

California Coastal Commission Key Metrics Report 2024



Introduction

Every year the California Coastal Commission issues hundreds of Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) and processes dozens of amendments for Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) and other planning documents. The agency also enforces public access and natural resource protections, reviews federal projects and produces numerous reports and guidance memos.

In addition, city and county governments typically issue more than 1,000 CDPs annually throughout the Coastal Zone. The agency tracks these local coastal permits and hears a few dozen project appeals every year.

The data related to these actions has in the past been compiled in the annual Workload Report, which has been a component of the annual Year in Review Report. To better inform the general public, from now on this report will focus on CDPs issued by both the Commission and local governments, as well as permit appeals and changes to LCPs. These items represent the agency's core planning and regulatory functions.

Additional items covered in previous Workload Reports, such as enforcement orders, federal consistency items, informational briefings and final local action notices still contribute to the Commission's overall workload. However, they will no longer be included in this report, referred to as the Key Metrics Report.

Coastal development planning

Coastal Commission staff operate out of six district offices throughout the Coastal Zone, from San Diego to Arcata. Each of these regional district offices serves unique communities with diverse geographies, resources and land use planning challenges.

These regional differences are reflected in each district's workload. For instance, the Central Coast District issued a large number of emergency permits in 2024 as a result powerful storm surges, record flooding and associated high rates of erosion in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. The South Coast District has the largest regular permitting workload, approving 176 CDPs in 2024. This is partly a reflection of the large swaths of territory in this district where a local government has yet to adopt a certified LCP, including the cities of Los Angeles and Santa Monica. In contrast, the North Coast District, which is comprised of smaller cities with a high percentage of certified LCPs, processed 48 CDPs in 2024.

Statewide, the Commission approved a total of 394 CDPs, 46 emergency permits and 65 LCP amendments in 2024. The Commission typically approves about 99% of permit applications in its retained jurisdiction. In 2024, the agency approved all permits filed directly with the agency and denied only one permit on appeal. That's out of a total of the 1,873 CDPs acted on by the agency and local governments throughout the Coastal Zone.

*All actions are taken at the Coastal Commission's monthly three-day hearings, which are held in different locations across the state to increase public participation.

**The Coastal Commission and local government planning and permitting activity in the Coastal Zone is tracked using the agency's Coastal Data Management System.

***Cover art by Karen Cohen for the 2024 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest.

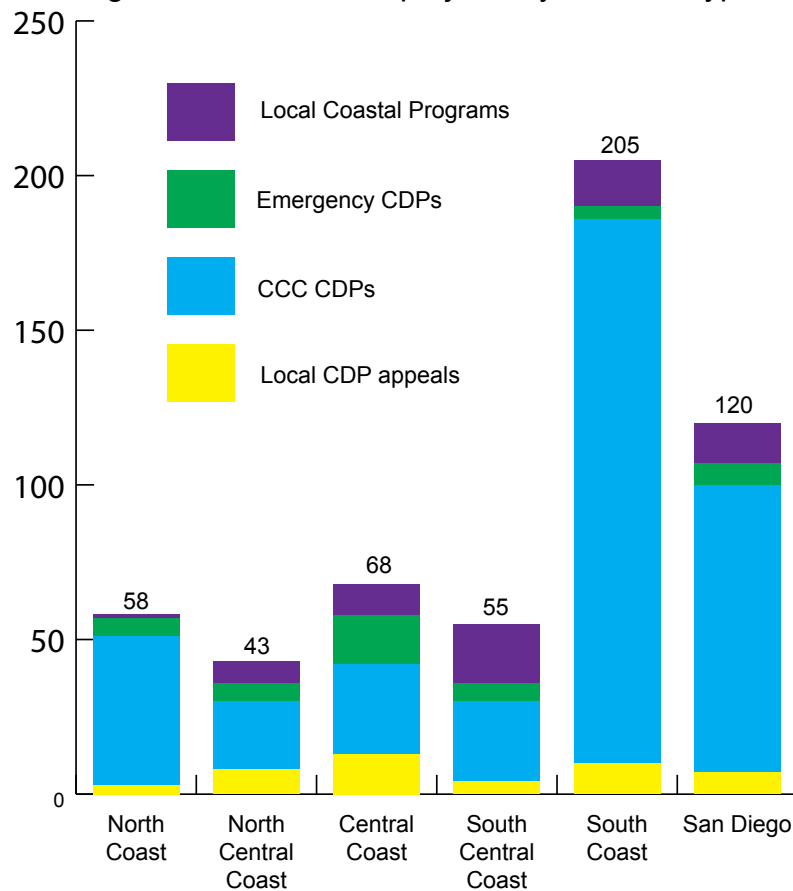
Coastal Commission District Offices

North Coast: Arcata
 North Central Coast: San Francisco
 Central Coast: Santa Cruz
 South Central Coast: Ventura
 South Coast: Long Beach
 San Diego: San Diego

Table 1. Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) & Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) by district

Coastal Districts	LCP amendments	Emergency CDPs	CCC CDPs	Local CDP appeals	Total
North Coast	1	6	48	3	58
North Central Coast	7	6	22	8	43
Central Coast	10	16	29	13	68
South Central Coast	19	6	26	4	55
South Coast	15	4	176	10	205
San Diego	13	7	93	7	120
Total	65	45	394	45	549

Figure 1. Commission projects by district & type



Process: Local Coastal Programs & Coastal Development Permits

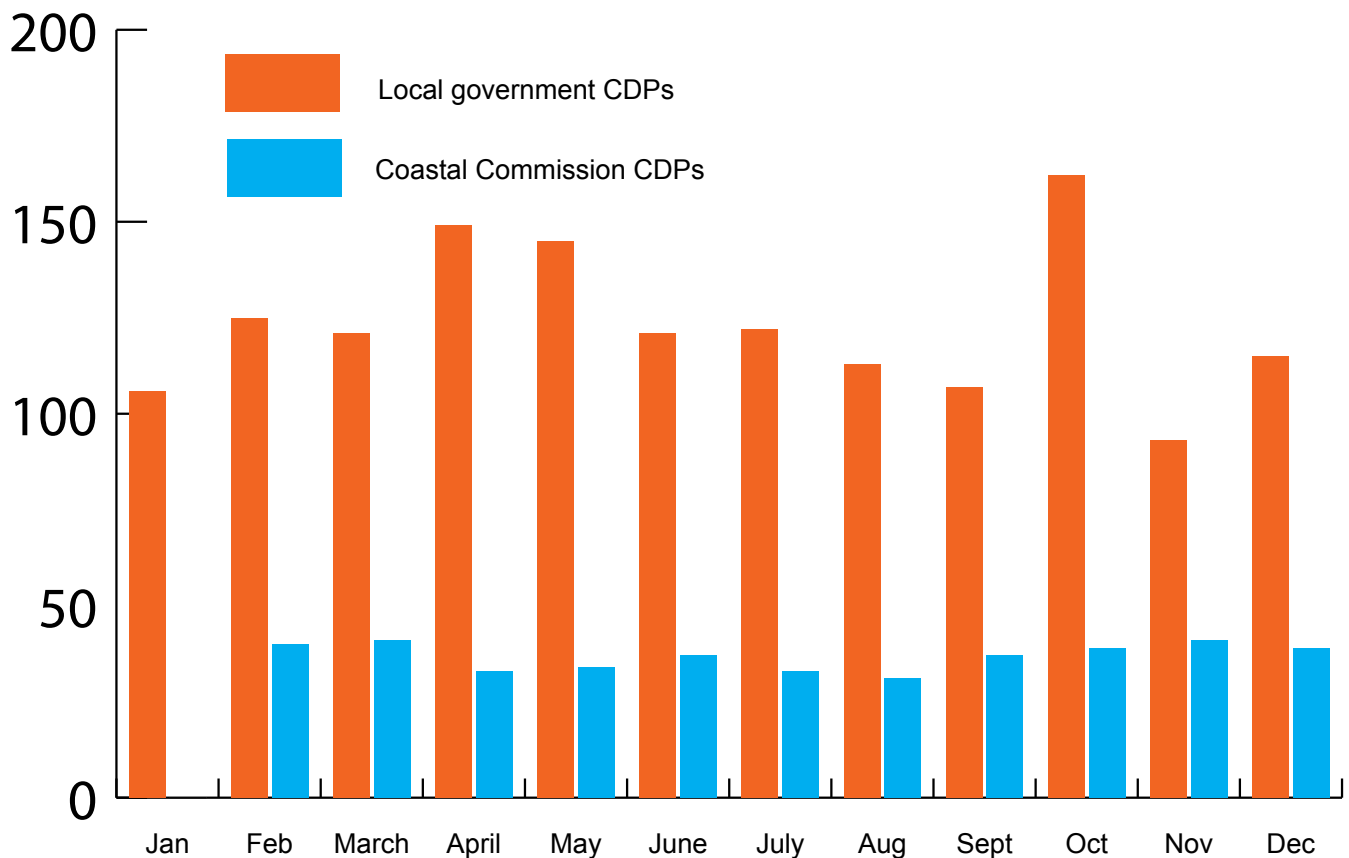
An LCP consists of a land-use plan (LUP) and an implementation plan (IP), which translate the coastal resource policies of the Coastal Act into local priorities and zoning requirements — such as setbacks, height limits, land uses, and open space. Once the Commission has approved a city or county’s LCP, the local government is responsible for issuing most CDPs in its Coastal Zone. The agency retains permitting authority in state waters up to three miles offshore and on state tidelands up to the mean high-tide line, generally considered areas of wet sand.

Local governments approved 1,479 Coastal Development Permits in 2024 — nearly 80% of all CDPs.

Table 2. Local versus Coastal Commission CDPs in 2024

Local CDPs	CCC CDPs	Total
1,479	394	1873
79%	21%	100%

Figure 2. Local versus Coastal Commission CDPs by month in 2024



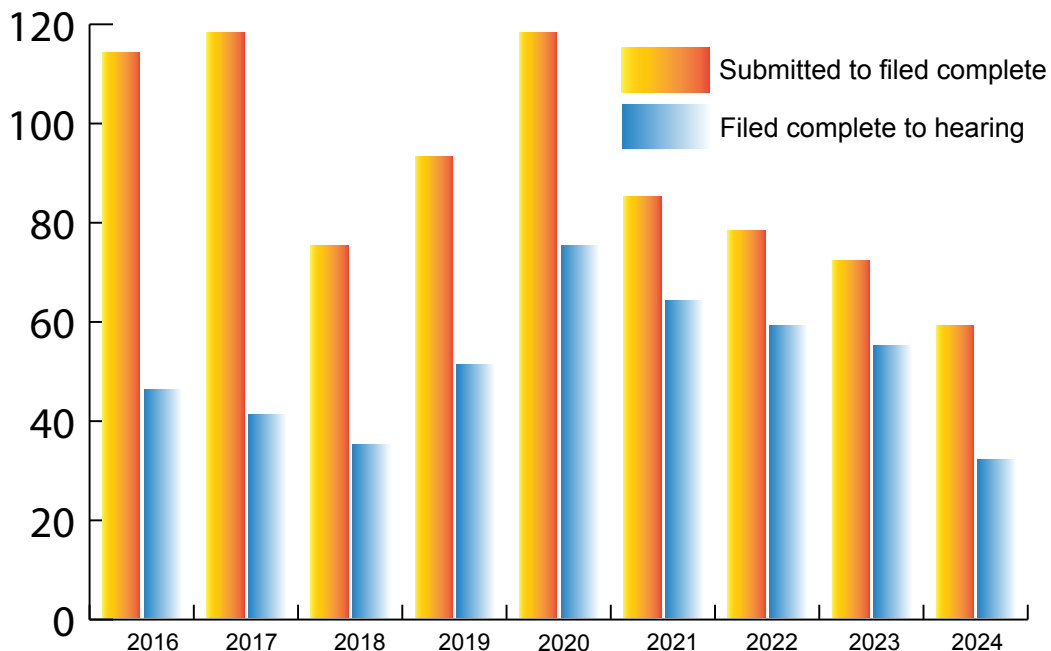
Coast Development Permit (CDP) processing times

The Coastal Commission is required by the state Permit Streamlining Act, or PSA, to hear permit applications within 180 calendar days of filing, with the option of a 90-day extension with the applicant's permission. Any project that is not acted upon within this time frame is subject to automatic approval. The Commission has a good track record of compliance with the PSA. CDP applications are often incomplete when initially submitted, and it can take additional time to generate the information needed to file a complete application. Commission staff works with applicants to properly complete and file their documentation as soon as possible and has dramatically reduced processing times in recent years.

Table 3. CDP average processing times 2016 to 2024

Year	Submit to filed as complete (calendar days)	Filed as complete to hearing (calendar days)
2024	59	32
2023	72	55
2022	78	59
2021	85	64
2020	118	75
2019	93	51
2018	75	35
2017	118	41
2016	114	46

Figure 3. CDP average processing times 2016 to 2024

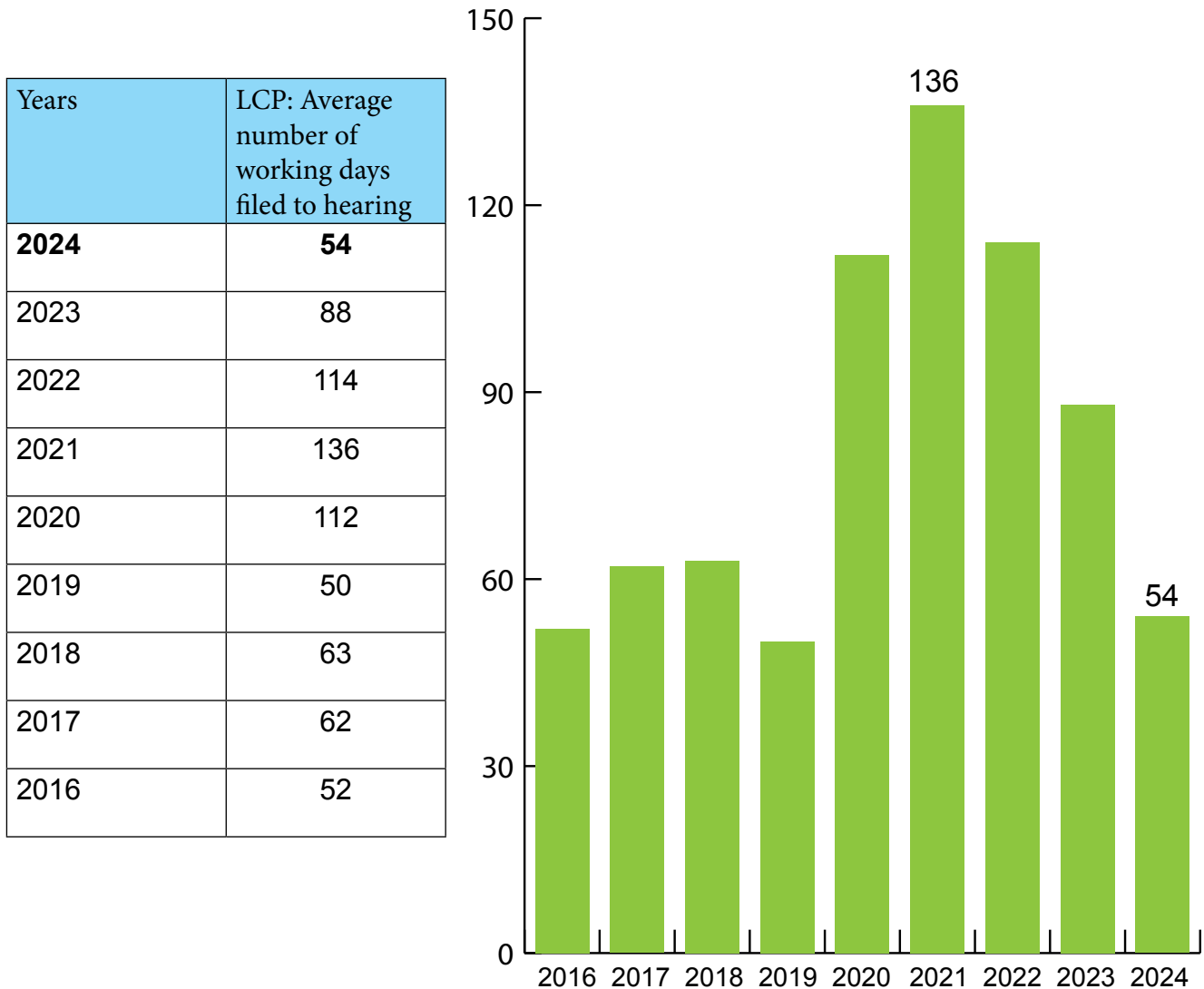


Local Coastal Program (LCP) processing times

All but about 10% of the Coastal Zone is regulated under an LCP. Local jurisdictions use these documents to, among other things, set density, height limits and resource protection policies in seaside communities. Like General Plans and other planning documents, LCPs are updated periodically to respond to changing conditions and evolving state and local priorities. Changes to a certified LCP require Commission approval.

The Coastal Commission is required by state law to act on a request for an LCP amendment within 90 working days, with the option of a one-year extension, if approved by a vote of the Commissioners. However, when an extension is granted, staff often brings an item to hearing within a few months. Processing times peaked at the height of the Covid pandemic in 2021 due to multiple disruptions at all levels of government but have been trending steadily downward since then. In the past four years, the average processing time for an LCP amendment has dropped from 136 to 54 working days.

Table & Figure 4. LCP average processing times 2016 to 2024



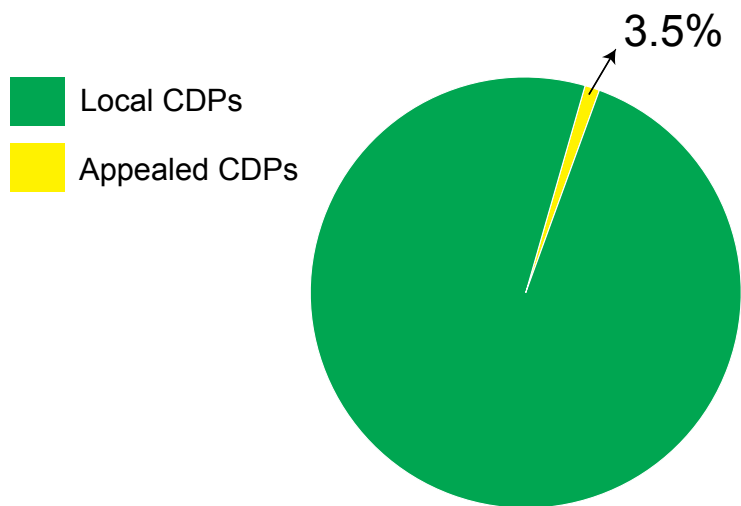
Local Coastal Development Permit (Local CDP) appeals process

Not all CDPs approved by local governments in the Coastal Zone are appealable to the Coastal Commission. Generally, projects located between the ocean and the nearest public road, within 300 feet of a coastal bluff or 100 feet of a wetland can be appealed. Of the 1,479 CDPs approved by local governments in 2024, only 52, or less than 4% were appealed to the Commission.

Table 5. Local CDPs by appeals status in 2024

Total	Not Appealable	Appealable	Appealed
1479	616	863	52

Figure 5. Local CDP appeals rate in 2024



The Coastal Commission reviews appeals of local CDPs for conformance with the issuing jurisdiction's certified LCP. The Commission is required to make an initial determination within 49 working days or obtain an agreement from the applicant (not the appellant) to extend the deadline. For projects found to raise no substantial issue (NSI), the appeal is rejected, and the local approval stands. For those appeals that are found to raise a substantial issue (SI), the Commission considers the project in its entirety. In this "de novo" phase of the review, the Commission can either approve, deny or approve the project with additional conditions necessary for Coastal Act compliance.

Of the 45 appeals the Commission acted on in 2024, 26 were found to raise no substantial issue, meaning more than half of the appealed projects moved forward as approved by the local jurisdiction. Of the remaining 19 projects where a substantial issue was found, one was withdrawn, one was denied, seven were approved with conditions and the remaining 10 were continued into 2025.

Table 6. CDP appeals by district in 2024

District	Appeals	No Substantial Issue (NSI)	Substantial Issue (SI)	Approved with conditions	Withdrawn by applicant	Cont. into 2025	Denied
North Coast	3	2	1	0	0	1	0
North Central Coast	8	6	2	2	0	0	0
Central Coast	13	8	5	2	0	2	1
South Central Coast	4	3	1	1	0	0	0
South Coast	10	3	7	2	1	4	0
San Diego	7	4	3	0	0	3	0
Total	45	26	19	7	1	10	1

Actions by hearing type

Finally, more than half of all actions taken by the Coastal Commission in 2024 were for the review of administrative permit waivers, permit extensions or immaterial amendments to existing permits. Another third of all actions scheduled for a hearing were approved on the consent agenda with no opposition, with the remaining 14% being considered as individual hearing items on the regular calendar with staff presentations.

Figure 7. Commission actions by agenda designation in 2024

