

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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TO: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Parties

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SUBJECT: Unocal Avila Beach Remediation and Rebuild Status Report

Staff Notes:

In a report dated April 22, 1999, (prepared for the May, 1999, Commission meeting), Coastal Commission staff provided a brief history of the Unocal Avila Beach oil spill; past Coastal Commission involvement, including permits issued for spill characterization, containment or remediation; current ongoing remediation activities; and future remediation activities and permitting requirements. This status report provides updates on the most recent activities.

Because Unocal has completed beach cleanup, this will be the last regularly-scheduled written monthly update report for the Avila Beach cleanup project. Avila Beach updates will continue out of the Central Coast District Office regarding the Front Street Enhancement Plan, the Specific Plan, and the Settlement Agreement money disbursement and project selection.

ONGOING SITE ACTIVITIES, DECEMBER, 1999**1.0 Summary of major cleanup activities at Avila this past month****Town Areas:**

- Cell 3 (eastern town): Excavation is in progress.

Beach Areas:

- Unocal has completed beach excavation, backfill, and rebuild of the seawall. The only remaining activity is to replace the section of Avila Pier, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.
- Unocal re-opened the western portion of the beach to the public on November 30. Unocal is currently discussing the re-opening of the entire beach with the Port San Luis Harbor District and San Luis Obispo County. Although there will be little or no construction on the beach after May, the issues of safe street access, such as roads and sidewalks, and lighting for nighttime access need to be addressed.

2.0 "Deferred Areas" of Contamination

The RWQCB's Cleanup or Abatement Order (No. 98-37, April 3, 1998) does not address remediating certain "outlier" plumes. Establishing cleanup levels for these areas is deferred until the completion of additional studies and further site characterization.

- Unocal is working with agency staff to develop a workplan to further assess and delineate the inter- and subtidal plume;
- Unocal has met with CCC staff to further discuss other deferred areas. Staff will keep the Commission updated activities in these other areas.

3.0 Front Street Enhancement Plan

The Front Street Enhancement Plan as incorporated in the Local Coastal Program provides guidelines for improvements along Front Street. As cleanup activities are completed along Front Street, the street will be reconstructed in accordance with the Front Street Plan and the developing Specific Plan.

As reported to the Commission in previous updates, the County has approved coastal development permits for Phase I and Phase II of the Front Street rebuild, which carry out streetscape and coastal access and recreation improvements called for by both the Front Street Enhancement Plan and the draft Specific Plan.

In order to ensure that elements of Phase I and Phase II of the Front Street reconstruction that are seaward of the seawall were appropriately engineered, the County, in coordination with Commission staff, required that the plans for these features be reviewed and approved by the executive director. Unocal recently submitted the engineered plans for the overlook at the end of San Miguel Street, and the bulkhead at the base of the pier, pursuant to the conditions of the County's permit for Phase I. These plans, along with the plans for the pier reconstruction, have been reviewed by Commission staff, and determined to be appropriately designed and engineered in conformance with the applicable permit conditions. Construction permits for these components of the rebuild are forthcoming from the County.

4.0 Specific Planning Process

A primary tool that will guide the design and review of redevelopment in Avila Beach is the Avila Beach Specific Plan, the development of which has been closely coordinated with a wide range of interested parties, including Coastal Commission staff. On November 15, 1999, the San Luis Obispo Planning Commission approved the September, 1999, Public Hearing Draft of the Specific Plan. The next step will be for the County Board of Supervisors to review and approve the Plan, and certify the Final Environmental Impact Report, which is scheduled for the Board's February 15, 2000, meeting. Upon adoption by the Board, the Specific Plan will be submitted for Coastal Commission review and approval as an amendment to the San Luis Obispo County Local Coastal Program. This is expected to occur in the Spring of 2000.

5.0 Disbursement of the Settlement Agreement Monies

The Commission staff is working with the Department of Fish and Game's Office of Spill Prevention and Response ("OSPR") to disburse settlement monies held in trust by the OSPR per the MOU that was entered into by the CCC and the OSPR on September 16, 1998. Specifically, the staff has been working with the OSPR to develop a process to solicit, review, and rank specific project proposals. The process is proceeding, and planned, as follows:

- In August and September, 1999, the agencies with jurisdiction over the use of the settlement funds developed one-page summaries of their application and review criteria.
- In early October, 1999, the County released a public mailer that explains the application and decision process, and includes the summaries;
- On October 14, 1999, a public workshop was held;
- The November 15 deadline for submitting restoration/mitigation project proposals has been extended until December 15, 1999;
- The Department of Fish and Game will be sharing the proposals received with Commission staff in the near future;
- The Commission staff will inform the Commission of the proposals received for review and comment in subsequent updates;
- At a public workshop in February, 2000, agencies will present their initial rankings and draft restoration plan(s);
- In March, 2000, agencies will review the public's reaction to the initial ranking/draft plan(s);
- A subsequent public meeting may follow; and
- Final projects and restoration plan(s) will be chosen.

Commission staff has recently been informed that the Department of Fish and Game is in the process of establishing a locally-based committee to review proposals for the use of monies allocated for the mitigation of biological impacts associated with the contamination and clean-up,

and to development of additional proposals. The Commission staff biologist will be participating on this committee. Additional information regarding the projects that have been proposed to mitigate biological impacts, as well as impacts to coastal access and recreation, will be provided in subsequent updates, after staff has an opportunity to review the submitted proposals.

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