

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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May 22, 2009

TO: Commissioners and Other Interested Parties

FROM: Peter Douglas, Executive Director
Susan Hansch, Chief Deputy Director
Christiane Parry, Public Education Program Manager

SUBJECT: Contract with Marketing Firm
(For the meeting of June 10, 2009, in Marina del Rey)

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with a marketing firm (TO BE NAMED VERBALLY AT THE COMMISSION MEETING) for up to \$90,000, to market the Whale Tail License Plate.

Motion: *"I move that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with the staff's recommended marketing firm for up to \$90,000 to market the Whale Tail License Plate."*

Staff Analysis: The California Coastal Commission's Whale Tail License Plate was established as a mechanism through which the public can contribute funds to coastal and marine education programs in California. For each new plate that is sold, approximately \$15.00 is deposited in the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA). Annual renewal fees deposit \$20.00 per plate into the account. Additional funds are deposited in the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF), which funds environmental programs in other state agencies. As of March 2009, 180,000 license plates had been sold.

The staff used the Department of General Services (DGS) California Multiple Awards Schedule (CMAS) to procure a marketing consultant. The CMAS is a Leverage Procurement Agreement program. The program allows State agencies to expedite the contracting process since participants in the CMAS program have essentially been "prescreened" by DGS. The staff solicited bids from seven CMAS marketing suppliers. The staff is currently reviewing proposals submitted in response to the Request for Offers (RFO), and is evaluating proposals on the basis of the overall approach, the qualifications and experience of the assigned staff, the company's past work, and cost. Since the review process ongoing as of the date of the staff report; the staff will make a verbal recommendation at the Commission meeting.

The RFO calls for a consultant to develop and implement a marketing and public relations strategy for the Whale Tail License Plate. The goal of the strategy is to generate broad publicity for the new whale tail design and increase plate sales. The staff hopes to have a new design selected by July 2009. The marketing campaign would be launched coincident with the new design being available for purchase (expected in early 2010).

The funds for this project were allocated from Whale Tail License Plate funds for this purpose in the Commission's 2008/2009 budget (\$45,000) and from the 2009/2010 budget (\$45,000) **subject to final budget authorization**. State law provides that no more than 25% of the revenue from specialty license plates sales be spent on administrative, marketing, and promotional activities related to encouraging sales of the plate. The \$90,000 allocated for this contract (over two fiscal years), when combined with other marketing, promotional, and administrative costs, totals approximately 9% of the combined budgets for FY08/09 and FY09/10.