over the Years***

- More than three million Californians have participated in coastal cleanup, education, and conservation programs funded by the plate.
- Cleanup volunteers have picked up more than 21 million pounds of trash from our beaches and waterways.

License plate sales have funded well over 200,000 field trips for students.

Since 1998, the license plate has funded \$11 million in WHALE TAIL® grants to more than 600 community projects statewide; supported the annual Coastal Cleanup Day event and year-round Adopt-A Beach® program; funded coastal improvement projects and coastal access grants by the State Coastal Conservancy; and supported the preservation of natural areas, restoration of fish and wildlife habitat, and water quality improvements by numerous other organizations such as California Conservation Corps, the Natural Resources Agency, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Parks, and many others.

To participate in the Nothin' But Sand Beach and Creek Cleanup on Oct. 21, 2017 visit, Heal the Bay's events page at <https://healthebay.org/event/nothin-but-sand-beach-cleanup-4/>.

The WHALE TAIL® License Plate has a full color graphic depicting a California Gray Whale diving into the ocean. For more information and to purchase the plate, visit [www.ecoplates.com](http://www.ecoplates.com).

### **About the California Coastal Commission**

The California Coastal Commission is committed to protecting and enhancing California's coast and ocean for present and future generations. It does so through careful planning and regulation of environmentally-sustainable development, strong public participation, education and effective intergovernmental coordination. For more information about the California Coastal Commission's programs and how to buy a Whale Tail Plate, call (800) COAST-4U or visit [www.coastforyou.org](http://www.coastforyou.org).

### **About Heal the Bay**

Heal the Bay is Southern California's leading nonprofit dedicated to protecting local beaches, oceans and watersheds. The organization has a 32-year track record of using sound science and community engagement to keep our coastline and inland neighborhoods clean and vibrant. The group issues water quality grades for more than 500 beaches each week, conducts monthly beach cleanups, educates thousands of underserved schoolchildren each year, and operates the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium, among many other programs.

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