



For Immediate Release

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Santa Cruz, Coastal Commission maintain strong partnership on wharf maintenance amid climate change and rising seas

The California Coastal Commission and the City of Santa Cruz have partnered for over five decades to protect the City's iconic wharf, a collaboration that will continue to preserve this landmark for future generations. This legacy landmark, built over 100 years ago, requires year-round care and maintenance, completed by the City of Santa Cruz. Thanks to close cooperation between the City and the Commission, this work has been accomplished through dozens of coastal development permits that have been issued and implemented over many years.

Several factors affect the construction timeline for wharf repair and maintenance work. However, the partial wharf failure on December 23rd, 2024 was primarily caused by record swells generated by a powerful ocean storm system, which further undermined an area of the wharf that sustained major damage from a high surf event last winter and was being repaired.

This crisis highlights the urgent need for increased coordination between state and local coastal managers, particularly regarding coastal infrastructure. We look forward to exploring more efficient and collaborative solutions moving forward. The long-standing partnership between the City and the Coastal Commission provides a strong foundation for continuous improvement, allowing us to address these challenges together and ensure sustainable stewardship of the wharf.

With the impacts of climate change and sea level rise increasing the force and intensity of storms globally, it is critical that we are reinforcing our coastal infrastructure. Here in Santa Cruz, the City and the Commission are already deeply engaged in planning for sea level rise and climate resiliency so that this vibrant community is able to adapt and endure in an uncertain future.

As we move forward together into this uncharted territory, both agencies remain committed to finding new and more efficient ways to work together because long-term solutions depend on maintaining this important state and local partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Keeley".

Fred Keeley, Mayor, City of Santa Cruz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Cummings".

Justin Cummings, Chair, California Coastal Commission and Santa Cruz County Supervisor