



## California Coastal Commission

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# FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on

## Coastal Commission and Port Development

### 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 by implementing the California [Coastal Act](#). The Commission does this by looking at how planning policies and development affect the environment and public coastal access. Coastal Commission staff make recommendations to the Commissioners, who review and take action on these matters at public hearings.

### What is a Port Master Plan?

A Port Master Plan (PMP), is a long-term planning document that contains goals and policies regulating development within a port district, describes the proposed uses of land and water, and identifies projects likely to be developed within the specified planning horizon. The PMP must contain enough information so the Commission can determine whether it is consistent with the Coastal Act. The Commission has approved PMPs for the Ports of San Diego, Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Hueneme, transferring permit authority to the governing bodies of these ports. A port governing body can approve a development permit for a project if it is consistent with its PMP. The Port of Humboldt Bay does not have a PMP.

### What is the Commission's role in Port Master Plans?

The Commission has the authority to certify new PMPs and process any changes or updates to an existing PMP. Some permits approved by the port can be appealed to the Commission depending on the type of development, such as projects involving large amounts of liquefied natural gas or crude oil, wastewater treatment facilities, external roads or highways, and even non-port related developments. The Commission can review a port's action, and if it determines that an appealable project is not consistent with the PMP or Coastal Act, it will take jurisdiction over that project.

### How does this affect me?

Ports help support the economy, but port development and operations can also impact coastal resources and human health as a result of emissions, dredging, fill, light and noise pollution. In fact, communities located near ports are overburdened by the negative environmental impacts from operations and industry. The Commission reviews policies and planned projects included in PMPs to ensure the impacts of growth on coastal resources and local communities are avoided, minimized or mitigated. The [Commission's Environmental Justice Policy](#) and the Coastal Act allow the agency to consider how port development may affect overburdened communities. The ports of Long Beach and San Diego are currently drafting PMP updates to address such environmental impacts.

### How can I learn about Port actions under Commission review?

- For questions regarding the San Diego port planning area, contact Melody Lasiter at [Melody.Lasiter@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:Melody.Lasiter@coastal.ca.gov)
- For questions regarding the Los Angeles and Long Beach port planning areas, contact Dani Ziff at [Dani.Ziff@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:Dani.Ziff@coastal.ca.gov)
- For questions regarding the Hueneme port planning area, contact Jacqueline Phelps at [Jacqueline.Phelps@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:Jacqueline.Phelps@coastal.ca.gov)
- For questions regarding the Humboldt Bay Harbor planning area, contact Melissa Kraemer at [melissa.kraemer@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:melissa.kraemer@coastal.ca.gov)
- Ports located within the San Francisco Bay Area are under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) [bcdc.ca.gov](http://bcdc.ca.gov)