

2025

YEAR IN REVIEW

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

coastal.ca.gov

Cover: *Running in the Sun's Last Breath* | Falu Bakrania | Contest Participant
2025 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

The Commission is committed to protecting and enhancing California's coast and ocean for present and future generations. It does so through careful planning and regulation of environmentally-sustainable development, rigorous use of science, strong public participation, education, and effective intergovernmental coordination.



Photo: *Together at Twilight* | Angela Chen | Contest Participant
2025 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

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Photo: *A Surreal Day on the Water* | Robin Riggs | Contest Participant
2025 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest



MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Dr. Kate Huckelbridge
Director, California Coastal Commission

California's coast is our state's largest public park — a treasured commons that belongs to us all. It provides a refuge for friends and families to escape the heat, reconnect with one another and enjoy the many mental and physical health benefits that come from spending time in nature. It is part of a dynamic ecosystem that supports unparalleled biodiversity. And it's a powerful source of joy and inspiration, which we at the Coastal Commission are committed to keeping accessible to all people regardless of where they live or the resources they have.

While our agency continues to uphold its commitment to fulfill the Coastal Act's mandates, those efforts are possible only because of the continued outpouring of support from everyday Californians. Together we can and will protect the coast for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kate Huckelbridge
Executive Director, California Coastal Commission

Cover: *Edge of Silence* | Chelsea Weaver | Contest Participant
2025 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025 the California Coastal Commission continued to balance coastal protections with economic development, approving many new housing and hotel projects, and working closely with local governments to implement a number of new state laws intended to promote walkable, transit-oriented development.

The Commission upheld its core mandates to maximize public access and protect coastal resources, by taking actions to preserve thousands of acres of coastal lands, reduce plastic pollution, restore habitats and facilitate tribal land returns.

The agency made progress on its longstanding efforts to promote alternatives to driving, such as rail, bicycle and pedestrian projects. In the Coastal Zone, Caltrans projects such as bridge and road projects now routinely include sidewalks and bike lanes because of close collaboration with the Commission.

The Commission continued to empower local governments to guide environmentally sustainable development. Nearly 90% of all coastal development permits were approved by cities and counties, according to the Key Metrics Report 2025. At the same time, the agency's 12 voting Commissioners exercised their appellate authority sparingly, taking jurisdiction over only 1% of the nearly 1,290 locally approved coastal permits.

The agency also focused on efficiency, approving completed coastal development permits within two months on average. More than 80% of all actions taken by the Coastal Commission in 2025 were processed with permit waivers or on consent. Only about one in five project applications were required to have a full hearing. The agency denied only one project, which involved a proposal to reconfigure public boat moorings for small vessels in Newport Beach Harbor.

Together, these efforts reflect the Commission's ongoing commitment to protecting California's coast while ensuring thoughtful, efficient, and community-focused development that preserves and enhances the coast for all.



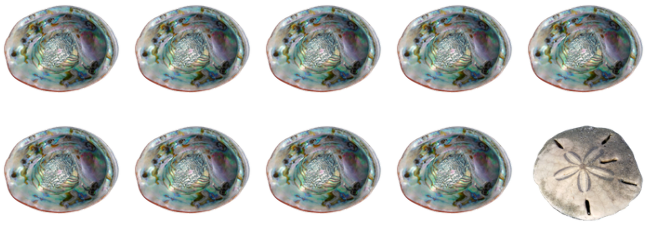
Art: *Shell Shock* | Gavin Tesser | Honorable Mention, Grades 10-12 Art
2025 Coastal Art & Poetry Photography Contest

2025 KEY METRICS

Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) issued by the Commission or local governments ensure that projects in California's Coastal Zone comply with the Coastal Act and protect public access to the coast.

Approved by Local Governments

1,290
Coastal Development Permits in 2025



~ 9 in 10 CDPs were approved locally

Approved by the Coastal Commission

250	160	71	43
Project Waivers	CDPs	Local Coastal Program Amendments	Emergency Permits

47 Days
Average time for the Commission to process a CDP



Only 1 Project Denied
A proposal to reconfigure public boat moorings for small vessels in Newport Beach Harbor

Link to the full 2025 Metrics Report **here**.

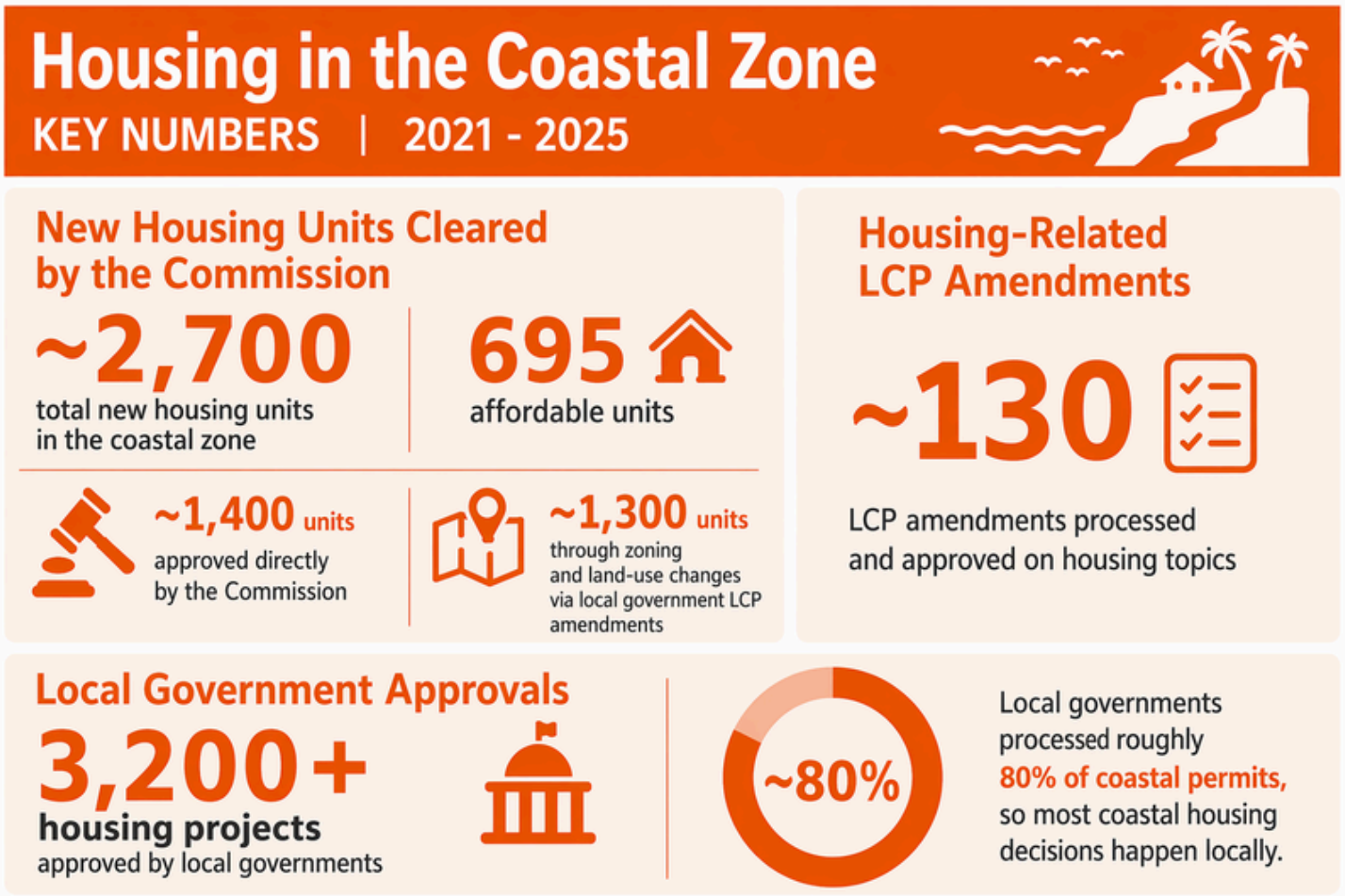
HOUSING

Expanding Housing Opportunities Along The Coast

The Coastal Commission continued its longstanding commitment to promote dense, walkable communities and prioritize housing opportunities for low-income residents. This included everything from updating regulations for affordable housing projects to approving new student housing and multifamily developments.

With **local governments approving nearly 90% of all coastal development permits in 2025,** the Commission signed off on numerous local zoning and land-use changes to streamline or create new housing throughout the Coastal Zone. That included amending Local Coastal Programs, or LCPs, to incorporate legislative changes to density bonus law.

In 2025, the Commission did not deny any housing projects, consistent with its longstanding approach of working closely with applicants to reach mutually acceptable outcomes that allow projects to move forward while still protecting natural landscapes, habitats and public access.



Notable Housing Actions and Approvals



Affordable Housing

The Coastal Commission approved changes to its regulations to extend the time for 100% affordable housing projects to start construction from two years to five years after a permit is issued. The new rules are aimed at helping affordable housing developers secure funding for projects in the Coastal Zone.



Santa Monica Mixed-Use Affordable Housing

The Coastal Commission approved a 122-unit affordable housing development in downtown Santa Monica. The units will be deed-restricted in perpetuity.



Dana Point Density

The Coastal Commission approved zoning changes in the city of Dana Point to create the Victoria Boulevard Specific Plan, which would allow for a proposed 306-room apartment complex, including 46 affordable units.



UC Santa Barbara Student Housing

The Coastal Commission approved the San Benito Student Housing Project at UCSB, including seven new residential and support buildings containing over 2,200 new student and faculty housing units.



San Diego Assisted Living Facility

The Coastal Commission approved a 105-unit assisted living facility in the city of San Diego, including a dining room, fitness center and pool.

Photo: *Wildflower Watch on Coastal Trail* | Michael Sheltzer | Contest Participant
2025 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest



Venice Mixed-Use Apartment Building

The Coastal Commission approved a three-story housing development in the Venice neighborhood of Los Angeles, including 16 units, three of which will be set aside for very low-income residents.



Fort Bragg Apartments

The Coastal Commission cleared the way for seven new apartment buildings in the city of Fort Bragg, which include designated affordable housing units.

Streamlining for ADUs

The Coastal Commission granted many permit waivers for accessory dwelling unit projects, including in Santa Monica, Laguna Beach, San Clemente and Solana Beach.

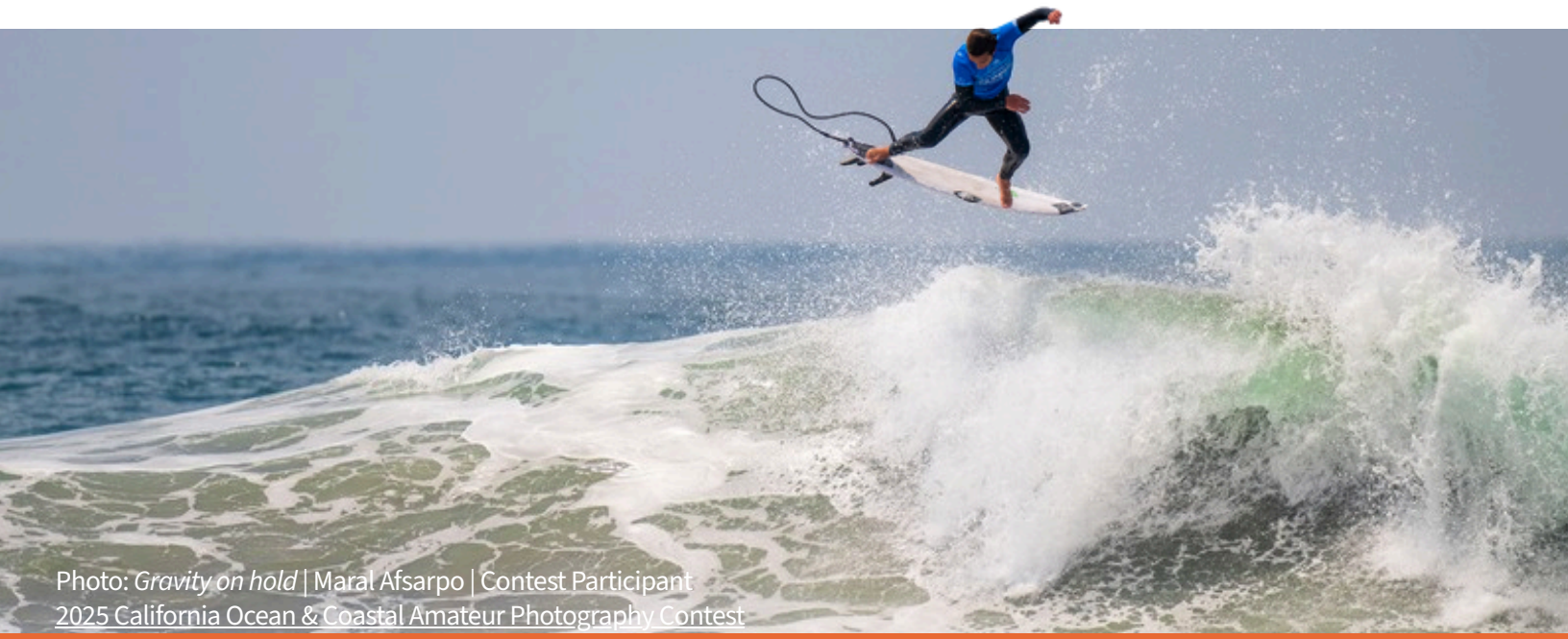


Photo: *Gravity on hold* | Maral Afsarpo | Contest Participant
2025 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

VISITOR-SERVING ACCOMMODATIONS

Increasing Affordable Coastal Accommodations

The Coastal Commission continued to support public access to the coast by approving new hotels projects, while reviewing new permitting regulations from local governments for short-term rentals. Such accommodations can enable inland visitors to enjoy to the coast, especially when they include lower-cost options. The agency remains dedicated to ensuring the coast accessible to all income levels.

Coastal Lodging Actions and Approvals



Santa Barbara Hotel

The Coastal Commission upheld the **construction of a 250-room hotel and six affordable housing units in the city of Santa Barbara.**



Los Osos Accommodations

The Coastal Commission upheld the local approval of four projects in Los Osos in San Luis Obispo County, including **two single family homes, a three-unit motel and laundry facility and a mixed-use restaurant and hotel.**



San Clemente Hotel

The Coastal Commission approved a **28-unit hotel in San Clemente, including six lower-cost units.**



San Clemente Hotel

The Coastal Commission approved a new **13-room hotel in San Clemente, including three lower-cost rooms.** The project includes a new sidewalk and public viewing area.



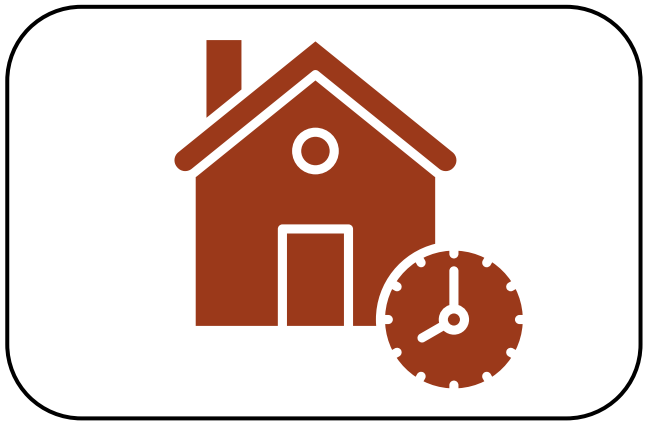
Half Moon Bay Hotel Review

The Coastal Commission accepted an appeal for a proposed **102-room hotel in the city of Half Moon Bay because of concerns about its impact on a scenic stretch of Highway 1.**



Newport Beach Short-Term Rentals

The Coastal Commission approved changes to the city of **Newport Beach's rules for short-term rentals,** shifting permits to mixed-use corridors that put visitors closer to commercial businesses.



Monterey County Short-Term Rentals

The Coastal Commission approved **Monterey County's plan for regulating short-term vacation rentals along the coast.** The county developed the new regulations over the last decade with extensive public and stakeholder input, although litigation is pending.

TRANSPORTATION

Expanding Coastal Transportation Options

The Coastal Commission worked throughout the year to expand multimodal transportation, advocating for everything from bike lanes and sidewalks to employer-paid transit passes for workers. This helps ensure the coast is accessible to both visitors and those who work there.

The Commission also continued efforts to make sure our coastal transportation networks are more resilient to climate change, advancing adaptation projects across the state. Agency staff worked closely with staff at the California Department of Transportation and other partners to respond to emergency threats from flooding and erosion.

Coastal Transportation Actions and Approvals

Gladstone's PCH Bus Stop

The Coastal Commission approved the construction of a new ocean-front restaurant on the site of the former Gladstone's restaurant near Malibu. The parking lot design will feature a **new bus stop on Pacific Coast Highway and reimburse employees for the cost of commuting on public transit.**

Will Rogers State Beach Bike Trail

The Coastal Commission approved the repair and **realignment of the Marvin Braude Bicycle Trail** along Will Rogers State Beach in the city of Los Angeles.



Photo: *Gladstone's on Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA*

Laguna Beach Pedestrian Plaza

The Coastal Commission cleared the way for the creation of a **permanent pedestrian plaza in the city of Laguna Beach,** including the closure of car traffic along the lower section of Forest Avenue.

Long Beach Bridge Safety

The Coastal Commission approved the **overhaul of an existing four-lane bridge on Highway 1 over the San Gabriel River** between the cities of Long Beach and Seal Beach, addressing seismic upgrades while **adding new bicycle lanes and pedestrian sidewalks.**

San Luis Obispo County Bridge Safety

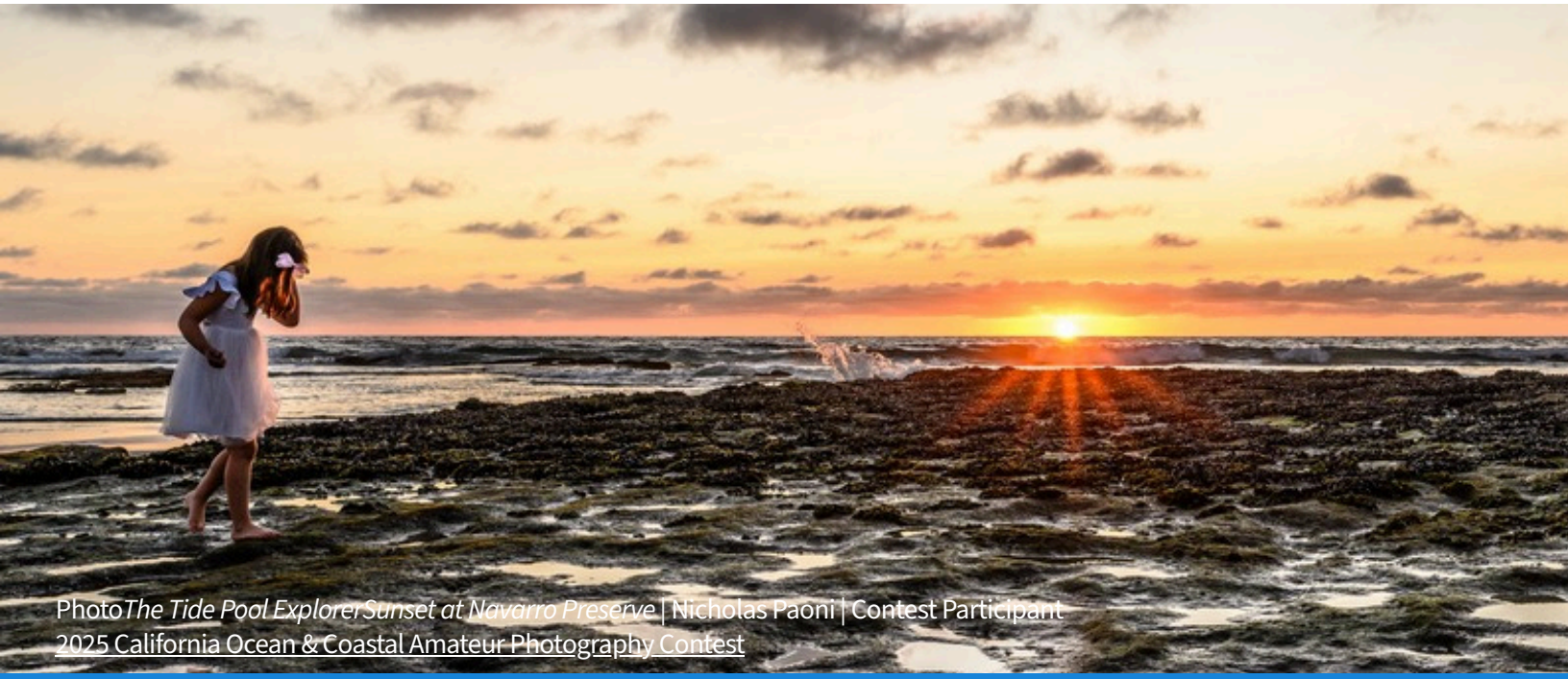
The Coastal Commission approved **replacing an earthquake-vulnerable bridge over Toro Creek on Highway 1 north of the city of Morro Bay.** The new bridge will make the area safer and improve access to the coast, **new roadside guardrails and drainage facilities, and wider shoulders that also serve as a bicycle lane.**

Long Beach Bike and Pedestrian Paths

The Coastal Commission approved a **road redesign in Long Beach** to make room for **protected bicycle and pedestrian paths** along West Shoreline Drive.

Big Sur PCH Erosion Controls

The Coastal Commission approved **multiple public safety projects along Highway 1 through Big Sur**, which has been repeatedly impacted by landslides. This included **stabilizing slopes, addressing large landslides and reducing speeds with new safety signage and other measures.**



Photo*The Tide Pool Explorer Sunset at Navarro Preserve* | Nicholas Paoni | Contest Participant
2025 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

PUBLIC ACCESS

Protecting and Expanding Coastal Public Access

The Coastal Commission was created by voters in large part to protect public access to and along California's beaches, bays and other shorelines. The agency advances that goal in many ways, including requiring new projects to provide pedestrian paths, bike lanes, public parking and scenic overlooks. The agency also coordinates with federal, state and local agencies to ensure that, when available, dredged sand is placed on beaches to help combat erosion and sea level rise.

In 2025, the Coastal Commission required Pacific Gas & Electric, as a condition of the continued operation of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, to establish **new public hiking trails and conserve thousands of acres of natural open space around the facility in San Luis Obispo County.**

The Commission also **approved a multi-year permit for a popular Pacific Airshow in Huntington Beach which includes tracking potential environmental impacts and protecting public access to the shoreline.** The permit included specific protections for a nearby ecological reserve and wildlife refuge.



Photo: *The Diablo Canyon lands near Avila Beach in San Luis Obispo, CA*

Public Access Actions and Approvals

Diablo Canyon Lands Conservation

The Coastal Commission approved continued operations at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant in San Luis Obispo County on the condition that, among other things, 2**5 miles of new hiking trails be established for the public, and 4,500 acres of land surrounding the plant be placed in a conservation easement.**

Huntington Beach Pacific Airshow

The Coastal Commission approved a **5-year permit for the Pacific Airshow in Huntington Beach, including conditions to ensure members of the public can reach the shoreline without having to purchase a ticket.** The permit also requires the submission of annual monitoring reports on the environmental impacts in the nearby Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve and Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge.

USS Midway Museum Public Access

The Coastal Commission approved **replacing a gangway and installing an elevator at Navy Pier in San Diego while also adding a condition for new public access signage plan** on the USS Midway Museum's viewing deck.

Newport Beach Wheelchair Path

The Coastal Commission approved the construction of a **200-foot-long wheelchair-accessible path and viewing pad** on the sand near the famed Wedge surf break in Newport Beach.

Torrey Pines Benches, Restrooms, and Wheelchair-Accessible Paths

The Coastal Commission approved the construction of a **new public restroom** at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve in San Diego County. The project also included **ADA-accessible parking spaces and electric vehicle charging stations, as well as benches, water fountains and wheelchair-accessible walking paths.**

Paradise Point Resort Public Access Amenities

The Coastal Commission approved a suite of public access and other improvements at Paradise Point Resort in San Diego to mitigate longstanding public access violations. This included constructing **new public restrooms, trails, signage and parking, as well as eliminating all single-use plastics at on-site restaurants and other facilities.**





Art: *Cute Little Bird* | Madeline Yang | Honorable Mention, Grades K-1 Art
2025 Coastal Art & Poetry Photography Contest

Beach Replenishments

- The Coastal Commission approved dredging up to **415,000 cubic yards of sediment in Alamitos Bay in Long Beach,** which will be used for sand replenishment at Peninsula Beach, which is eroding due to sea level rise.

- The Coastal Commission approved a **10-year extension to the city of Encinitas' beach replenishment program.** Efforts focus on obtaining beach-quality sand from upland or dredging projects for placement at Batiquitos and Moonlight beaches.

- The Coastal Commission approved a **sand management plan for the Ventura Port District**, including sand grooming and installation of ADA-accessible beach mats at Harbor Cove, South Jetty, and Surfer's Knoll.

- The Coastal Commission approved **removing sand from five ocean outlets in Orange County and placing it on nearby beaches.** The project will reduce sediment buildup in the Santa Ana River and the Talbert Channel while benefitting nearby beaches with additional sand.

- The Coastal Commission concurred with a plan by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to **dredge navigation channels in Humboldt Bay and place roughly 300,000 cubic yards of sand offshore** to create a berm to slow down shoreline erosion.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcing Coastal Protections and Public Access

The Coastal Commission's enforcement program continued to protect and provide for public access and other coastal resource protections in 2025. The agency worked closely with violators to remedy impacts from unpermitted development that blocked public access or impaired habitat or water quality. Most were resolved without having to issue financial penalties, honoring its longstanding spirit of cooperation.

In 2025, the Commission fully resolved 108 enforcement cases, many involving complex restoration orders. The agency also opened 113 new cases adding to the ongoing backlog of more than 3,200 cases, highlighting the growing need for additional enforcement resources and staff.

Occasionally, violators are unwilling to work with the Coastal Commission, prompting the need for fines. Such funds are paid into the Violation Remediation Account, which is administered by the California State Coastal Conservancy and used for, among other things, public access and habitat restoration projects.



Photo: *Locked vehicle gate blocks Beach Access Easement to a nearby beach and Buena Vista Lagoon in Carlsbad, CA*

Enforcement Actions and Approvals

Malibu Public Access Trail Improvement

The Coastal Commission **approved** a consent cease and desist order with the owner of a property in Malibu for **blocking public access with an unpermitted fence and other structures. The property owner agreed to construct a new public trail** that will provide connectivity for a series of popular hiking and equestrian trails in Escondido Canyon Park in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Carlsbad Homeowner Public Access Violation

The Coastal Commission **fined** a homeowner in Carlsbad **$1.4 million for blocking public access with locked gates** to a nearby beach and Buena Vista Lagoon in San Diego County. The enforcement orders required they **restore the habitat and open the two gates.**

Santa Monica Sandbourne Hotel Transit Passes

The Coastal Commission **issued** an enforcement order against the Santa Monica Sandbourne Hotel for **not providing transit and carpool incentive program for staff in order to limit vehicle traffic in the area,** which was a requirement of their previous coastal development permit. The hotel owners agreed to implement an **expanded program, including fully reimbursed transit subsidies for workers, EV charging stations and designated bicycle and carpool parking areas.** The hotel also agreed to implement a **plastics and Styrofoam elimination program,** as well as provide four **new publicly available beach wheelchairs** at the Santa Monica Pier.



Photo: *Non-functioning public access easement in a housing development, where a required trail has not been provided*

SEA LEVEL RISE

Protecting California from Sea Level Rise

California's coastal communities continued to feel the impacts of a warming planet in 2025, from a record-breaking marine heatwave to wildfires to continued beach and bluff erosion.

The Coastal Commission released its **2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan**, which prioritizes hazard mitigation policies, while also calling for the exploration of new approaches, such as voluntary buyout programs for high-risk properties.

Long-term success will require working closely with local government partners. **That's why the agency awarded more than $6.3 million in grants in 2025 to help cities and counties plan for sea level rise and other coastal hazards.** The agency has since exhausted its funding for such grants and is now looking for ways to replenish these critical funds that will help ensure communities across California are safe.

The Coastal Commission recognizes the continued need for targeted armoring in some places, especially to protect important public infrastructure. At the same time, the Commission is increasingly encouraging communities to think about adaptation on a neighborhood scale, rather than parcel by parcel. This helps ensure that efforts are more comprehensive and prioritize public beaches and other important coastal resources.

The Commission also supported local policies to limit the use of seawalls, rock revetments, and other coastal protection structures. While these structures can help protect property in the short term, they can also cause beaches to disappear over time. They also cannot fully protect coastal communities from the long-term effects of flooding and erosion.

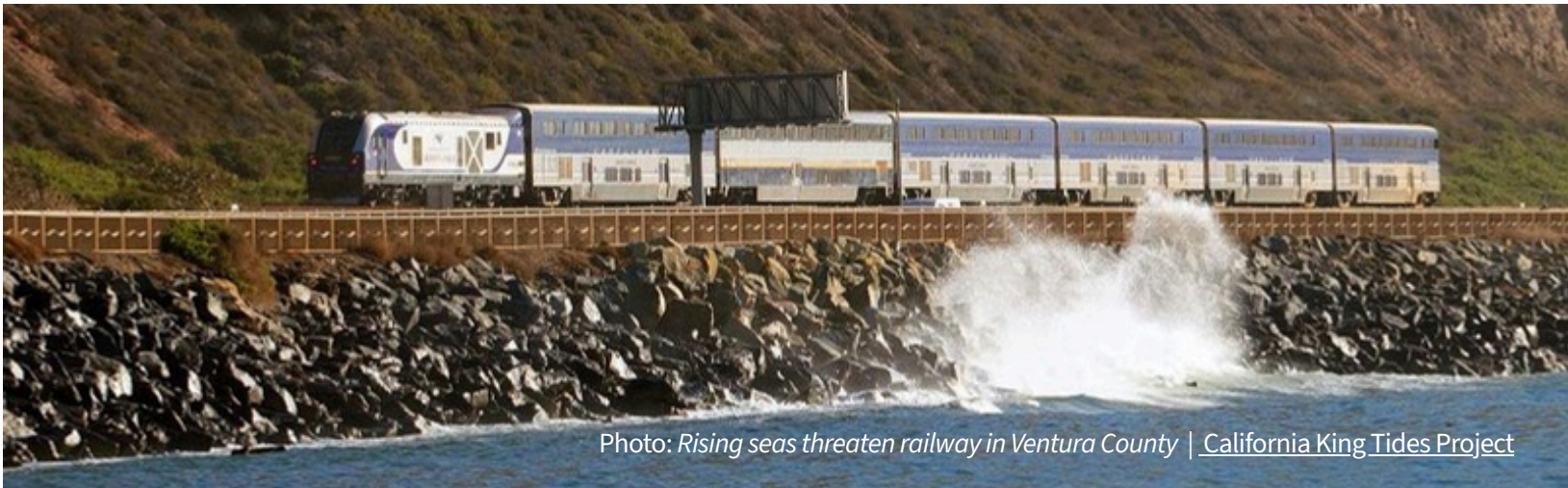


Photo: *Rising seas threaten railway in Ventura County* | California King Tides Project

Sea Level Rise Actions

Pacifica Coastal Planning

The Coastal Commission **approved landmark changes to the city of Pacifica's Local Coastal Program,** which allow the city to continue to protect specific locations with coastal armoring for the near-term on the condition that the city engages in detailed, long-term planning for sea level rise.

Marina Coastal Planning

The Coastal Commission **approved land-use and zoning changes in Marina that limit the use of sea walls to address sea level rise and coastal erosion.** The goal of the new policies is to keep the city's beaches open and accessible to all.

Newport Beach Flooding Protection

The Coastal Commission **approved land-use changes in Newport Beach establishing a new "Special Flood Hazard Area" to protect public access and natural resources through development standards,** such as height, setback and lot coverage.



Photo: *Sharp Park, Pacifica* | *California King Tides Project*



Photo: *Del Monte Beach, Monterey, CA* | California King Tides Project

Sea Level Rise Grants

- The Coastal Commission **approved** a **$938,960 local assistance grant for Monterey County** to update its Moss Landing Community plan and the Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan to address sea level rise and coastal hazards.

- The Coastal Commission **approved** a **$1.8 million local assistance grant to the city of Oceanside** for baseline monitoring and vulnerability assessment to inform coastal hazard adaptation options.

- The Coastal Commission staff **approved** a **$1.1 million grant to the city of Los Angeles** to plan for sea level rise and other issues in the Venice neighborhood.

- The Coastal Commission **approved** a **$900,000 grant to help the city of Pismo Beach** prepare for increasing sea level rise. The city proposes to update its vulnerability assessment, perform an economic analysis of adaptation strategies, and develop neighborhood-scale adaptation pathways.

- The Coastal Commission **approved** a **$500,000 grant to the city of Redondo Beach** to update its sea level rise vulnerability assessment and develop policies around resiliency.

- The Coastal Commission **approved** a **$500,000 grant to Half Moon Bay** to update its implementation plan to address issues of climate change, sea level rise and environmental justice, as well as to incorporate new state laws around housing.

- The Coastal Commission **approved** a **$499,000 grant to the city of Huntington Beach** to plan for sea level rise, including to update its Local Coastal Program, Coastal Resiliency Plan, and Floodplain Ordinance.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Advancing Environmental Justice

The Commission works to ensure greater public participation and meaningful community engagement during its regular monthly hearings, through quarterly meetings between community-based organizations and agency leadership and by reaching out directly to community members for feedback on potential projects. The agency offers materials in Spanish, shares FAQs about upcoming project decisions and sends out a monthly environmental justice newsletter on issues most relevant to underserved communities.

In 2025, the agency incorporated environmental justice principles into many different projects. For example, staff worked with San Diego-based nonprofit Outdoor Outreach on a webinar to encourage greater public participation. The segment shared the Coastal Commission's origin story, the agency's mission and how community members can participate in the decision-making process by speaking at the agency's monthly hearings.

Environmental Justice Actions

National City Park Expansion

The Coastal Commission approved the **National City Balance Plan,** which was part of the San Diego Unified Port District Master Plan update. This project included protections for **lower-cost visitor and recreational facilities as well as expanding Pepper Park and more.**



Photo: *Coastal Commission bilingual staff conducting public outreach in Long Beach, CA*



Photo: *Coastal Commission Environmental Justice staff at CA Ocean Day in Sacramento*

Assembly Bill 2939: Expanding Access

The Coastal Commission worked with the California Natural Resources Agency on an FAQ to help communities and local groups better understand **AB 2939.** This **legislation** was passed in 2024 by former Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon to expand access to California's local city and county parks and beaches. The bill says that **nonprofits and tribal organizations that provide educational or interpretive programs for groups of up to 30 people should be treated like regular members of the public when it comes to permitting and fees when using local coastal parks, beaches, and other coastal areas.**

Belmont Pool Access

The Coastal Commission required a **public access program as part of renovations to Belmont Pool in Long Beach.** As a result, the city committed to, among other things, **low-cost weekend recreation swim sessions, free water exercise classes for seniors, as well as providing transit vouchers to assist those with limited mobility options.**

Huntington Beach Airshow Public Access

The Coastal Commission granted a 5-year permit for the **Huntington Beach Airshow** requiring public access conditions such as **free V.I.P. tickets for low-income households.**

UC Davis Environmental Policy Graduate Program

The Coastal Commission mentored graduate students at University of California Davis working on a project **examining the relationship between ecological restoration and environmental justice, such as improving water quality and expanding recreational opportunities.** Students presented their research at a Coastal Commission public hearing.



Photo: *Belmont Pool in Long Beach, CA*

TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Advancing Tribal Affairs

The Coastal Commission recognizes that the state's Coastal Zone was originally Indigenous territory and has designated tribal liaisons for each of its district offices and programs to strengthen relationships with regional tribes. **All planning and permitting decisions at the agency require consideration of impacts to tribal cultural resources, including sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places and objects with cultural value to tribes in California.**

In 2025, the Coastal Commission **hired Tribal Affairs Coordinator Courtney Owen** to oversee tribal consultation for the agency, supporting district and program liaisons, and advancing high-priority tribal issues. Owen brings over a decade of experience on tribal coordination, climate resilience, and stakeholder engagement.

That same year, Coastal Commission staff attended the "Going Beyond Land Acknowledgements" training hosted by RedBud Resource Group. The training objectives included improving staff's understanding of tribal sovereignty and the challenges faced by contemporary native peoples.



Photo: Axel Lindgren Memorial Trail

Tribal Affairs Actions

Mendocino County Tribal Land Returned

The Coastal Commission approved the **return of 136 acres of state coastal property near Blues Beach in Mendocino County to a tribal non-profit.** The tribally chartered nonprofit Kai Poma will manage the lands for public access, maintaining natural habitat and protecting cultural resources. In 2021, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 231 (McGuire), directing Caltrans to transfer excess state property in the vicinity of Blues Beach to the tribal non-profit, which includes the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, the Round Valley Indian Tribes, and the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians.

Tribal Consultation in Trinidad

The Coastal Commission voted to review a project approved by the city of Trinidad to repair the Axel Lindgren Memorial Trail that traverses a coastal bluff with known sensitive resources. The Commission agreed with the Tsurai Ancestral Society's appeal of the City's approval **that proper tribal consultation had not taken place and that there are feasible project alternatives that would maintain public access along the trail but in a manner that better protects tribal cultural resources.**

Tribal Engagement on Offshore Wind

Commission staff, together with the California Offshore Wind Energy Fisheries Working Group, completed the **Statewide Strategy for the Coexistence of California Fishing Communities and Offshore Wind**. The Strategy provides a guiding framework for offshore wind development to proceed in a manner that recognizes and protects California's fishing communities. **It includes a dedicated chapter on unique considerations for tribal fisheries, developed by tribal and developer working group members and informed by a series of Commission-hosted roundtable discussions and consultations.**

Los Cerritos Tribal Access to Ancestral Lands

The Coastal Commission approved a **restoration project on more than 100 acres in the Los Cerritos Wetlands in Seal Beach.** The project, which includes parking and public trails, will increase access to ancestral lands. The Commission worked closely with representatives of Gabrieleño-affiliated Tribes and Juañeno Band of Mission Indians. **The engagement resulted in the formation of a Tribal Advisory Group to engage tribal perspectives early on and throughout planning development, and to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into ecological restoration designs and all other elements of the tribal cultural resource design features.**

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Increasing Public Education

The Coastal Commission continued its longstanding commitment to public education in 2025, from helping to organize annual events focused on environmental stewardship to providing grants to nonprofits, schools and tribes that promote coastal access and education.

The agency, for example, helped organize longstanding activities such as Kids' Ocean Day, California King Tides Project, the Coastal Art & Poetry Contest and the Ocean & Coastal Photography Contest.

The 41st annual California Coastal Cleanup Day took place on September 20, **with tens of thousands of Californians volunteering at hundreds of cleanup sites. For the first time in the event's history, cleanups took place in all 58 California counties.** The state leads the world in cleanup activity as part of the International Coastal Cleanup.



Photo: *Aerial Art at Huntington State Beach* | Kids Ocean Day

The Coastal Commission also continued the long-running Whale Tail® Grants program, which prioritizes projects that engage communities facing barriers to coastal access and experiential learning. The grants, for example, have funded the purchase of beach wheelchairs that have wide balloon tires that can move across sand.

The agency awarded 53 competitive grants in 2025, helping to engage an estimated 14,000 participants during implementation. Twenty-eight of the grantee organizations are first-time Whale Tail® Grant recipients.

Since the grant program was established in 1998, it has awarded more than $25 million to 1,074 different projects. This year's grantees include a university, two government entities, six schools or districts, and 44 nonprofits. Of the nonprofit grantees, half have annual budgets of under $1 million.

The Coastal Commission continued its partnership with California State Parks on the Boating Clean and Green Program, which provides education and training on environmentally responsible practices. **2025 marked the 25th anniversary of the "Dockwalker" environmental education program and included 14 trainings for more than 200 partner educators, and eight new episodes of the "Dockside" clean and safe boating podcast.**



COASTAL HABITAT

Protecting Coastal Habitat

Protecting sensitive coastal habitats like dunes, wetlands, estuaries and woodlands is one of the Coastal Act's most important mandates. **California has lost 95% of its historic coastal wetlands and an even higher percentage of coastal dunes, making those habitats that remain some of the rarest and most valuable in the state.** The Commission protects these areas through permit conditions, land-use provisions, enforcement orders, easements and deed restrictions. The goal of these actions is to build a resilient web of interconnected habitats that can thrive for generations.

Habitat Approvals & Actions

Mussel Rock Landfill

- Commission staff provided an update on the **management of Mussel Rock Landfill in Daly City.** The capped landfill, which is currently used as a public park, is in a geologically unstable area that is subject to wave erosion and potentially earthquakes. Staff is working with the city to address the site's environmental threat to marine resources.

Navy Sonar Concerns

- The Coastal Commission **objected to the continued expansion of a Navy training program in state waters, including the use of high-energy sonar, lasers, explosives and other munitions.** The federal government has the authority to proceed with its training program despite the commission's concerns about the impacts on marine ecosystems.



Photo: *Where Giants and Flocks Meet* | Falu Bakrania | Contest Participant
2025 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

Wetlands Restored

- The Coastal Commission approved the abandonment and **restoration of former oil drilling areas in the Los Cerritos Wetlands in Seal Beach in Orange County.** The project will restore salt marsh and upland habitat, while remediating contaminated soil and boosting public access.

- The Coastal Commission approved modified **restoration plans for the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve in Los Angeles.** The plans include leaving some existing drains and pipes in place to avoid larger impacts to sensitive habitat.

Big Sur Restoration

- The Coastal Commission approved **Caltrans' restoration of the Mud Creek Landslide area in Big Sur,** including improvements to public access and habitat, as well as intertidal species monitoring. The permit serves as the follow-up approval for multiple emergency shoreline armoring structures built by Caltrans after the slide occurred in 2017.

- The Coastal Commission approved an **ecological restoration project at the Alila Ventana Big Sur resort in Monterey County,** including vegetation treatments to create defensible space around structures and power lines.

Fireworks

- The Coastal Commission approved a **two-year permit for the Big Bay Boom firework shows on the Fourth of July in the city of San Diego.** As part of the project, the Port of San Diego will study fireworks alternatives, such as those that use drones, to reduce environmental impacts for future events.

- The Coastal Commission approved an a**nnual fireworks show in the city of Capitola through 2027.** The city is required to clean up all fireworks-related debris and submit a report to commission staff documenting such activities.

- The Coastal Commission approved a J**uly 4th block party and firework display in Alamitos Bay in Long Beach, as well as an additional four-year permit for a block party with a fireworks alternative, such as a drone light show.** The agency sought to phase out fireworks in the bay to protect water quality and nesting birds.



Photo: *Pelicans over Asilomar* | Laurie Waagen | Contest Participant
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MAPPING

Expanding Coastal Mapping and Data

The Coastal Commission continued in 2025 to advance its “Open Coast” vision, which is an initiative to make coastal data and information more accessible, transparent and useful to the public as well as local, state and federal government partners. This approach helps foster a broader community of coastal stewards by removing barriers to coastal information.

For example, the Commission launched a new and improved version of the YourCoast application, making it even easier to discover beaches, trails and other ways to enjoy the coast. The application also includes new information about locations of beach wheelchairs.

The agency expanded its GIS Open Data website, providing convenient access to maps and datasets used to understand and manage the coast This includes everything from the California Coastal Trail to Coastal Zone boundaries.

Behind these public-facing improvements, the agency also upgraded to a modern enterprise GIS platform where staff can securely access and share maps, data, analytical tools and applications. This foundational investment expands GIS from a specialized mapping function into an agency-wide resource, supporting stronger collaboration and decision-making.

At the same time, the Coastal Commission certified updated maps for the cities of Del Mar, Morro Bay, Pacifica, Sonoma County and San Diego’s Tijuana River section. These maps provide clear, more accessible information about permitting and appeal authority. Similar mapping efforts are underway for several additional segments of San Diego, Pismo Beach, and San Luis Obispo County. Together, these efforts are making both the coast and the information needed to manage it more accessible and user-friendly.



RETIREMENTS

In 2025, the Coastal Commission said goodbye to several colleagues whose institutional knowledge, professional experience and general comradery will be dearly missed. We thank them for their service and wish them all the best.

Vanessa Miller retired after 32 years of service to the Coastal Commission, starting with the agency in 1993 as an office assistant. She worked her way up to Associate Governmental Program Analyst, serving for many years as the Commission's Hearing Manager. She was responsible for the smooth and efficient operation of the commission's monthly hearings and for maintaining a complete public record of all hearing actions. Miller was beloved colleague, known for her storytelling, astute observations and incredible singing voice.

Tom Luster served for more than 24 years as a senior environmental scientist, consistently taking on some of the most controversial and important projects at the agency. These included desalination, nuclear waste storage and the siting and operation of coastal power plants. Luster consistently developed strong, defensible recommendations based to protect coastal resources, based on his impeccable science-based analysis. He was an agency leader, helping to train several members of the commission's executive and management teams. His tireless, yet good-humored, approach has been deeply appreciated.

Melanie Wong retired after 25 years of service, most recently as the director of human resources. She began her distinguished career as a staff services analyst and continued to serve with the agency as an essential member and leader. She guided staff through all aspects of HR, recruitment and hiring, helping to strengthen the heart and soul of the agency.

Kelly Cuffe retired after 26 years of service, working as an environmental scientist with the commission. In an ambitious effort to expand coastal access, she helped create the agency's California Coastal Trail mapping project, researching and digitizing hundreds trail segments. Cuffe also coordinated the agency's Open Space and Conservation Easement Program, working to secure permanent protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas, agricultural resources and scenic viewsheds.

Their contributions will be forever felt by all who visit California's magical shoreline.



Photo: *The Gateway* | Catherine Presmyk | Contest Participant
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