

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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# W6a

August 7, 2020

**TO:** California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties  
**FROM:** John Ainsworth, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Director's Report, August 2020

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## **Commission Office Move**

The San Francisco Headquarters and North Central Coast offices have moved. Our new offices location is 455 Market Street, Suite 228, San Francisco, CA 94105. The office phone numbers have not changed. Please see the Commission website for more information

## **Coastal Cleanup Month 2020**

The Public Education Program is happy to announce a revised plan for the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day. In order to continue to inspire coastal stewardship as safely as possible, the Coastal Commission will be encouraging volunteers to conduct neighborhood cleanups around their own homes and with the people or family members with whom they've been sheltering-in-place. The cleanups will take place on each Saturday of this September, from 9 AM to Noon. This new model will help educate Californians about the impacts we can all have on our coast even from far inland locations, while discouraging large gatherings at traditional cleanup sites.

*More information, and this year's new Coastal Cleanup posters, can be found now at [www.coastalcleanupday.org](http://www.coastalcleanupday.org).*

## **Meetings and Events**

### **Congressman Levin Meeting – Encinitas/Solana Beach shoreline protection and public safety**

On July 8, 2020, Commission staff participated in virtual stakeholder meeting held by Congressman Mike Levin (D-49) to discuss shoreline protection and public safety for the cities of Encinitas and Solana Beach. Congressman Levin provided a summary of the issues regarding beach safety and shoreline erosion and a status update for the Encinitas Solana Beach Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Project, a project to be carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The Commission concurred with the federal consistency determination for this project in November 2013. More recently, Representative Levin helped to secure federal funding for the initial phase of this project. The virtual meeting started with introductory remarks from Dr. Davis, whose family member was killed last year by an eroding bluff near the Grandview Lifeguard Tower in the City of Encinitas.

Commission staff provided a statement on the status of the existing shoreline protection policies of the area ([Appendix A](#)). Other stakeholders that participated in the meeting and provided statements included: SANDAG (history of shoreline management efforts), SCRIPPS Institute for Oceanography (science of shoreline processes), the City Encinitas (Deputy Mayor on the status of vegetation management plan efforts for bluff stabilization), State Senator Atkins (Chief of Staff; summary of Senator Atkins legislative efforts to address sea level rise), State Senator Bates (status of SB 1090 on shoreline protective devices), State Assembly member Boerner Horvath (status of legislative efforts to address coastal erosion), Surfrider (statement on the impact of sea walls on equitable public access), and Mr. Charlie McDermott (consultant to Senator Bates on SB1090, working with Davis family). At the close of the meeting, Representative Levin committed to working to secure federal funding needed for the next phase of the USACE Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Project and urged continued dialogue among stakeholders on beach safety and shoreline protection issues.

### **Coastal Development Permit Application Guidance for Aquaculture and Marine Restoration**

To meet the requirements of Senate Bill 262 and Objective 3.4.1 of the Commission's draft Strategic Plan, the Commission staff are developing CDP application guidance for marine aquaculture and restoration projects. A draft of this guidance is now available for public review and comment until August 31<sup>st</sup> and is posted on the Commission's homepage ([CDP Guidance for Aquaculture](#)). On July 24, Commission staff participated in a Zoom meeting with Senator Mike McGuire, author of SB 262, and representatives of the shellfish aquaculture industry and Department of Fish and Wildlife, to discuss the draft guidance. We are pleased that responses to the draft guidance document were very positive. Once the comment period closes, Commission staff will consider all comments received and prepare a final version of the guidance by the end of 2020.

## **San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) Mitigation Monitoring Program Webinars**

In June, Commission staff hosted two public webinars to report annual results from the SONGS Mitigation Monitoring program. The public webinar for the Wheeler North Mitigation Reef took place on June 16 and included presentations from Commission contract scientist on 2019 performance monitoring and an update from Southern California Edison on the required expansion of the reef. The reef webinar is available for viewing at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSwwbtmgQpl&feature=youtu.be>. The public webinar for the San Dieguito Wetlands Restoration Project was held on June 18 and included presentations by Commission contract scientist on results from 2019 performance monitoring and an in-depth analysis on the status of salt marsh vegetation at the restoration site. The wetland webinar is available for viewing at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YyDc8k150c&feature=youtu.be>.

## **San Diego Region Coastal Exchange Meetings**

Commission staff recently participated in the San Diego Region Coastal Exchange in a series of four virtual meetings to explore innovative approaches to coastal protection in the region. The participants first learned about several innovative resilience projects in Cardiff, Waikiki, and the Netherlands before breaking into smaller groups that explored different paths for building resilience in the region. The thematic topics for the smaller groups were:

- Strengthening Regional Governance and Regulatory Environments
- Financing and Funding Coastal Resilience Solutions
- Community Planning and Communicating Long-Term Risk
- Learning from Local Nature-Based Pilots and Scaling Success

The Exchange was led by Resilient Cities Catalyst and sponsored by The San Diego Foundation and Alumbra Innovations Foundation. A follow-up report will be provided and several of the participating groups voiced interest in building upon the initial exchange to start developing some of the general ideas into action and coordination. Links to the initial Exchange and to RCC's other efforts are at: [www.rcc.city/sandiego](http://www.rcc.city/sandiego) and [www.rcc.city](http://www.rcc.city).

## **Public Education Unit**

**Home Learning Webpage.** In order to support parents, teachers, and students engaging in distance-learning, the Public Education Program created a [new webpage](#) highlighting Coastal Commission educational materials that work well for learning at home. Find it by clicking on "Learn" on the Coastal Commission website menu.

**Clean Boating News.** Boating Clean and Green staff conducted a clean boating webinar on July 30<sup>th</sup> in partnership with Solano Resource Conservation District. And on July 27<sup>th</sup>, the program launched a six week online clean boating quiz campaign to reach 4,500 recreational boaters.

## Appendix A

### **CCC Statement – 7.8.20 Virtual Meeting hosted by Congressman Levin re: Encinitas and Solana Beach shoreline protection and public safety**

Good morning, thank you Congressman Levin for inviting Coastal Commission staff to participate in this meeting and for your on-going efforts to improve public access and public safety at beaches in your District. My name is Michelle Jespersen, the Commission's Federal Programs Manager. I am joined by other members of the Coastal Commission staff: Larry Simon, Kanani Leslie, Mary Matella, Karen Vu and Jeremy Smith. Today I will provide a brief statement on shoreline protection policies and provide some context for the application of these policies to plan for and address sea level rise impacts.

The Coastal Act creates a unique partnership between the state and local governments to manage and protect the state's coastal resources through a planning and regulatory program. This partnership is further enhanced under the national Coastal Zone Management Act or CZMA, that enables the federal government and coastal states to cooperatively manage the nation's coastlines. The law also allows states to review federally sponsored or funded actions that could impact state coastal resources.

The Coastal Act's Chapter Three policies establish the standard of review for the development of local coastal programs, coastal development permits issued by the Commission, federal consistency reviews and other actions.

Under the Coastal Act, shoreline protection shall be permitted when required to protect existing structures built by 1977, unless otherwise specified in a local coastal program. The law also requires that protective structures are designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts to shoreline sand supply. New development must minimize risks to life and property in areas of high flood hazard, such as the shoreline, and must also be safe and structurally sound. New development must not require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs to be safe from hazards.

While the Coastal Act generally discourages shoreline protection such as sea walls because they can destroy public beaches, they are permitted under certain circumstances. The Commission has approved many armoring structures over the years, with adequate mitigation measures. When planning for sea level rise, the Commission acknowledges that long term adaptation that phases different strategies over time will be necessary, including the use of shoreline protective structures where permissible. It is important to note that the Coastal Act also allows for shoreline protection to protect coastal dependent development and to ensure continued public recreation and beach access.

Armoring as a solution, can result in many adverse impacts to the public beach. This includes blocking beach access, causing greater sand erosion and preventing the natural retreat of the bluffs that supply the beach with sand. Sea walls can provide short term protection for a structure but will likely not provide adequate protection to structures in the long term because of rising seas and increased wave action. Shoreline protection can also fail, causing further risk to the public, and impede or prevent the public from safely accessing the coast.

In reviewing and permitting proposed protective devices, the Commission must evaluate a range of alternatives and determine the least damaging environmental alternative – one that is most protective of coastal resources. For private residences, the Commission encourages looking at siting options, relocation of structures, removal of at-risk portions of structures, drainage controls and front-yard setback reductions in order to site development further from the bluff edge. Using nature-based adaptation strategies, like beach nourishment, is another option that can slow sea level rise effects while also augmenting coastal habitats, public access, and recreation.

One example of the Commission's role in the application of these policies is when the Commission in November 2013 "concurred" with the Army Corps of Engineer's determination that the Encinitas-Solana Beach Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Project was consistent with the Coastal Act. The Commission did this under its federal consistency review authority provided by the CZMA. While the Commission recognized that the project has some potential to adversely affect marine resources, given the lack of feasible alternatives, and the likely negative effects of the no-project alternative, the Commission found that the project was the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative to reduce storm damage in the project area. Commission staff will provide input on the design of the coastal resource monitoring and mitigation plans during the next phase of the project.

In closing, Commission staff would like to emphasize the following points:

- The Coastal Act and the Encinitas LCP policies do allow for shoreline protection in limited circumstances;
- Shoreline protective devices, while providing short term protection, will have long term adverse impacts on beaches and public access. Soft or nature-based adaptation strategies, like the Encinitas-Solana Beach Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Project can provide interim protection with less environmental impact, leaving open the opportunity for longer-term adaptation strategies to be planned, financed and put in place.
- Public access to and the beaches themselves are treasured resources of the California coast – the Commission is responsible for protecting and enhancing these resources for all members of the public. The Commission supports efforts to ensure the public can safely enjoy these public resources.

Thank you.