

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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To: California Coastal Commissioners

FROM: James W. Burns, Chief Deputy Director
Tami Grove, Deputy Director
Jaime Kooser, Federal Programs Manager

SUBJECT: Recommended Approval of an Agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board to assist the Morro Bay National Estuary Program in the completion of a Base Program Analysis for Morro Bay

Staff Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) under which the Commission would receive \$45,000 to continue the Commission's efforts to improve treatment of nonpoint source pollution (polluted runoff), including the completion of a component of one of the planning documents required by the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP). Specific Commission staff responsibilities are described under "Scope of Work" below.

Staff Summary

In July 1995, Morro Bay was designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as part of the National Estuary Program (NEP). The intent of the NEP designation is to protect and improve the water quality and enhance the living resources of nationally significant estuaries and bays that are threatened by pollution, development, and overuse. Priority problems for management of Morro Bay include water quality (sediment, bacteria, nutrients, heavy metals, and other toxic materials) and habitat loss (exotic species invasion, land development, and riparian/wetland degradation).

The MBNEP requires development of several mandatory documents as part of the management planning process. One of these documents is the "Base Program Analysis." This document will describe the institutional framework associated with water and habitat protection within the Morro Bay estuary and its watershed, and will identify gaps and overlaps in this framework. It also makes recommendations for changes in plans, policies, ordinances, etc. to more effectively protect water and habitat quality. The Base Program Analysis will be included as an appendix to the MBNEP Management Plan.

Commission staff work on this project is consistent with the Coastal Commission's overall strategy for enhancing the coastal program's management of polluted runoff in the coastal zone. Pursuant to a request by the Mayor and City Council of Morro Bay, work on this project will also

serve to provide assistance to the City in meeting necessary requirements for City projects and plans through the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP).

Scope of Work

Under the proposed standard agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board, the Coastal Commission would receive \$45,000 over a twelve-month period for Commission staff to perform specific tasks. Specifically, Coastal Commission staff will undertake the following tasks in order to complete those components of the Base Program Analysis which relate to local jurisdictions (the City of Morro Bay and the County of San Luis Obispo) as well as to nonpoint source issues within specific state jurisdictions (including the Coastal Commission and the Department of Fish and Game).

1. Complete an institutional inventory and description of programs which affect water quality and habitat protection in the Morro Bay estuary and watershed. This inventory will focus primarily on the City of Morro Bay, the County of San Luis Obispo, the California Coastal Commission and the Department of Fish and Game.
2. Complete an analysis of the inventory developed above to include (1) a description of the gaps, overlaps, inconsistencies, and appropriateness of the institutional framework for protection of water and habitat quality in Morro Bay and its watershed, (2) a findings and recommendations from the analysis which will enhance water and habitat protection in the watershed while minimizing regulatory and economic burden, and (3) a summary and response to comments received on the draft findings. The analysis of local jurisdictions shall focus particularly on the Local Coastal Programs for the City of Morro Bay and the County of San Luis Obispo. Specific recommended language for incorporation into Morro Bay's Local Coastal Plan update shall be included as an attachment to this analysis and provide a general basis for other LCP updates that follow.
3. Prepare and conduct a workshop targeting local and state agency representatives, in cooperation with the MBNEP and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. This workshop will review the intent and findings of the Base Program Analysis, including: (1) a presentation of findings and recommendations from the Base Program Analysis; (2) provisions for participant input on these findings; and (3) education on the need for implementation of appropriate management measures and recommended actions.
4. Prepare a final narrative analysis of the institutional framework incorporating any input resulting from the workshop and recommended implementation actions.