



California Coastal Commission

455 Market Street, Suite 300
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Voice (415) 904-5200
www.coastal.ca.gov

FACT SHEET

Coastal Commission responds quickly to emergency flooding along Beach Road in Dana point

How is the Commission responding to homeowners?

The Coastal Commission understands that homeowners along Beach Road are facing significant damage and uncertainty, and we are providing immediate and ongoing assistance. Our staff has been working alongside local governments and homeowners to authorize needed emergency work. We have issued verbal or written approvals for numerous emergency coastal development permit applications for Beach Road and will continue to respond quickly as applications come in. Prior to the Labor Day weekend storm event, the Commission allowed for seawalls and rock revetments to protect homes along Beach Road. We have also reviewed and approved proposals for nearby sand replenishment.

Why was there so much damage along Beach Road?

All 201 parcels along Beach Road within the Capistrano Bay Community Services District are in FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Map Coastal High Hazard area, which shows properties at high risk of flooding. Many damaged structures had aging, unpermitted wooden seawalls that were not designed for the level of fierce wave action and severe beach erosion that we saw over the weekend. Commission staff sent letters to the Capistrano Bay District, Capistrano Bay Shoreline Committee, and individual property owners about the unpermitted armoring, encouraging homeowners to pursue new applications for options that would protect both homes and the public beach, which in turn provides greater long-term protection for structures.

How did the Commission support coastal resilience for individual properties and the community?

Shoreline hazards have been known to the community since at least the 1960s but homes built along Beach Road were not designed to withstand those hazards. Since the Coastal Act became law in the 1970s, community plans for Beach Road have required new and redeveloped homes to be built to withstand erosion and flooding by elevating them on caisson foundations and discouraging seaward encroachment. A local effort in 1999 to weaken those rules was denied by the Commission. More recently, the Commission has required new Beach Road homes to be designed for even greater hazards resiliency. Since 2024, the Commission has sent letters to individual homeowners, the city of Dana Point, the Capistrano Bay Community Services District, and the Community's Shoreline Committee alerting these parties to increasing potential risks and urging them to work collaboratively on a more comprehensive and durable community-wide solution that protects private property and reduces impacts to Capistrano Beach. We remain open to discussing options and remedies that benefit the community.

How did the Commission support long-term sea-level-rise planning in Dana Point?



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The Commission has been working with the city of Dana Point on the need to update their Local Coastal Program (LCP), which is the community's development roadmap to address sea level rise. To this end, the Commission provided two grants totaling \$245,000 to the city to assess how vulnerable they are to sea level rise. The city is still working to complete sea level rise adaptation planning needed for this update to reflect local conditions and adaptation needs.

What is the Coastal Commission's approach to seawalls and armoring on Beach Road?

The Coastal Act requires the Commission to limit the approval of seawalls to certain circumstances because while they can be an option to protect structures in the short term, they can also accelerate the problem by increasing erosion and destroying the public beaches that provide recreation and help protect those same structures in the long term. Along Beach Road, the Commission has approved numerous permits for shoreline armoring for homes along Beach Road when necessary to protect structures threatened by erosion and flooding.