



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 five to seven 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. In addition, it could be an alternative for Cal-Am to rely less on 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?

The Commission is anticipating holding a public hearing on the project on Thursday November 17, 2022. The Commission will hear from its staff, government representatives, and members of the public, all of whom can participate in person at the hearing or virtually by Zoom or telephone. You can also provide written comments to the mailing or email addresses below. 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 analyzing the proposed project for impacts to environmentally sensitive habitats, public access and recreation, water quality and quantity, and coastal hazards, among other issues. As part of its review, staff will also evaluate the proposed project for environmental justice impacts. After analyzing project impacts, staff will prepare a recommendation for the Commission to consider at the public hearing.

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 may receive discounted water supply from the project. Cal-Am ratepayers will receive a new source of water (in part to replace withdrawals from the Carmel River) but may also face higher water bills to pay for the cost of the project.

How can I participate?

- Email comments to CalAmMonterey@coastal.ca.gov
- Mail comments to 445 Market Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94105
- Participate at the Commission's public hearing on Thursday, November 17, 2022 over Zoom or in person at the Monterey County Board of Supervisors Chambers in Salinas, CA. Information on how to participate can be found here: <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/virtual-hearing/VIRTUAL-HEARING-PROCEDURES.pdf>. The meeting agenda will be posted in October.
- For questions regarding environmental justice, contact Sumi Selvaraj, Environmental Justice Manager, at 415-904-5294 or Sumi.Selvaraj@coastal.ca.gov. For general questions about the project, email Tom Luster at Tom.Luster@coastal.ca.gov.