CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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 Staff:
 Fernie Sy-LB

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 Commission Action:
 Kention



STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

APPLICATION NUMBER:	5-06-062
APPLICANT:	County of Orange, Dana Point Harbor Department
PROJECT LOCATION::	Dana Point Harbor Drive/Embarcadero Place, Dana Point, Orange County
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	Renovate existing boat launch facility: replace boat launch ramp, repair bulkhead, replace two existing floating docks with three new docks (8' x 136') with a total of nine 12-3/4" diameter steel piles and install a new trench drain at the ramp apron. Grading is proposed.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending approval of the proposed project subject to **Nine (9) Special Conditions**, which are necessary to assure that marine resources, water quality and public access are protected.

Special Condition No. 1 requires that the applicant dispose of all demolition and construction debris at an appropriate location. Special Condition No. 2 requires the applicant to periodically inspect all pilings installed as part of this project, and shall immediately undertake any repairs necessary to maintain the plastic coating (including patching any holes to ensure that the piles are completely encased) and/or the integrity of the piles. Special Condition No. 3 requires the applicant to maintain the proposed trench drain. Special Condition No. 4 requires the applicant to follow Best Management Practices to ensure the continued protection of water quality and marine resources. Special Condition No. 5 requires pre and post-construction eelgrass surveys and if eelgrass is discovered within the project vicinity, that impacts be avoided and, if unavoidable, mitigated pursuant to the Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy. Special Condition No. 6 requires that a pre-construction survey for Caulerpa taxifolia be done and if its presence is discovered, the applicant shall not proceed with the project until 1) the applicant provides evidence to the Executive Director that all Caulerpa taxifolia within the project and buffer areas have been eliminated or 2) the applicant has revised the project to avoid any contact with Caulerpa taxifolia. Special Condition No. 7 requires the applicant to provide written evidence of RWQCB approval for the dock construction and dewatering. Special Condition No. 8 requires the applicant to conform to the submitted construction phasing/staging plan. Special Condition No. 9 prohibits construction from occurring during the peak use summer season.

The proposed development is taking place in the City of Dana Point, which has a certified Local Coastal Program (LCP). However, the proposed development is taking place in the Harbor water, the Commission's area of original jurisdiction. Therefore, the development is within the Commission's original permit jurisdiction under Coastal Act Section 30519(b) and must be evaluated for consistency with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. In addition, portions of the proposed development are taking place on land, which normally would require approval from the City of Dana Point since it, as stated before, has a certified LCP. However, according to the

City's certified LCP, where a proposed development lies partially within the area of "Coastal Commission Permit Jurisdiction" and partially within the Coastal Overlay District, and the development is physically integrated, the Coastal Commission shall be the responsible agency for issuance of any Coastal Development Permit for the entire development. The City has endorsed this approach to processing the CDP. The policies of the certified Dana Point LCP may only be used for guidance.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS: Letter from the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) dated August 31, 2005; Mitigated Negative Declaration (File No. 05-317) dated September 2005; *Geotechnical Investigation Dana Point Harbor Boat Launch Ramp Rehabilitation Dana Point, California* prepared by Diaz Yourman & Associates dated November 29, 2005; Letter to the County of Orange Dana Point Harbor Department from Commission staff dated March 14, 2006; Letter to Commission staff from the County of Orange Dana Point Harbor Department from the City of Dana Point Harbor Department dated May 11, 2006; and Letter to Commission staff from the City of Dana Point Community Development Department dated May 15, 2006.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

- 1. Location Map
- 2. Site Plan
- 3. Launch Ramp Plan
- 4. Bulkhead Plan
- 5. Construction Phasing/Staging Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following motion and resolution:

MOTION:

"I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit No. 5-06-062 pursuant to the staff recommendation."

Staff recommends a <u>YES</u> vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

I. APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

The Commission hereby **<u>GRANTS</u>** a coastal development permit for the proposed development and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that

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would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

II. STANDARD CONDITIONS

- 1. <u>Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment</u>. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
- 2. <u>Expiration</u>. If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date this permit is reported to the Commission. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
- 3. <u>Interpretation</u>. Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
- 4. <u>Assignment</u>. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
- 5. <u>Terms and Conditions Run with the Land</u>. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. CONSTRUCTION RESPONSIBILITIES AND DEBRIS REMOVAL

The permittee shall comply with the following construction-related requirements:

- **A.** No construction materials, equipment, debris, or waste shall be placed or stored where it may be subject to tidal and wave erosion and dispersion.
- **B.** Any and all debris resulting from construction activities shall be removed from the site within 10 days of completion of construction.
- **C.** Machinery or construction materials not essential for project improvements shall not be allowed at any time in the intertidal zone.
- **D.** Sand from the beach, cobbles, or shoreline rocks shall not be used for construction material.
- E. If turbid conditions are generated during construction a silt curtain shall be utilized to control turbidity.
- **F.** Measures shall be taken to ensure that barges do not ground and impact eelgrass sites.

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- **G.** Floating booms shall be used to contain debris discharged into coastal waters and any debris discharged shall be removed as soon as possible but no later than the end of each day.
- **H.** Non-buoyant debris discharged into coastal waters shall be recovered by divers as soon as possible after loss.
- I. Reasonable and prudent measures shall be taken to prevent any discharge of fuel or oily waste from heavy machinery, pile drivers, or construction equipment or power tools into coastal waters. The applicant and applicant's contractors shall have adequate equipment available to contain any such spill immediately.
- J. All stock piles and construction materials shall be covered, enclosed on all sides, shall be located as far away as possible from drain inlets and any waterway, and shall not be stored in contact with the soil.
- **K.** All debris and trash shall be disposed of in the proper trash and recycling receptacles at the end of each construction day.
- L. The applicant shall use the least damaging method for the construction of pilings and any other activity that will disturb benthic sediments. The applicant shall limit, to the greatest extent practicable, the suspension of benthic sediments into the water column.

2. PILE MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE

Pilings treated with a multi-layer coating consisting of a primer, fusion-bonded epoxy, and then a stabilized polyethylene or polypropylene layer shall be used only if coated PRIOR TO INSTALLATION, and in a manner acceptable to the Executive Director as follows:

- A. The material used shall be durable and a minimum of one-tenth of an inch thick.
- **B.** All joints shall be sealed to prevent leakage.
- **C.** To prevent the introduction of toxins and debris into the marine environment, the use of plastic coated pilings (e.g. high density polyethylene or polypropylene), shall conform to the following requirements:

Inspection and Maintenance Program. The permittee shall exercise due diligence in periodically inspecting pilings to be repaired under this permit, and shall immediately undertake any repairs necessary to maintain the coating and/or structural integrity of the pilings. On an annual basis for all piles coated with a plastic material that may come into contact with rubble and other floating debris, and on a biannual basis for those that will not, beginning one and two years (as applicable) following the date that the first pile is installed, the permittee shall conduct a piling inspection to ensure the integrity of the pile, and that all corrective actions have or will be immediately undertaken to maintain the plastic coating and/or integrity of the pile. The applicant shall provide to the Executive Director the results of the monitoring annually for the life of the piling(s). The inspections shall be undertaken by boat, SCUBA or other equally effective method. If the monitoring results indicate repairs are necessary, the applicant shall immediately

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complete those repairs that are exempt from coastal development permit requirements, and shall apply for an amendment to this permit for those repairs requiring a permit. Alternatively, the permittee may submit a different timeline for the piling inspection program that ensures that the plastic coating and structural integrity of the pile is properly maintained; the alternative timeline shall be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director, **prior to the issuance of the permit**.

<u>New Information</u>. If federal or state regulatory agencies, through new or better scientific information, determine that environmentally less damaging materials or methods are available for pilings, and are feasible to implement, the permittee shall, after consultation with the Executive Director, revise procedures or use alternative materials consistent with the new information. The substitution of non-plastic piling materials may be authorized by the Executive Director if the Executive Director determines that substitute material has no potential for significant adverse impacts upon coastal resources. Other revisions, including but not limited to the use of other preservative-treated, wrapped or coated piles, may require an amendment to this permit.

3. TRENCH DRAIN MAINTENANCE

The trench drain shall be designed, installed/implemented and maintained in accordance with well-recognized and accepted design principles and guidelines, such as those contained in the California Stormwater Quality Association Best Management Practice Manuals. The applicant shall carry out routine and recommended maintenance, including inspection and regular cleaning of the trench drain, to ensure its effectiveness prior to, and during, each rainy season from October 15th through April 30th of each year. Such maintenance activities shall include, but not be limited to, the following specifications:

• All BMP traps/separators and/or filters shall be, at a minimum, cleaned prior to the start of the winter storm season, no later than October 15th each year, inspected monthly thereafter for the duration of the rainy season (October 15th -April 30), and cleaned/maintained as necessary based on inspection.

4. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES PROGRAM

By acceptance of this permit the applicant agrees that the long-term water-borne berthing of boat(s) in the approved dock and/or boat slip will be managed in a manner that protects water quality pursuant to the implementation of the following BMP's.

- **A.** Boat Cleaning and Maintenance Measures:
 - 1. In-water top-side and bottom-side boat cleaning shall minimize the discharge of soaps, paints, and debris.
 - 2. In-the-water hull scraping or any process that occurs under water that results in the removal of paint from boat hulls shall be prohibited. Only detergents and cleaning components that are designated by the manufacturer as phosphate-free and biodegradable shall be used, and the amounts used minimized.

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- 3. The applicant shall minimize the use of detergents and boat cleaning and maintenance products containing ammonia, sodium hypochlorite, chlorinated solvents, petroleum distillates or lye.
- **B.** Solid and Liquid Waste Management Measures:
 - 1. All trash, recyclables, and hazardous wastes or potential water contaminants, including old gasoline or gasoline with water, absorbent materials, oily rags, lead acid batteries, anti-freeze, waste diesel, kerosene and mineral spirits shall be disposed of in a proper manner and shall not at any time be disposed of in the water or gutter.
- **C.** Petroleum Control Management Measures:
 - Oil absorbent materials shall be examined at least once a year and replaced as necessary. The applicant shall recycle the materials, if possible, or dispose of them in accordance with hazardous waste disposal regulations. The boater shall regularly inspect and maintain engines, seals, gaskets, lines and hoses in order to prevent oil and fuel spills. Boater shall also use preventive engine maintenance, oil absorbents, bilge pump-out services, or steam cleaning services as much as possible to clean oily bilge areas and shall not use detergents while cleaning. The use of soaps that can be discharged by bilge pumps is prohibited.

5. <u>EELGRASS SURVEYS</u>

- Α. **Pre Construction Eelgrass Survey.** A valid pre-construction eelgrass (Zostera marina) survey shall be completed during the period of active growth of eelgrass (typically March through October). The pre-construction survey shall be completed prior to the beginning of construction and shall be valid until the next period of active growth. The survey shall be prepared in full compliance with the "Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy" Revision 8 (except as modified by this special condition) adopted by the National Marine Fisheries Service and shall be prepared in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game. The applicant shall submit the eelgrass survey for the review and approval of the Executive Director within five (5) business days of completion of each eelgrass survey and in any event no later than fifteen (15) business days prior to commencement of any development. If the eelgrass survey identifies any eelgrass within the project area, which would be impacted by the proposed project, the development shall require an amendment to this permit from the Coastal Commission or a new coastal development permit.
- B. Post Construction Eelgrass Survey. If any eelgrass is identified in the project area by the survey required in subsection A of this condition above, within one month after the conclusion of construction, the applicant shall survey the project site to determine if any eelgrass was adversely impacted. The survey shall be prepared in full compliance with the "Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy" Revision 8 (except as modified by this special condition) adopted by the National Marine Fisheries Service and shall be prepared in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game. The applicant shall submit the post-construction eelgrass survey for the review and approval of the Executive Director

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within thirty (30) days after completion of the survey. If any eelgrass has been impacted, the applicant shall replace the impacted eelgrass at a minimum 1.2:1 ratio on-site, or at another location, in accordance with the Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy. All impacts to eelgrass habitat shall be mitigated at a minimum ratio of 1.2:1 (mitigation:impact). The exceptions to the required 1.2:1 mitigation ratio found within SCEMP shall not apply. Implementation of mitigation shall require an amendment to this permit or a new coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment or new permit is required.

6. PRE-CONSTRUCTION CAULERPA TAXIFOLIA SURVEY

- A. Not earlier than 90 days nor later than 30 days prior to commencement or re-commencement of any development authorized under this coastal development permit (the "project"), the applicant shall undertake a survey of the project area and a buffer area at least 10 meters beyond the project area to determine the presence of the invasive alga *Caulerpa taxifolia*. The survey shall include a visual examination of the substrate.
- **B.** The survey protocol shall be prepared in consultation with the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- **C.** Within five (5) business days of completion of the survey, the applicant shall submit the survey:
 - (1) for the review and approval of the Executive Director; and
 - (2) to the Surveillance Subcommittee of the Southern California Caulerpa Action Team (SCCAT). The SCCAT Surveillance Subcommittee may be contacted through William Paznokas, California Department of Fish & Game (858/467-4218) or Robert Hoffman, National Marine Fisheries Service (562/980-4043).
- D. If Caulerpa taxifolia is found within the project or buffer areas, the applicant shall not proceed with the project until 1) the applicant provides evidence to the Executive Director that all *C. taxifolia* discovered within the project and buffer area has been eliminated in a manner that complies with all applicable governmental approval requirements, including but not limited to those of the California Coastal Act, or 2) the applicant has revised the project to avoid any contact with *C. taxifolia*. No revisions to the project shall occur without a Coastal Commission approved amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.

7. REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD (RWQCB) APPROVAL

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall provide to the Executive Director a copy of a permit issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding the dock construction and dewatering, or a letter of permission, or evidence that no permit or permission is required. The applicant shall inform the Executive Director of any changes to the project required by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Such changes

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shall not be incorporated into the project until the applicant obtains a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit amendment, unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

8. <u>CONFORMANCE WITH THE SUBMITTED CONSTRUCTION PHASING/STAGING</u> <u>PLAN</u>

The applicants shall conform with the construction staging plan received on June 20, 2006 showing construction equipment, materials or activity shall not occur outside the staging area and construction corridor identified on the site plan and that construction equipment, materials, or activity shall not be placed in any location which would result in impacts to the harbor and boat launch facility.

9. TIMING OF CONSTRUCTION

By acceptance of this permit, the applicant agrees to minimize adverse impacts to public use of the boat launch facility resulting from construction activities approved pursuant to Coastal Development Permit No. 5-06-062, as required below:

No construction shall occur during the "peak use" beach season, defined as the period starting the day before the Memorial Day weekend and ending the day after the Labor Day weekend of any year.

IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

The Commission hereby finds and declares:

A. PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is a public boat launch facility located at Dana Point Harbor Drive/Embarcadero Place in the City of Dana Point, County of Orange (Exhibit No. 1). Dana Point Harbor is a County facility located within the City of Dana Point and offers a number of recreational activities. The facility is operated and maintained by the Embarcadero Marina and County of Orange and is open to recreational boating year round at all hours. The boat launch facility provides boat access to the water. The applicant states that the objectives of the project includes upgrading launch facilities to better serve boaters, including new boarding float docks, which will be accessible in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) federal guidelines for recreational facilities.

The existing boat launch facility ramp is approximately 225-feet wide and extends 120-feet into the water then continues down as a rock covered slope. The side slopes of the ramp are supported by two (2) bulkhead walls located to the North and South. The new ramp will extend an additional 16-feet into the water, but will remain within the original footprint as it will encompass the unpaved rock covered slope (Exhibits No. 2-3). The original construction extended 144-feet into the harbor waters, with 120-feet of concrete ramp and 24-feet of rock covered slope. The proposed project will also extend 144-feet into the harbor waters, but will consist of 136-feet of concrete ramp and 8-feet of rock covered slope. The extension of the concrete portion of the ramp is needed to accommodate the longer trailers of sailboats with fixed keels and to counter the effects of powerboats being launched.

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The North and South Retaining walls will be inspected, assessed and rehabilitated as necessary. A preliminary review of the bulkhead has determined that the bulkhead walls are structurally sound. The project engineers have recommended that only the north wall will have minor surface repairs performed on it (Exhibit No. 4). The bulkhead walls will not be extended beyond their existing location, and no intertidal habitat will be reduced or eliminated.

Grading will consist of 133 cubic yards of cut (debris, rock, sand and gravel underwater), 133 cubic yards of export (debris, rock, sand and gravel underwater) and 224 cubic yards of fill (90 cubic yards of gravel and 133 cubic yards of rock underwater). The additional fill of 90 cubic yards is necessary to soften the transition from the apron to the ramp. Newer vehicles and boat trailers are longer and closer to the ground and thus are bottoming out due to the existing angle. Softening of the transition with the proposed fill would eliminate this problem.

Two (2) 6-foot wide boarding float docks currently provide access for boaters during launch and retrieval. The existing docks each have three (3) 10" diameter steel piles. A 6-foot x 6-foot concrete platform provides access to each of the existing docks. The two (2) docks, six (6) piles and two (2) platforms will be removed as part of the launch ramp renovation. Three (3) new 8-foot wide boarding float docks will replace the existing two (2) and will be in new locations and each float will be ADA accessible (Exhibits No. 2-3). Three (3) new 12-3/4" diameter steel piles with a multi-layer of coating consisting of a primer, fusion-bonded epoxy, and then a stabilized polyethylene or polypropylene layer will be installed to support each of the floats resulting in a total of nine (9) new piles (Exhibits No. 2-3). The dock materials will consist of foam encased in fiberglass and a modular fiberglass structure incorporating wood interior wales, and galvanized and stainless steel metal fittings.

An existing 372-car parking/boat trailer parking lot for the boat launch facility use exists on site. Part of the proposed project consists of resurfacing and restriping of the parking lot. This will result in a loss of six (6) car parking/boat trailer parking spaces, but will result in seven (7) handicap boat trailer parking spaces and one (1) handicap car parking space (Exhibit No. 2). Thus, parking is actually increasing on site to a total of 380-car parking/boat trailer spaces.

In addition, another project component will be the construction of a trench drain along the ramp apron to collect runoff and treat it via an inline stormwater filtration vault. The treated runoff will continue to the existing storm drain and be discharged into the harbor (Exhibit No. 3).. Currently, site runoff flows down the boat launch ramp and into the water. There is an existing boat wash area located near the boat launch area that will remain. Drainage from this boat wash area will be directed to the new trench drain.

Lastly, a dedication sign (9' (I) x 2' (w) x 4' (h)) stating that this is the Dana Point Boat Launch Facility and is funded by the Department of Boating and Waterways and is operated and maintained by the County of Orange will be installed on the landward side of the project adjacent to the new handicap parking space.

The demolition and reconstruction of the existing ramp will occur in two Phases. The project will be staged to ensure that public access to portions of the ramp is available for launching at all times during construction. Construction of the landside improvements such as the drainage system, parking lot striping and signage will occur separate from the boat launch ramp construction phasing. The applicant anticipates beginning the project in the fall of 2006 with anticipated opening on Memorial Day weekend 2007.

B. MARINE RESOURCES

Section 30233 of the Coastal Act states in relevant part:

(a) The diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes shall be permitted in accordance with other applicable provisions of this division, where there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative, and where feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects, and shall be limited to the following:

(1)New or expanded port, energy, and coastal-dependent industrial facilities, including commercial fishing facilities.

(4) In open coastal waters, other than wetlands, including streams, estuaries, and lakes, new or expanded boating facilities and the placement of structural pilings for public recreational piers that provide public access and recreational opportunities.

The proposed project is located in the coastal waters of Dana Point Harbor (Exhibit No. 1). Projects which could have an adverse impact on water resources should be examined to assure that potential impacts are minimized. The standard of review for development proposed in coastal waters are the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act, including the following marine resource policy. Section 30233 of the Coastal Act limits the fill of open coastal waters.

The Coastal Act limits the fill of open coastal water and also requires that any project which results in fill of open coastal waters provide adequate mitigation. Section 30233 of the Coastal Act allows fill of open coastal waters, such as Dana Point Harbor, for recreational boating purposes. Part of the proposed project requires the installation of nine (9) new 12-3/4" diameter steel piles and the installation of the new ramp, rock and gravel (Exhibits No. 2-3). The installation of these nine (9) new piles will displace habitat bottom. The installation of the new ramp, rock and gravel that is necessary to improve operation of the existing boat launch facility is also fill but it will not newly displace habitat bottom, rather, it's removal and replacement of existing fill. In both cases, the fill required by the project is for a recreational boating facility, an allowable purpose under 30233 (4) of the Coastal Act. The project can be found consistent with Section 30233, only if it is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative and feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize environmental effects. One way to minimize environmental damage is to limit fill. In order to anchor the new docks the installation of nine (9) new piles is necessary. This is the minimum number of piles necessary to adequately support and anchor the new dock, gangway and landing. The proposed project will use the minimum number of piles thereby minimizing the amount of fill needed to support the allowable use. Thus, the project as proposed is the least environmentally damaging alternative. Section 30233 also requires that any project which results in fill of open coastal waters also provide adequate mitigation. The proposed project meets this requirement because the pilings provide vertical habitat for marine organisms. Therefore, for the reasons listed above, the Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent with Section 30233 of the Coastal Act.

C. WATER QUALITY AND THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Section 30230 of the Coastal Act states:

Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored. Special protection shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance. Uses of the marine environment shall be carried out in a manner that will sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms adequate for long-term commercial, recreational, scientific, and educational purposes.

Section 30231 of the Coastal Act states:

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

The proposed project is located in and over the coastal waters of Dana Point Harbor (Exhibit No. 1). Any potential impacts to water quality due to development should be examined to assure that potential impacts are minimized. The standard of review for development proposed in coastal waters is the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act, including the following water quality policies. Sections 30230 and 30231 of the Coastal Act require the protection of biological productivity and water quality.

1. <u>Construction Impacts to Water Quality</u>

The proposed development will occur over and in the water. Construction of any kind adjacent to or in coastal waters has the potential to impact marine resources. The harbor provides an opportunity for water oriented recreational activities and also serves as a home for marine habitat. Because of the coastal recreational activities and the sensitivity of the harbor habitat, potential water quality issues must be examined as part of the review of this project.

Storage or placement of construction materials, debris, or waste in a location subject to erosion and dispersion or which may be discharged into coastal water via rain, surf, or wind would result in adverse impacts upon the marine environment that would reduce the biological productivity of coastal waters. For instance, construction debris entering coastal waters may cover and displace soft bottom habitat. In addition, the use of machinery in coastal waters not designed for such use may result in the release of lubricants or oils that are toxic to marine life. Sediment discharged into coastal waters may cause turbidity, which can shade and reduce the productivity of foraging avian and marine species ability to see food in the water column. In order to avoid adverse construction-related impacts upon marine resources, **Special Condition No. 1** outlines construction-related requirements to provide for appropriate construction methods as well as the safe storage of construction materials and the safe disposal of construction debris. The condition

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requires that the applicant dispose of all demolition and construction debris at an appropriate location. This condition requires the applicant to incorporate silt curtains and/or floating booms when necessary to control turbidity and debris discharge. Divers shall remove any non-floatable debris not contained in such structures that sink to the ocean bottom as soon as possible.

2. <u>Post-Construction Impacts to Water Quality</u>

The proposed project also involves the installation of nine (9) new 12-3/4" diameter steel piles with a multi-layer of coating consisting of a primer, fusion-bonded epoxy, and then a stabilized polyethylene or polypropylene layer. It is also necessary to evaluate the material used to treat and coat any steel coatings, as certain substances may have an adverse impact on water quality. Water Quality staff reviewed the proposed epoxy and coating materials and determined that they were acceptable. The Commission is concerned about the use of plastic in the marine environment due to the possible deterioration of the pile coating and subsequent increase in marine debris. Since plastic is an inorganic material, it does not biodegrade, but rather continually breaks down into ever-smaller pieces. The presence of plastics in the coastal and ocean environment is both widespread and harmful to human and marine life. Consequently, it is necessary for the Commission to impose a special condition requiring maintenance of the polyethylene or polypropylene coating that encases the steel pilings. Special Condition No. 2 requires the applicant to periodically inspect all pilings installed as part of this project, and shall immediately undertake any repairs necessary to maintain the plastic coating (including patching any holes to ensure that the piles are completely encased) and/or the integrity of the piles. Every two years following initial pile installation, the applicant shall inspect the piles to ensure their integrity, and to ensure that all corrective actions have been or will be immediately undertaken to maintain the plastic coating and/or the integrity of the piles. An alternative maintenance schedule may be approved by the Executive Director if it is found to achieve the same objective.

Currently, water from adjacent parking area flows down the ramp and into the harbor water without being filtered and thus potentially adversely impacting coastal waters. However, another project component will be the construction of a trench drain along the ramp apron to collect runoff and treat it via an inline stormwater filtration vault (Exhibit No. 3).. The treated runoff will continue to the existing storm drain and be discharged into the harbor. There is currently an existing boat wash area located near the boat launch area that will remain. Drainage from this boat wash area will be directed to the new trench drain. Thus, water quality will be improved by the proposed project. In order to verify that the proposed trench drain works properly, the Commission imposes **Special Condition No. 3**, which requires the applicant to maintain the proposed trench drain so that it functions correctly.

The proposed dock launch project will allow for the temporary berthing of boat(s) by the public. Some maintenance activities if not properly regulated could cause adverse impacts to the marine environment. Certain maintenance activities like cleaning and scraping of boats, improper discharges of contaminated bilge water and sewage waste, and the use of caustic detergents and solvents, among other things, are major contributors to the degradation of water quality within boating facilities.

To minimize the potential that maintenance activities would adversely affect water quality, the Commission imposes **Special Condition No. 4** that requires the applicant to follow

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Best Management Practices to ensure the continued protection of water quality and marine resources. Such practices that the applicant shall follow include proper boat cleaning and maintenance, management of solid and liquid waste, and management of petroleum products, all of which associated with the long term berthing of the boat(s) (more thoroughly explained in **Special Condition No. 4** of this permit).

3. Eelgrass

Eelgrass (Zostera marina) is an aquatic plant consisting of tough cellulose leaves which grows in dense beds in shallow, subtidal or intertidal unconsolidated sediments. Eelgrass is considered worthy of protection because it functions as important habitat and foraging area for a variety of fish and other wildlife, according to the Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy (SCEMP) adopted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). For instance, eelgrass beds provide areas for fish egg laying, juvenile fish rearing, and waterfowl foraging. Sensitive species, such as the California least tern, a federally listed endangered species, utilize eelgrass beds as foraging grounds.

The site was surveyed on April 13, 2005 for eelgrass and none was found. Eelgrass surveys completed during the active growth (typically March through October) phase of eelgrass are valid for 60-days with the exception of surveys completed in August-October. A survey completed in August - October shall be valid until the resumption of active growth (i.e., March 1). If construction does not occur within the respective time periods, a subsequent survey will be required. If any eelgrass is found on the project site, **Special Condition No. 5** identifies the procedures necessary to be completed prior to beginning any construction. Therefore, the Commission is imposing **Special Condition No. 5**, which requires pre and post-construction eelgrass surveys and if eelgrass is discovered within the project vicinity, that impacts be avoided and, if unavoidable, mitigated pursuant to the *Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy*.

4. <u>Caulerpa taxifolia</u>

Also, as noted above, eelgrass is a sensitive aquatic plant species which provides important habitat for marine life. Eelgrass grows in shallow sandy aquatic environments which provide plenty of sunlight. Around the year 2000, a non-native and invasive aquatic plant species, Caulerpa taxifolia (herein C. taxifolia), was discovered in parts of Huntington Harbor (Emergency Coastal Development Permits 5-00-403-G and 5-00-463-G) which occupies similar habitat. C. taxifolia is a tropical green marine alga that is popular in the aquarium trade because of its attractive appearance and hardy nature. In 1984, this seaweed was introduced into the northern Mediterranean. From an initial infestation of about 1 square yard it grew to cover about 2 acres by 1989, and by 1997 blanketed about 10,000 acres along the coasts of France and Italy. Genetic studies demonstrated that those populations were from the same clone, possibly originating from a single introduction. This seaweed spreads asexually from fragments and creates a dense monoculture displacing native plant and animal species. In the Mediterranean, it grows on sand, mud and rock surfaces from the very shallow subtidal to about 250 ft depth. Because of toxins in its tissues. C. taxifolia is not eaten by herbivores in areas where it has invaded. The infestation in the Mediterranean has had serious negative economic and social consequences because of impacts to tourism, recreational diving, and commercial fishing¹.

¹ References

Because of the grave risk to native habitats, in 1999 C. taxifolia was designated a prohibited species in the United States under the Federal Noxious Weed Act. In addition, in September 2001 the Governor signed into law AB 1334 which made it illegal in California for any person to sell, possess, import, transport, transfer, release alive in the state, or give away without consideration various Caulerpa species including C. taxifolia.

In June 2000, C. taxifolia was discovered in Aqua Hedionda Lagoon in San Diego County, and in August of that year an infestation was discovered in Huntington Harbor in Orange County. Genetic studies show that this is the same clone as that released in the Mediterranean. Other infestations are likely. Although a tropical species, C. taxifolia has been shown to tolerate water temperatures down to at least 50°F. Although warmer southern California habitats are most vulnerable, until better information if available, it must be assumed that the whole California coast is at risk. All shallow marine habitats could be impacted.

In response to the threat that C. taxifolia poses to California's marine environment, the Southern California Caulerpa Action Team, SCCAT, was established to respond quickly and effectively to the discovery of C. taxifolia infestations in Southern California. The group consists of representatives from several state, federal, local and private entities. The goal of SCCAT is to completely eradicate all C. taxifolia infestations.

If C. taxifolia is present, any project that disturbs the bottom could cause its spread by dispersing viable tissue fragments. No C. taxifolia survey has been conducted. Therefore, in order to assure that the proposed project does not cause the dispersal of C. taxifolia, the Commission imposes **Special Condition No. 6**, which requires the applicant, prior to commencement of development, to survey the project area for the presence of C. taxifolia. If C. taxifolia is present in the project area, no work may commence and the applicant shall seek an amendment or a new permit to address impacts related to the presence of the C. taxifolia, unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment or new permit is required.

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5. Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)

The proposed project involves dock work, which requires approval from the RWQCB. However, no approval from the RWQCB regarding the dock work has been received. Therefore, evidence of RWQCB review and approval is required for the dock work. **Special Condition No. 7** requires that the applicant provide written evidence of RWQCB review and approval of the dock work prior to issuance of a coastal development permit amendment. If the RWQCB approval results in changes to the currently proposed project, the applicant may be required to obtain an amendment to the current coastal development permit amendment.

In addition, the applicant has stated that a temporary cofferdam, which will be a 12-foot high free standing steel frame structure with an impervious fabric facing and skirts to hold back water, will be constructed on the existing boat launch ramp surface to allow for the upper portion of the ramp to be cast-in-place with reinforced concrete and in doing so would require dewatering. Dewatering would require approval from the RWQCB, however, no evidence of review of RWQCB review and approval has been submitted. Therefore, evidence of RWQCB review and approval is required for dewatering of the site and the Commission imposes **Special Condition No. 7**, which also requires that the applicant provide written evidence of RWQCB review and approval of dewatering prior to issuance of a coastal development permit amendment. If the RWQCB approval results in changes to the currently proposed project, the applicant may be required to obtain an amendment to the current coastal development permit amendment.

Conclusion

To minimize the adverse impacts upon the marine environment, Seven (7) Special Conditions have been imposed. Special Condition No. 1 requires that the applicant dispose of all demolition and construction debris at an appropriate location. Special Condition No. 2 requires the applicant to periodically inspect all pilings installed as part of this project, and shall immediately undertake any repairs necessary to maintain the plastic coating (including patching any holes to ensure that the piles are completely encased) and/or the integrity of the piles. Special Condition No. 3 requires the applicant to maintain the proposed trench drain. Special Condition No. 4 requires the applicant to follow Best Management Practices to ensure the continued protection of water quality and marine resources. Special Condition No. 5 requires pre and post-construction eelgrass surveys and if eelgrass is discovered within the project vicinity, that impacts be avoided and, if unavoidable, mitigated pursuant to the Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy. Special Condition No. 6 requires that a pre-construction survey for Caulerpa taxifolia be done and if its presence is discovered, the applicant shall not proceed with the project until 1) the applicant provide evidence to the Executive Director that all Caulerpa taxifolia within the project and/or buffer area has been eliminated or 2) the applicant has revised the project to avoid any contact with Caulerpa taxifolia. Special Condition No. 7 requires the applicant to provide written evidence of RWQCB approval for the dock construction and dewatering. Only as conditioned does the Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent with Section 30230 and 30231 of the Coastal Act.

D. PUBIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

Section 30210 of the Coastal Act states:

In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

Section 30212 of the Coastal Act states, in relevant part:

(a) Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where:(2) adequate access exists nearby, or,

Section 30213 of the Coastal Act states in relevant part:

Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred...

One of the strongest legislative mandates of the Coastal Act is the preservation of coastal access. Section 30210 of the Coastal Act states that maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse. Section 30212 of the Coastal Act mandates that new development shall provide coastal public access. Section 30213 of the Coastal Act requires that lower cost and recreational facilities be protected, encouraged and where feasible provided.

The Coastal Act requires that development not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea by providing adequate parking to serve that development. An existing 372-car parking/boat trailer parking lot for the boat launch facility use exists on site. Part of the proposed project consists of resurfacing and restriping of the parking lot. This will result in a loss of six (6) car parking/boat trailer parking spaces and result in seven (7) handicap boat trailer parking spaces and one (1) handicap car parking space. Thus, parking is actually increasing on site to a total of 380-car parking/boat trailer spaces. Therefore, there are no adverse impacts to parking onsite.

The applicant states that work is anticipated to begin the project in the fall of 2006 with anticipated opening on Memorial Day weekend 2007. The project will take place primarily during the fall, winter and spring season when there are fewer visitors to the beach, which will further reduce any adverse impacts to public access. Furthermore, the applicant states that public access will not be completely eliminated during construction. The applicant has submitted a "construction staging plan" (Exhibit No. 5) and states that the project will be staged to ensure that public access to portions of the ramp is available for launching at all times during construction. In addition, the applicant has also shown that the an area consisting of approximately thirty (30) boat trailer parking spaces, located landward to the Northeast will serve as the "construction staging area" (Exhibit No. 5). The location of this construction staging area will not hamper access to the boat launch facility. Due to construction to take place during the non-peak season,

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that portions of the ramp will be made available at all times and the location of the construction staging area, public access to the harbor will be protected. In order to make sure that public access to the harbor is not adversely impacted and is available at all times, the Commission imposes **two (2) Special Conditions. Special Condition No. 8** requires the applicant to conform to the submitted construction phasing/staging plan. **Special Condition No. 9** prohibits construction from occurring during the peak use summer season. Only as conditioned does the Commission find the proposed development is consistent with Sections 30210, 30212 and 30213 of the Coastal Act.

E. LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM (LCP)

The proposed development is taking place in the City of Dana Point, which has a certified Local Coastal Program (LCP). However, the proposed development is taking place in the Harbor water, the Commission's area of original jurisdiction. Therefore, the development is within the Commission's original permit jurisdiction under Coastal Act Section 30519(b) and must be evaluated for consistency with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. In addition, portions of the proposed development are taking place on land, which normally would require approval from the City of Dana Point since it, as stated before, has a certified LCP. However, according to the City's certified LCP, where a proposed development lies partially within the area of "Coastal Commission Permit Jurisdiction" and partially within the Coastal Overlay District, and the development is physically integrated, the Coastal Commission shall be the responsible agency for issuance of any Coastal Development Permit for the entire development. The City has endorsed this approach to processing the CDP. The policies of the certified Dana Point LCP may only be used for guidance.

Policy 3.c.4. states, in relevant part:

In order to preserve valuable marine life and resources, development should not significantly degrade the quality of coastal waters.

Policy 7.a.7. states, in relevant part:

The County will take all necessary steps to protect the public's constitutionally guaranteed rights of access to and along the shoreline.

F. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

Section 13096 of the California Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permit application to be supported by a finding showing the application, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available, which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect that the activity may have on the environment. Potential impacts on marine habitat, eelgrass, and water quality have been identified and those impacts are avoided or mitigated.

The proposed project is located in an urban area. All infrastructure necessary to serve the site exists in the area. As conditioned, the proposed project has been found consistent with the marine resource protection policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Mitigation measures include special conditions requiring pre- and post-construction eelgrass surveys and disposal of all

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demolition and construction debris at an appropriate location and to follow Best Management Practices to ensure the continued protection of water quality and marine resources.

As conditioned, there are no feasible alternatives or additional feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect which the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project, as conditioned to mitigate the identified impacts, is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative and can be found consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

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