

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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September 5, 2025

To: Planning Directors of Coastal Counties and the Cities of Grover Beach and Dana Point
From: Dr. Kate Huckelbridge, Executive Director, California Coastal Commission
RE: **AB 130 and Modification of the Grounds for Appeal of Coastal Development Permits**

On June 30, 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom signed several trailer bills, including [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 130 \(Ch. 22, Stats. 2025\)](#), which took effect immediately upon the Governor's signature. Among other changes, AB 130 modified the Coastal Act to eliminate certain grounds for appealing local government actions on coastal development permit (CDP) applications for some multifamily housing projects. Specifically, the legislation amends Section 30603 of the Coastal Act in the following manner:

- (1) a CDP for any "residential development project" that is approved by a local government can no longer be appealed on the basis that the development is in a sensitive coastal resource area;
- (2) a CDP for a "residential development project" that is approved by a coastal county can no longer be appealed on the basis that the development is not the principal permitted use under the zoning ordinance or zoning district map.

For purposes of these changes, the legislation added language to the Coastal Act defining "residential development project" as "a multifamily housing project that consists exclusively of residential uses and includes four or more units."¹

Going forward, coastal counties will need to determine whether applications for multifamily housing projects that are not the principal permitted use under the county's certified zoning ordinance or zoning district map meet this definition of "residential development projects." This determination is required in order to decide whether the project may be appealed to the Commission. The local government will then need to let the applicant, interested parties, and the Commission know of that determination.² In addition, these new legal provisions are relevant for coastal counties and cities whose local coastal programs (LCPs) include designated sensitive coastal resource areas.³

¹ Pub. Res. Code § 30114.5.

² See e.g., 14 Cal. Code Regs §§ 13569, 13571 (requiring local appealability determinations and notification to relevant parties, including to the Commission via a Notice of Final Action/Final Local Action Notice).

³ The Commission has certified LCPs that designate sensitive coastal resource areas for the City of Grover Beach (1982), San Luis Obispo County (1987), the City of Dana Point (1989) and the segment of Mendocino County's LCP that covers areas outside of the Town of Mendocino (1992). The Commission

Such jurisdictions will need to determine whether proposed multifamily development projects that are located in designated sensitive coastal resource areas meet the definition of a “residential development project” so that they can inform relevant parties of a project’s appealability to the Commission.

Locally approved CDPs for “residential development projects” may still be appealed on the other bases of appeal codified in Coastal Act Section 30603(a)(1)-(2), including that the development is located in any of the following areas:

- Between the sea and the first public road paralleling the sea;
- Within 300 feet of the inland extent of any beach or of the mean high tideline of the sea where there is no beach, whichever is the greater distance;
- On tidelands, submerged lands, or public trust lands;
- Within 100 feet of any wetland, estuary, or stream; or
- Within 300 feet of the top of the seaward face of any coastal bluff.

AB 130 did not change the standard of review for “residential development projects”; such projects must still be approved, conditionally approved, or denied based on their consistency with relevant LCP or Coastal Act provisions. Rather, AB 130 simply modified the appealability of such projects in certain ways, as described above. The Commission encourages local government staff to reach out to local Commission District staff if they have questions regarding how these new provisions of law should be applied in any particular instance.

itself did not designate any sensitive coastal resource areas prior to September 1, 1977, as it was authorized to do under Coastal Act Section 30502. See <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2014/11/W10a-11-2014.pdf> (pp. 12-14).