



California Coastal Commission

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FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on **Coastal Commission Hearing on Cal-Am's proposed Desalination Plant**

What is Cal-Am's proposed project?

The California-American Water Company ("Cal-Am") wants to build a desalination plant including six new slant wells near the Monterey Bay shoreline in the city of Marina. The project would provide water for customers in Cal-Am's service area in the Monterey Peninsula region, as well as the community of Castroville. It would also enable Cal-Am to stop illegal water withdrawals from the Carmel River.

What is the California Coastal Commission?

The Coastal Commission is a state government agency that preserves and protects California's coast and ocean for the people. The Commission does this by looking at how development affects the environment and public coastal access. Agency staff makes recommendations to a board, which makes a final vote.

When will the Commission make a decision about the Cal-Am project?

On September 17, 2020, the Commission will hold a virtual public hearing on Zoom about the proposed desalination plant. The Commission will hear from its staff, government representatives, and members of the public. The Commission is expected to vote on whether to approve or deny the Cal-Am project. The public hearing is an opportunity to make your voice heard on the Cal-Am proposal. All are welcome.

What is the staff recommending to the Commission?

Staff is recommending denial because the project would harm environmentally sensitive habitat among other issues. Cal-Am's proposal also raises some of the most significant environmental justice issues since the agency adopted its Environmental Justice Policy, including that the project benefits one underserved community while significantly increasing water costs, coastal resource impacts and risks to other low-income and communities of color. The Commission must consider less environmentally damaging alternatives if one exists and is able to meet the project's objectives. There is an alternative recycled water project that would be significantly less damaging to the environment and have fewer impacts on underserved communities.

How does this affect me?

You may be affected if you live in Marina or Castroville, or if you are a customer within Cal-Am's Monterey Peninsula service area such as Seaside, Monterey, Pacific Grove or Sand City. The project would affect Marina because of coastal resource and industrial impacts. Castroville would benefit from the project by receiving discounted water to help keep their water rates low. Cal-Am ratepayers will face higher water bills to pay for the cost of Cal-Am's desalination plant and Castroville's subsidized water.

How can I participate?

- Email comments to CalAmMonterey@coastal.ca.gov
- Mail comments to 445 Market Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94105
- Speak at the virtual September 17 meeting by filling out a speaker slip:
<https://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/request-testimony/special-hearing/>
- Virtual hearing procedures: <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/virtual-hearing/Special-Meeting-Hearing-Procedures.pdf>
- Commission's staff report:
<https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2020/9/Th3a&4a/Th3a&4a%20Staff%20Report.pdf>
- For questions, contact Noaki Schwartz, Public Information Officer at 562-833-5487 or Noaki.Schwartz@Coastal.Ca.Gov