

## CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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# W 28b

January 7, 2009

TO: Coastal Commissioners and Other Interested Persons

FROM: Peter Douglas, Executive Director  
Hope Schmeltzer, Chief Counsel  
Christopher Pederson, Deputy Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Report for Public Hearing and Commission Action Regarding the Commission's Approval of Educational and Training Activities (California Coastal Commission Meeting of January 7-9, 2009)

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the California Coastal Commission (Commission) authorize staff participation in free or reduced-cost educational and training activities, subject to the approval of the Executive Director or the Chief Deputy Director.

## **MOTION:**

*"I move that the Commission authorize staff to participate in free or reduced-cost educational and training activities, subject to the approval of the Executive Director or the Chief Deputy Director."*

Staff recommends a **YES** vote.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS:**

Periodically staff learns of opportunities to participate in training or educational activities for free or at reduced expense. Those opportunities, when provided by an entity that qualifies as an interested person, constitute "gifts" within the meaning of Coastal Act section 30327.5 unless authorized in advance by the Commission.

Due to serious budgetary constraints, the Commission's budget for educational and training activities has been drastically reduced in recent years. These activities, however, are important opportunities for staff to learn about new information and

developments relating to their job responsibilities. When staff learns of relevant educational or training activities, the normal practice is to inquire whether staff may participate for free or at reduced cost.

When the educational or training activities are provided by an organization that is not an "interested person" within the meaning of Coastal Act section 30323, staff participation does not raise any legal concerns. Sometimes, however, the sponsoring organization qualifies as an interested person. In those situations, absent prior Commission approval, staff may not take advantage of free or reduced-cost admission. Often, because of timing issues related to the educational and training activities and the Commission meeting schedule, prior approval by the Commission will often not be possible.

In order to benefit from free or reduced-cost training and educational activities, staff recommends that the Commission provide advance authorization for participation in such event. Staff participation in any particular event would continue to require approval by the Executive Director or the Chief Deputy Director to ensure the participation is appropriate. It also avoids the need for time consuming and burdensome review by the Commission itself.