

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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February 25, 2004

TO: Commissioners and Interested Persons

FROM: Peter M. Douglas, Executive Director
Susan M. Hansch, Chief Deputy Director
Tami Grove, Development and Transportation Liaison *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Interagency Agreement with California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to fund up to three staff positions to provide coordinated review and processing of Caltrans' plans and projects

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to enter into an interagency agreement to accept up to \$1,104,618 from the Department of Transportation to provide environmental assistance, coordination and review services to Caltrans-related plans and projects in Caltrans Coastal Districts 1, 4, 5, 7, 11, and 12 that are under the CCC's permit, appeal and federal consistency review jurisdiction.

Staff Analysis:

The California Department of Transportation undertakes many plans and projects in the coastal zone every year, involving construction and repair of highways, bridges, and other facilities. Transportation planning issues are interlinked with many of the land use planning issues that the Commission reviews and monitors in local coastal programs throughout the state. Further, many transportation projects are located within the Coastal Commission's original jurisdiction area for coastal permits. Other projects are located within the coastal permit jurisdiction of cities or counties with certified Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) where the local government is responsible for reviewing coastal permit applications. In most cases, however, local government actions on Caltrans projects are appealable to the Commission, and a sizeable number of these local actions are in fact appealed. Because many of these projects are significant public works, a wide array of Coastal Act issues are often implicated.

The Coastal Commission has extremely limited staff resources to devote to the review of Caltrans plans and projects, particularly for the necessary detailed analysis of coastal permit applications and appeals. Although the Coastal Act requires timely review of applications, due to staffing limitations in the past the Commission was not always able to act as promptly on Caltrans applications as hoped for. Caltrans and the Commission recognized that this situation was generally preventing the participation of Commission staff in the early stages of alternatives analysis and environmental review of Caltrans projects and thereby confounding an efficient and cost-effective project design and delivery process. Accordingly, Caltrans entered into an agreement with the Coastal Commission nearly four years ago to provide the resources necessary for a productive, coordinated, and timely review of Caltrans plans and projects.

This new Interagency Agreement will continue this previous arrangement by providing the needed resources to support the three permanent positions that were established at the Commission in FY02/03 for these purposes. The agreement provides for sufficient funding to support up to three Coastal Program Analyst III positions, at least one of which will be located in Northern California and another in Southern California, until December 31, 2006.

With these additional resources, the Commission agrees to provide such services as: participation in Caltrans' project scoping, planning, development meetings, and field reviews; identification of critical issues, key decision points and potential conflicts as early as possible; review of Federal, State and local transportation agency transportation projects; jurisdictional determinations; early identification of coastal access and other coastal issues; timely review, analysis and processing of permit applications; participation in State/Regional transportation planning activities and alternative analyses and selection processes; early and timely review of environmental documents; development of programmatic processes for environmental compliance; assistance in avoiding potential violations; and participation in the development and selection of appropriate project related mitigation and monitoring activities.

The date for initiating this next phase of this continuing work is February 13, 2004, as specified in the interagency agreement and agreed to by Caltrans. Caltrans has entered into similar agreements with other resources agencies, with the same goal of improving the design and review of transportation projects that affect a variety of resources throughout the State.