

California Coastal Commission

**Strategic Plan
2026-2030**



Protecting California's coast for present and future generations

The 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, rigorous use of science, strong public participation, education, and effective intergovernmental coordination.



La Jolla Cove | Photo by Ahmad Alomar

Contents

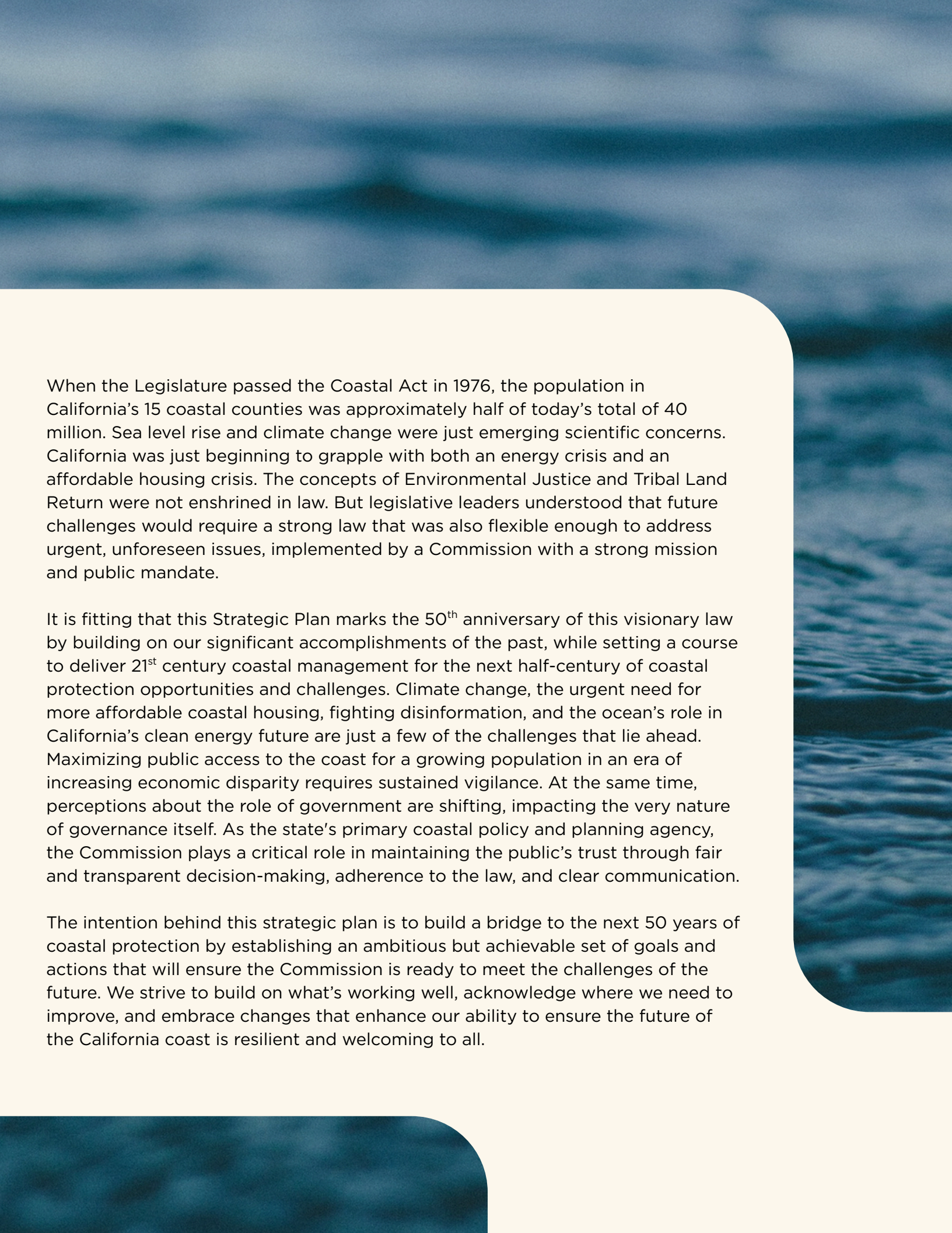
COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE	4
PURPOSE OF THE PLAN	6
FIVE-YEAR GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS	7
Goal 1: Ensure Coastal Access for All	8
Goal 2: Plan for Resilient Communities	13
Goal 3: Improve External Engagement and Coordination	18
Goal 4: Protect Coastal Resources	22
Goal 5: Build and Maintain a Resilient Organization	26



Commitment to the Future

The California Coastal Act safeguards California's irreplaceable coastal resources and guarantees that all people can access our iconic beaches and coastline. It also provides for environmentally responsible development that supports the state's nearly \$42 billion marine economy. For 50 years, through implementation of the Coastal Act, California has demonstrated that resource protection and economic development go hand in hand.

The California Coastal Commission and the public have consistently applied this landmark law in creative and sometimes surprising ways to achieve some of the state's greatest accomplishments in equitable and affordable public access and recreation, habitat conservation and wetland recovery. Since 1976, the Commission and the Coastal Act have been at the heart of hundreds of major coastal success stories along California's 1,100-mile long coast, including saving coastal treasures like the Bolsa Chica and Ballona wetlands, Trestles Beach and Martins Beach, the Hearst Ranch, Newport Banning Ranch, Sea Ranch and the cabins at Steep Ravine and Crystal Cove. We've also been directly responsible for the creation of over 200 public accessways, more than 1,200 lower cost overnight accommodations, including hotel rooms, cabins, campsites, and hostel beds (with an additional 440 in the pipeline), protection of approximately 12,000 acres through open space and conservation easements, and prevented the demolition of over 1,100 existing affordable housing units. The Commission shares these success stories with a multitude of essential and valued partners who share the mission of coastal protection and public access. But without the strong, comprehensive policies of the Coastal Act, California's coastline would be far less open, accessible, and inspiring.

The background of the page is a photograph of ocean waves, with a white, rounded rectangular box on the left side containing text. The waves are dark blue and white, creating a textured, dynamic background.

When the Legislature passed the Coastal Act in 1976, the population in California's 15 coastal counties was approximately half of today's total of 40 million. Sea level rise and climate change were just emerging scientific concerns. California was just beginning to grapple with both an energy crisis and an affordable housing crisis. The concepts of Environmental Justice and Tribal Land Return were not enshrined in law. But legislative leaders understood that future challenges would require a strong law that was also flexible enough to address urgent, unforeseen issues, implemented by a Commission with a strong mission and public mandate.

It is fitting that this Strategic Plan marks the 50th anniversary of this visionary law by building on our significant accomplishments of the past, while setting a course to deliver 21st century coastal management for the next half-century of coastal protection opportunities and challenges. Climate change, the urgent need for more affordable coastal housing, fighting disinformation, and the ocean's role in California's clean energy future are just a few of the challenges that lie ahead. Maximizing public access to the coast for a growing population in an era of increasing economic disparity requires sustained vigilance. At the same time, perceptions about the role of government are shifting, impacting the very nature of governance itself. As the state's primary coastal policy and planning agency, the Commission plays a critical role in maintaining the public's trust through fair and transparent decision-making, adherence to the law, and clear communication.

The intention behind this strategic plan is to build a bridge to the next 50 years of coastal protection by establishing an ambitious but achievable set of goals and actions that will ensure the Commission is ready to meet the challenges of the future. We strive to build on what's working well, acknowledge where we need to improve, and embrace changes that enhance our ability to ensure the future of the California coast is resilient and welcoming to all.

Purpose of the Plan

This Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap for the Coastal Commission's next five years. It outlines five overarching goals that reflect our core priorities and values. These goals are not listed in any order of priority and are intended to be undertaken concurrently.



Ensure Coastal Access for All



Plan for Resilient Communities



Improve External Engagement and Communication



Protect Coastal Resources



Build and Maintain a Resilient Organization

Nested within these goals are multiple objectives and specific actions, many of which build on work from the previous Strategic Plan, but with new emphasis, additional specificity, or course corrections grounded in new information. Several of the objectives and actions are entirely new, reflecting new legal mandates and evolving priorities. The goals, objectives, and actions outlined here do not represent the full scope of the Commission's activities; instead, they identify targeted efforts that will drive meaningful progress on the most critical priorities in the coming years.

Furthermore, because coastal management is multi-disciplinary and crosscutting, making progress in one area can also benefit others. For instance, planning for more affordable housing in the coastal zone will also serve objectives related to public access and environmental justice. Seeking opportunities to work with California Native American tribes to protect and restore coastal habitats can strengthen these partnerships while also increasing community resilience to climate change. And investing in training and mentorship to support the next generation of leadership within the staff will also improve the Commission's efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness. Through consistent reinforcement of these collective goals, objectives, and actions, the Commission will take another incremental step along a path charted by the Coastal Act's mandate and our shared vision: keeping California's coast a vibrant, welcoming, and lasting part of life in our state—for everyone, now and in the future.

Five-Year Goals, Objectives, & Actions





Goal 1: Ensure Coastal Access for All

Maximizing access to the coast is a foundational mandate of the Coastal Act. Over the past five decades, the Commission has successfully secured and protected hundreds of public accessways, trails, and coastal recreation areas, helping to make the California coast one of the most publicly accessible in the world. A significant component of the Commission's work has involved removing both physical and non-physical barriers to ensure that everyone can enjoy—and feel welcomed on—our beautiful coastline. To protect and build on this legacy, the Commission must develop new tools and strategies that respond to today's challenges, including climate change, rising costs, and growing inequities. This goal reinforces the Commission's commitment to uphold and expand public coastal access for the next 50 years.



Objective 1: Plan for the next 50 years of public coastal access

The Commission is dedicated to ensuring that California's coast remains open, accessible, and welcoming to all—now and for future generations. This long-term vision includes both protecting existing access and creating new opportunities for the public to experience the coast in meaningful ways. To achieve this, the Commission will work closely with local governments, state and federal agencies, tribal partners, and community-based organizations. Together, we will develop new tools, strengthen outreach, and raise public awareness about the right to access the coast. This objective also calls for proactive stewardship—preserving and restoring beaches and other public trust resources and limiting shoreline armoring to ensure our coastline remains resilient and available for generations to come.

Actions

- 1.1.1** Expand the Commission's Coastal Access Program to promote multi-modal access to the coast, facilitate new accessways, and establish new partnerships
- 1.1.2** Continue developing and implementing creative strategies to protect California's most vulnerable beaches from the impacts of climate change and sea level rise
- 1.1.3** Create and enhance digital tools that broaden public access and increase awareness of California's coastal resources
- 1.1.4** Modernize resources for local governments and other asset managers regarding accepting and maintaining accessways
- 1.1.5** Explore and implement forward-thinking approaches to safeguard California's public trust resources for future generations

Samoa Beach | Photo by Carissa Ranario





Objective 2: Prioritize affordable access, recreation, and overnight accommodations

Cost remains one of the most significant barriers preventing many Californians and visitors to California from accessing and enjoying the coast. Over the next five years, the Commission will work to reduce inequitable barriers to coastal access by expanding opportunities that are free or lower cost. This includes supporting youth and community access programs, encouraging the development of affordable visitor-serving facilities, and promoting inclusive recreational and overnight experiences that make the coast more accessible to all Californians.

Actions

- 1.2.1** Expand the California Coastal Trail (CCT) Network
- 1.2.2** Develop new strategies to protect existing and increase the supply of new lower-cost overnight accommodations and affordable housing opportunities for the coastal workforce
- 1.2.3** Explore innovative approaches to publicize and expand use of lower-cost overnight accommodations and recreational opportunities
- 1.2.4** Strengthen partnerships with local and state government agencies, Ports, community organizations and other partners to pilot new approaches to providing affordable access and lower-cost overnight accommodations

Objective 3: Break down barriers to coastal access

The Coastal Act emphasizes that California's coast is a resource for all people, as reflected in its strong public access policies. These policies, rooted in the public's support for Proposition 20 in 1972, affirm that access to and along the shoreline is a fundamental right—not a privilege reserved for those who live near the coast. The Commission recognizes that many communities have faced and continue to face significant barriers to accessing the coast and its many resources. To address these longstanding inequities, the Commission will prioritize strategies that expand access and ensure that all Californians, regardless of background or geography, can experience and enjoy the coast.

Actions

- 1.3.1** Support co-management and land return efforts for California Native American tribes
- 1.3.2** Collaborate with tribes to reduce conflicts between public access and the protection of tribal cultural and ecological resources
- 1.3.3** Expand engagement and education efforts to raise awareness of the public's right to access the coast and the importance of protecting public trust resources
- 1.3.4** Develop Local Coastal Program (LCP) and Coastal Development Permit (CDP) guidance to help local governments and applicants implement equitable and inclusive access programs that meet Coastal Act requirements
- 1.3.5** Grow the Whale Tail Grant program through outreach to new communities and identification of new funding sources
- 1.3.6** Support coastal access and recreation opportunities that are inclusive and foster a welcoming beach environment for all people



Objective 4: Enforce the public's right to access the coast

Effective enforcement is essential to upholding the integrity of coastal resource protection laws and ensuring that the public's rights are respected. This includes protecting the public's right to access the coast and ensuring that development within the coastal zone is legally authorized and carried out in compliance with all applicable terms and conditions. A critical part of this responsibility is enforcing public access protections and addressing violations that block or limit access, as well as preventing and remedying harm to sensitive coastal habitats, cultural resources, wetlands, and other coastal resources. This essential but complex work requires dedicated resources to monitor, investigate, and resolve violations across the state's many coastal communities and environments.

Actions

- 1.4.1** Seek additional staff and resources to strengthen and grow the Commission's enforcement team
- 1.4.2** Establish a compliance monitoring program for Commission permits, enforcement orders, and settlement agreements
- 1.4.3** Improve messaging and outreach to increase understanding of the Commission's enforcement work
- 1.4.4** Explore ways to improve the efficiency of the enforcement program, including resolving violations through permit actions and seeking statutory authority for information gathering



Goal 2: Plan for Resilient Communities

Climate change is upon us, affecting almost every facet of California's natural, social, and built environment. Altered fire regimes and increased fuel loads are driving larger and more catastrophic wildfires. Shifting weather patterns around the globe have led to extreme and prolonged droughts as well as intensifying storm conditions. Sea level rise is steadily reshaping the coastline, heightening risks to built environments, natural systems, and coastal communities. At the same time, climate migration due to worsening droughts, excessive prolonged heat, wildfires, and increased storm effects in other parts of the state and globe places additional pressure on our coastal spaces and communities. Adapting to climate change is one of the most pressing and complex challenges of our time—and it will remain a central focus of the Commission's work for decades to come. Addressing these impacts requires bold, adaptive planning that prioritizes resilience, equity, and long-term sustainability.



For more than 50 years, the Commission has partnered with local, state and Tribal governments to protect California's coastal resources and ensure public access. Through this work, we have developed strategic LCP policy guidance and permit conditions that anticipate and address the many coastal hazards exacerbated by climate change such as flooding, erosion, and wave uprush. However, these strategies are often applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis, resulting in a fragmented approach that does not fully address regional vulnerabilities to coastal hazards or ensure equitable access and resource protection at scale.

As climate change accelerates, our planning and regulatory frameworks must evolve to meet intensifying threats and ensure that coastal communities and ecosystems are collectively resilient. Guided over the next five years by the Commission's [Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance](#) and [Critical Infrastructure Guidance](#), we will advance Coastal Act-consistent planning efforts that ensure development at all scales is resilient to sea level rise and protective of access and coastal resources. This includes expanding the use of existing tools—such as the neighborhood-scale approach, hazard mitigation policies, and mitigation strategies for coastal armoring—while also exploring new approaches, including financial tools and strategies to fund adaptation work and voluntary buyout programs for high-risk properties. The Commission will also continue to develop knowledge and expand efforts to improve community resilience to other climate change stressors such as wildfire.

This proactive, systems-level approach will help ensure that coastal communities are prepared to navigate both environmental and social challenges posed by sea level rise and other climate change impacts over the next half-century. We will lead this effort by prioritizing innovation in key areas of our planning and permitting work—pushing beyond traditional approaches to build a more resilient and inclusive coastal future.



Cardiff State Beach | CA King Tides Project

Objective 1: Ensure LCPs address sea level rise and climate change

At the core of the Commission's Local Coastal Program (LCP) work is a unique planning partnership with coastal jurisdictions to implement California's Coastal Management Program and support locally issued coastal development permits. The Commission supports local governments in balancing development that fosters vibrant, inclusive communities with the Coastal Act's mandate to protect coastal resources and prioritize public access, recreation, and environmental stewardship.

Continued coordination on climate change planning is essential to ensure that LCPs are equipped to address the growing risks of sea level rise, flooding, erosion, wildfires, and other coastal hazards. [Senate Bill 272](#) (Laird, 2023) reinforces this need by requiring local governments in the Coastal Zone to submit an LCP—or an update to an existing LCP—to include sea level rise adaptation planning. In response, the Commission will continue to drive these LCP updates forward by providing technical support, policy guidance, and funding assistance to help jurisdictions update their LCPs to reflect the best available science and climate adaptation strategies, including community-scale adaptation where appropriate.

Actions

- 2.1.1** Prioritize and expedite new LCPs and LCP updates that plan for sea level rise in alignment with SB 272
- 2.1.2** Continue to collaborate with local governments through the Local Government Working Group
- 2.1.3** Develop additional knowledge and create new or updated guidance on innovative climate adaptation strategies that reflect the best available science
- 2.1.4** Seek permanent funding for the Commission's Local Assistance LCP Grant Program
- 2.1.5** Develop guidance on implementation of nature-based adaptation strategies and coordinate with local jurisdictions and other partners to identify feasible regulatory pathways that encourage these strategies

Oceanside | Photo by Kate Huckelbridge





Objective 2: Prioritize principles of environmental justice in resiliency planning efforts

In California, generations of discriminatory land use policies and practices have led to an inequitable distribution of environmental burdens and a lack of investment in natural resource benefits within environmental justice communities. Coastal hazards, exacerbated by sea level rise and other climate change impacts, will intensify these burdens, particularly for environmental justice and tribal communities that already experience heightened vulnerability. It is crucial for planners and decision-makers to consider not only the direct impacts of proposed development on coastal resources but also how those impacts affect the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens along the coast. This includes communities that rely on coastal resources, such as workers and visitors, even if they do not reside in the coastal zone. Meaningful engagement and equitable planning that centers environmental justice and tribal communities are also important for addressing these specific burdens while seeking to holistically address vulnerabilities and improve coastal resilience across the state.

Actions

- 2.2.1** Conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Commission's Environmental Justice Policy to date
- 2.2.2** Improve implementation of the Commission's Environmental Justice Policy through enhanced internal coordination and training
- 2.2.3** Continue working with local governments, Ports, Universities, applicants and the public to incorporate environmental justice principles into LCP, CDP, Port Master Plan (PMP) and Long-Range Development Plan (LRDP) processes

Objective 3: Advance climate-resilient housing, transportation, and other infrastructure planning

The Coastal Act includes forward-looking policies that seek to balance the need to protect coastal resources with the need for both public and private development and infrastructure to serve residents and visitors. Much of California's coastline reflects this vision, with concentrated land use patterns and transportation systems that have shaped where and how development occurs.

As climate change intensifies and housing and infrastructure needs change, it is critical to integrate land use, public access, housing, transportation and other infrastructure planning into climate adaptation efforts. The Commission plays a key role in advancing smart growth strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, focus on infill development and support resilient, equitable communities. This includes preserving existing and facilitating new climate-smart, affordable housing development that supports our coastal workforce. It also includes encouraging long-term adaptation planning for vulnerable transportation corridors and exploring innovative tools—such as requiring financial instruments to facilitate relocating infrastructure or prioritizing managed retreat where feasible—to address at-risk development. These efforts will help ensure that future infrastructure and housing developments are sustainable, climate-ready, and consistent with the Coastal Act.

Actions

- 2.3.1** Continue to advocate for climate-smart policies that address housing needs, particularly affordable housing needs, while also protecting coastal access and resources
- 2.3.2** Expand early coordination efforts with state partners on priority housing, transportation, and other infrastructure projects
- 2.3.3** Establish a dedicated team to coordinate with local governments and HCD on implementing housing projects and aligning LCPs with state housing policies
- 2.3.4** Explore innovative, multi-benefit sea level rise adaptation solutions for new and existing infrastructure, including nature-based adaptation strategies, voluntary property buyout programs, and managed retreat opportunities
- 2.3.5** Encourage multi-modal transportation projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve coastal access, and provide new recreational opportunities
- 2.3.6** Facilitate programmatic solutions for climate hazard mitigation and loss of beach and habitat



Goal 3: Improve External Engagement and Communication

As a state agency created by the people of California, the Commission deeply values a trusted and collaborative relationship with the public. Over the years, we have worked diligently to engage directly with individuals, organizations, and communities affected by our decisions. However, as California's social, cultural, and technological landscapes evolve, so too must the Commission's approach to public engagement. To fulfill our mission of making the coast—and the Commission—accessible to all, we must do more to reach those who are unfamiliar with our work and have not had a voice in coastal decision-making. This goal outlines how the Commission will expand the range of people and communities we engage with, and how we will make our regulatory processes and communications more accessible, understandable, and inclusive.



Objective 1: Engage more people

The Commission recognizes that diverse voices and perspectives strengthen coastal management outcomes. However, many communities—particularly those historically underrepresented—face challenges in accessing and participating in our regulatory and planning processes. These barriers may include language, geography, technology, or a lack of awareness about how decisions are made. To address these challenges, the Commission is committed to proactively engaging with new and diverse audiences, removing barriers to participation through improved communication, translation, and outreach strategies, and creating more transparent and accessible decision-making processes that invite meaningful public input. Through these efforts, we aim to ensure that all communities have the opportunity to participate in Commission processes that invite stewardship of coastal resources and shape the future of California’s coast.

Actions

- 3.1.1** Update the Commission’s website to improve readability, navigation, and accessibility
- 3.1.2** Strengthen and expand the Commission’s Spanish language program through increased opportunities for live translation at hearings and translation of Commission-produced materials
- 3.1.3** Expand use of social media and other digital platforms to reach broader and more diverse audiences
- 3.1.4** Hold at least one hearing per year at an inland location
- 3.1.5** Broaden the reach of the Commission’s public education programs by expanding to new audiences and new geographic areas



Photo by Erik Martinez



Objective 2: Improve Commission processes and transparency

A core component of strengthening public engagement is ensuring that Commission materials and processes are transparent, accessible, and easy to navigate. Over the next five years, the Commission will prioritize the development of streamlined, user-friendly systems that make it easier for the public to access records, understand procedures, and participate in decision-making. To support this objective, the Commission will maximize the use of digital technologies to improve transparency and efficiency.

Actions

- 3.2.1** Develop online portals for submittal of CDP applications and public comments
- 3.2.2** Expand access to the Commission's digital records through the Public Portal
- 3.2.3** Clarify the Commission's process and timelines for appeals
- 3.2.4** Digitize the Commission's historical records

Objective 3: Foster stronger relationships with California Native American tribes

For over 13,000 years—long before Spanish colonization—Indigenous communities have lived along and shaped what is now California’s coastline. The Commission acknowledges tribal sovereignty and recognizes that California Native American tribes have long served as stewards of the state’s coastal resources, including ancestral waters. The coast is not only an environmental and recreational resource for these communities, but also a living cultural landscape containing ancestral villages, burial sites, ceremonial places, and gathering areas for traditional foods, plants, and materials. Stewardship of these resources should be planned in close coordination with local tribal communities in alignment with the protection of public access and other coastal resources. Further, traditional ecological knowledge and cultural practices of Tribes offer invaluable insights for sustainable coastal management of coastal lands and waters, in alignment with the spirit and intent of the Coastal Act. The Commission is committed to strengthening government-to-government relationships with tribes and to fully implementing its [Tribal Consultation Policy](#). This includes ongoing communication, staff training, and collaborative efforts to protect tribal cultural and ecological resources. The Commission will also seek opportunities to share information, coordinate with other state agencies, and support tribal priorities related to coastal access, development, and cultural resource preservation. Additionally, the Commission will support tribal partnerships and coordination with local governments to improve coastal resiliency planning at the local level. The Commission will continue to recognize and strengthen its sovereign-to-sovereign relationship with California Native American Tribes for the mutual benefit of protecting coastal resources.

Actions

- 3.3.1** Provide training for staff on tribal cultural history, traditional ecological knowledge, effective tribal engagement and consultation, and other relevant topics
- 3.3.2** Identify and secure funding for a full-time, permanent agency Tribal Liaison position
- 3.3.3** Establish consistent dialogue with tribes to understand and support their priorities for access, development, and cultural and ecological resource protection in the coastal zone
- 3.3.4** Explore opportunities to strengthen Coastal Act protections of tribal cultural and ecological resources in partnership with tribal governments and other stakeholders
- 3.3.5** Improve engagement with tribes on LCP updates and climate resiliency planning efforts.



Goal 4: Protect Coastal Resources

Guided by the enduring vision of the Coastal Act, the Commission champions bold and proactive policies to safeguard and restore California's precious coastal resources—from environmentally sensitive habitats (ESHA) and wetlands to the vibrant marine ecosystems that define our shoreline to our treasured open spaces. These protections extend beyond the natural environment, encompassing public access, coastal agriculture, coastal communities, and the scenic and cultural landmarks that shape our coastal identity. Similar to built environments, coastal resource areas are vulnerable to sea level rise and other climate change impacts. They also face increasing pressure from urban expansion, overuse, and competing land uses that threaten their ecological integrity and long-term sustainability. Over the next five years, it will be crucial for the Commission to employ both trusted and innovative solutions to protect these resources and ensure their resilience for generations to come. Further, Commission staff will also work with local jurisdictions to ensure that LCPs, Port Master Plans (PMPs), Long Range Development Plans (LRDPs), and other planning documents reflect these solutions that protect coastal resources.



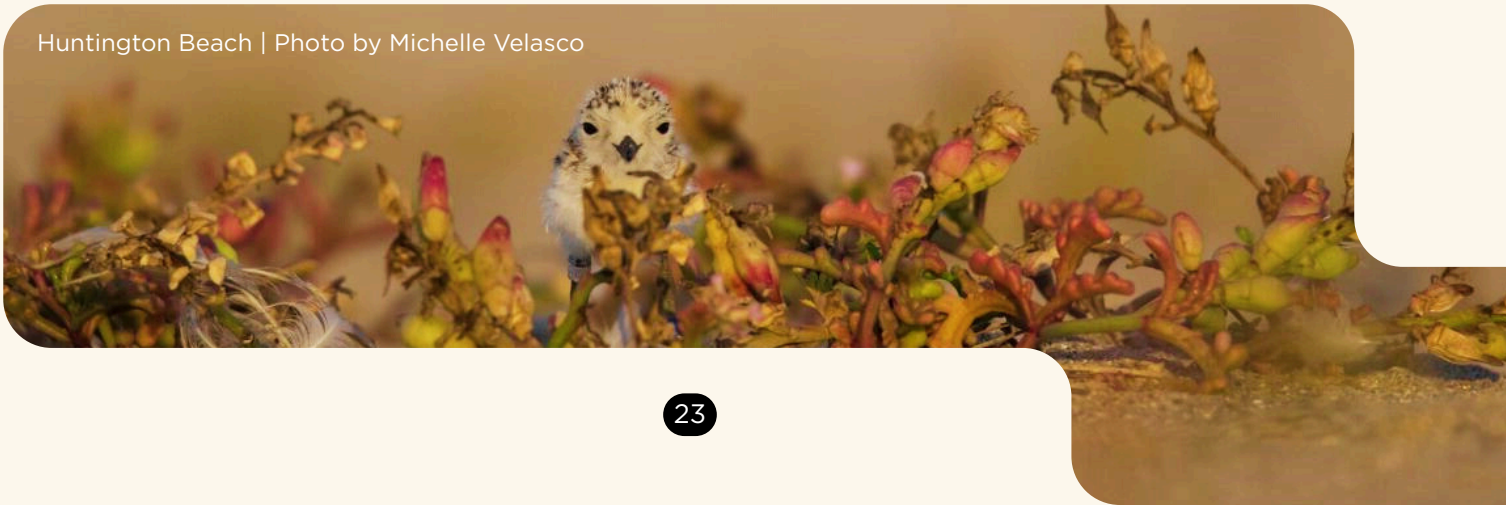
Objective 1: Preserve and restore sensitive habitats and coastal wetlands

The Commission seeks to build on our existing efforts to accelerate review of projects that heal and protect California's coastal ecosystems. By expanding use of programmatic approaches and fast-tracking reviews for well-planned restoration projects and wildfire resilience initiatives, coastal habitats can receive urgent and timely protection. This approach is aligned with the state's Cutting Green Tape Initiative and the administration's initiative to increase the pace and scale of wildfire and other resilience projects. To support these efforts, the Commission will develop updated guidance to assist with coastal habitat and wetland identification and impact assessment to facilitate efficient regulatory review. In addition, the Commission will continue to prioritize the avoidance and minimization of adverse impacts, refine its mitigation framework, and further explore advance mitigation as well as land preservation and out-of-kind mitigation strategies when these alternatives maximize benefits to relevant habitats and surrounding ecosystems. By implementing these actions, the Commission can alleviate environmental stressors and provide a foundation for a more resilient, thriving coastline—one that can withstand the challenges of climate change and continue to inspire future generations.

Actions

- 4.1.1** Develop roadmaps, permitting pathways, and submission guidelines to facilitate efficient review of projects advancing the preservation and restoration of coastal habitat functions and values.
- 4.1.2** Expedite review of wildfire resilience and vegetation treatment projects that will restore natural processes and protect vulnerable habitats and species
- 4.1.3** Update LCP and CDP guidance on methods for identifying, delineating, and mapping ESHA and coastal wetlands, applying buffers, and selecting compensatory mitigation options.
- 4.1.4** Identify and pursue mitigation opportunities that remove lands with significant habitat value from development pressure
- 4.1.5** Work with federal and state government partners to improve review timelines and outcomes for advanced mitigation projects

Huntington Beach | Photo by Michelle Velasco



Objective 2: Protect marine resources

California's marine environment is dynamic, diverse, and increasingly under pressure from climate change, pollution, and new ocean uses. The Commission is committed to protecting marine ecosystems by strengthening staff expertise, supporting sustainable ocean uses, and reducing threats such as plastic pollution and aging offshore oil and gas infrastructure. Building on recent efforts—such as the Commission's [2025 Guidance for Addressing Plastic Pollution in Coastal Development Permits and Local Coastal Programs](#)—we will continue to advance strategies that reduce marine debris and promote cleaner coastal waters. As new ocean-based industries emerge—such as offshore wind and aquaculture—we will ensure that planning and permitting processes are grounded in science and long-term stewardship of marine resources and take into account the cumulative impacts of multiple ocean uses.

Actions

- 4.2.1** Expand staff knowledge and expertise on emerging and expanded uses of the marine environment
- 4.2.2** Identify and implement educational, planning and regulatory strategies to reduce pollution to our marine environment and coastal watersheds
- 4.2.3** Continue participating in offshore wind energy planning, including the design of environmental monitoring and adaptive management frameworks
- 4.2.4** Prioritize the decommissioning of aging oil and gas infrastructure and legacy wells
- 4.2.5** Encourage sustainable and resilient fisheries, aquaculture and supporting infrastructure and uses in California's working waterfronts



Avila Bay | Photo by Ronnie Goyette

Objective 3: Prioritize resilience for coastal agriculture and open space

The Commission remains steadfast in its mission to preserve and protect agriculture and open space. These vital coastal resources are under constant pressure from the impacts of climate change, expansion of the built environment, and the growing demand for housing in the coastal zone. As California continues to address its housing crisis, it is essential to balance the need for new housing with the protection of agricultural lands, open space, and the natural systems that support community resilience and climate adaptation. Further, we must seek out projects that support multiple coastal resources, such as restoration of coastal lands and waters that provide benefits to coastal agriculture. Over the next five years, we will pursue progressive strategies that strengthen protections for coastal agriculture and open space. This includes concentrating development in urban areas, leveraging innovative land preservation tools, addressing vulnerabilities to climate change, and using science to inform and update land management practices.

Actions

- 4.3.1** Explore and expand agricultural land protection approaches and mechanisms
- 4.3.2** Evaluate the vulnerability of coastal agricultural lands and open space lands to sea level rise and other climate change impacts and develop appropriate adaptation strategies
- 4.3.3** Review and update timberland protection practices
- 4.3.4** Develop tools to assess the vulnerability of coastal resources to increasing wildfire risks
- 4.3.5** Support the design and adoption of agricultural practices and landscapes that protect water quality and aquatic habitats.

Muir Beach | Photo by Karen Vu



Goal 5: Build and Maintain a Resilient Organization

The key to the Coastal Commission's success has always been its dedicated and talented staff. As we face increasingly complex challenges—from climate change to evolving technology—it is critical that we hire, support and retain staff who have the skills, tools, and work environment necessary to implement the Commission's mission. To do this, we must foster a welcoming and inclusive workplace culture that encourages curiosity, collaboration, and innovation. We must also build an adaptable organization that can respond effectively to change. Most importantly, we must ensure that our staff are thriving—professionally, personally, and collectively.





Objective 1: Inspire an organizational culture that is inclusive, curious, solutions-oriented, and adaptable

Over the next five years, the Commission will expand opportunities for staff to grow as effective, compassionate, and resilient leaders. This includes investing in training, mentorship, and professional development programs that build capacity and support staff well-being in the face of current and future challenges.

Actions

- 5.1.1** Provide ongoing training on facilitation, conflict resolution, diversity and inclusion, and other relevant topics
- 5.1.2** Plan and implement all-staff trainings and provide opportunities for staff to strengthen working relationships across the agency
- 5.1.3** Support and expand opportunities and programs for staff mentorship
- 5.1.4** Develop staff trainings and materials that provide orientation to the agency, explain key processes and procedures, and build understanding of statewide coastal priorities
- 5.1.5** Increase and support Commission opportunities for internships, fellowships, and partnerships with academic institutions and other partners

Objective 2: Improve staff retention

The Commission's effectiveness depends on the expertise and institutional knowledge of its staff. Retaining experienced staff improves efficiency, continuity, and the quality of coastal decision-making. To support retention, the Commission will pursue opportunities to increase staff compensation, foster a sense of belonging, and ensure that staff feel supported in their roles.

Actions

- 5.2.1** Conduct an annual staff survey to assess job satisfaction and identify areas for improvement
- 5.2.2** Provide access to professional development and leadership opportunities for all staff
- 5.2.3** Continue to pursue opportunities to increase salaries
- 5.2.4** Develop a supervisor's guide for onboarding and training new staff
- 5.2.5** Identify workload management priorities for each District and Unit



Photo by Javier Padilla Reyes

