

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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Developer requests postponement on Newport Banning Ranch (Th11c)

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. _ Newport Banning Ranch project developers on Friday requested the Coastal Commission postpone a May 12th hearing to determine whether they could build on a 401-acre coastal parcel in Southern California.

The proposal is for 895 homes, a 75-room resort hotel, 20 bed hostel and 45,000 square feet of retail space on what has been for decades an active oil field. Staff had recommended approval with conditions to help protect much of the site which is Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area, or ESHA.

The land includes wetlands, vernal pools and coastal sage scrub which provides habitat for rare and threatened animals such as the California gnatcatcher and burrowing owl. Under the Coastal Act, applicants are allowed a one-time postponement in order to respond to the staff recommendation.

The project is expected to be heard later this summer in Southern California.