

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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W6d

October 26, 2023

TO: California Coastal Commissioners and Interested Public

FROM: Kate Huckelbridge, Executive Director
Erin Prahler, Statewide Planning Manager
Kelsey Ducklow, Statewide Coastal Resilience Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Recommended Update to the Local Coastal Program (LCP) Local Assistance Grant Program**

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Budget Act of 2021 appropriated \$31 million to the Coastal Commission to support its LCP Local Assistance Grant Program for Climate Resiliency. The funding is to be awarded to local governments as well as to support Coastal Commission staff administering the program and working with local governments on climate resiliency grant projects.

In October 2021 the Coastal Commission approved updates to the management details and evaluation criteria of the LCP Local Assistance Grant Program, including to specifically allow for a rolling, non-competitive application process by which jurisdictions could apply for a grant at any time to be reviewed by staff and approved by the Executive Director (if the proposed project meets the program criteria). Funding to be awarded by the Executive Director in this manner was initially capped at \$5 million dollars, of which approximately \$4.2 million has since been awarded. Given the ongoing success of this approach, staff is now recommending removal of the \$5 million cap.

Staff is recommending **approval** of this update to the LCP Local Assistance Grant Program, including to the description of the review of applications, as described in the staff report.

Table of Contents

I. DISCUSSION	3
A. Program Summary	3
B. Summary of Proposed Program Update	4
C. Rolling Grant Awards to Date.....	6

EXHIBITS

[LCP Local Assistance Grant Program Guidelines, as proposed](#)

W6d (LCP Grant Program Updates)

Motion and Resolution

Motion:

I move that the Commission approve the modification to the LCP Local Assistance Grant Program pursuant to the staff recommendation to remove the \$5 million cap on total funding that can be awarded by the Executive Director.

Staff Recommendation of Approval:

Staff recommends a **YES** vote on the foregoing motion. Passage of this motion will result in authorization for the Executive Director or their designee to continue to approve and enter into grant agreements with grantees beyond the initial \$5 million cap. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

Resolution of Approval:

The Commission hereby approves the newly modified guidelines for the LCP Local Assistance Grant Program pursuant to the staff recommendation to remove the \$5 million cap on total funding that can be awarded by the Executive Director.

I. DISCUSSION

A. Program Summary

Since 2013, the California Coastal Commission has awarded approximately \$21 million to local governments through the Local Coastal Program (LCP) Local Assistance Grant Program to support LCP updates with a focus on climate change, sea level rise, and coastal resiliency planning.

To date, the LCP Grant Program has provided funds to 45 local jurisdictions. Grant-funded work has included the completion of sea level rise vulnerability assessments, technical studies, economic analyses, adaptation planning and reports, public outreach and engagement, and LCP policy development. Proposed LCP work has consisted of a variety of new LUPs or IPs; comprehensive LUP, IP, or full LCP updates; and targeted amendments to LUPs, IPs, or both to address specific issues, mainly including climate change and sea level rise. More information on the LCP Grant Program, including grant agreements and links to completed deliverables can found on the Commission's [LCP Grant website](#).

Most recently, the Budget Act of 2021 appropriated \$31 million to the Coastal Commission to support its LCP Local Assistance Grant Program for Climate Resiliency. The funding is to be awarded to local governments as well as to support Coastal Commission staff administering the program and working with local governments on

climate resiliency. This new and expanded funding has already played a critical role in helping local jurisdictions prepare for the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.

In [October 2021](#), the Commission adopted revised priorities and evaluation criteria for reviewing and recommending awards for the LCP Local Assistance Grant Program. At the same time, the Commission approved an update to procedures for reviewing and awarding grants that allowed for the Executive Director to make award decisions for grant proposals up to \$100,000 on a rolling basis. At that time, a cap on total funding that could be awarded by the Executive Director was set at \$5 million, with an option to change that cap at a later date.

Following the success of the rolling, non-competitive grant process, the cap on individual proposals was raised from \$100,000 to \$500,000 in [November 2022](#). Most recently, in [May 2023](#), the LCP Grant Program Guidelines were updated to allow all grant applications to be submitted on a rolling basis rather than making a distinction between competitive grant rounds and rolling, non-competitive grants. The rest of the grant review processes remained unchanged, with applications for awards exceeding \$500,000 to be reviewed and decided upon by the Commission and for grant applications of \$500,000 or less to be reviewed and decided upon by the Executive Director.

B. Summary of Proposed Program Update

At this time, Commission staff is recommending removing the overall \$5 million cap on funding that can be awarded by the Executive Director. To date, the Executive Director has awarded 14 grants totaling \$4,209,755, as summarized in the following section. Based on past grant awards and ongoing discussions with various jurisdictions, the \$5 million cap could be reached within the next few months.

Overall, staff has found that allowing jurisdictions to apply for grants on a rolling basis and allowing the Executive Director to approve grants up to \$500,000 has improved efficiency and success of the LCP Grant Program from both a Commission and local jurisdiction perspective. By not limiting applications to competitive rounds with specific timelines for review and awards, local jurisdictions can apply for grants as need arises, staff and the Executive Director can make decisions more rapidly, and jurisdictions can initiate work on awarded grants more quickly. In practice, this approach has also led to significantly more coordination between Commission and local staff during the grant proposal development phase which results in proposals that better meet program requirements and Commission and local goals. For example, jurisdictions can reach out to talk through initial ideas and get feedback on what can or cannot not be funded by the program, and Commission staff can work with local governments to formulate a proposal that can be awarded. Commission staff have also been able to talk through specific tasks and deliverables to ensure clarity about what work will be done as well as to discuss expectations related to topics like Commission staff review and public outreach.

W6d (LCP Grant Program Updates)

Removing the \$5 million cap on funding that can be awarded by the Executive Director will ensure that this grant award process can be continued, allowing for the most efficient and successful use of funds. The proposed update to the relevant part of the LCP Grant Program Details is provided below (with deletions show in strikethrough). The complete set of LCP Grant Program Details, Priorities, and Evaluation Criteria, with the proposed changes incorporated, is included as [Exhibit 1](#).

Review of Applications

The LCP Local Assistance Grant Program will be administered on a rolling basis in two ways:

1. **Grant proposals greater than \$500,000:** Proposals for grants greater than \$500,000 may be submitted at any time. Commission staff will review applications and prepare recommendations for Coastal Commission authorization of individual grant awards. Once a complete grant application has been submitted, staff will seek to take proposals to the next scheduled Coastal Commission hearing for final approval. The level of funding that staff will recommend to the Commission for a particular award will be determined by the amount of available grant funds, as well as consistency with program priorities, evaluation criteria, and other general considerations as described below.
2. **Grant proposals up to \$500,000:** Proposals for grants up to \$500,000 can be submitted at any time and will be reviewed by staff against the program priorities, evaluation criteria, and other general considerations as described below. The Executive Director will make a final determination on grant awards within 30 days of submittal of a complete grant application and is authorized to enter into grant agreements with grantees for allocation of these funds. The Executive Director will provide an update to the Coastal Commission on awarded projects. ~~This funding to be approved by the Executive Director will initially be capped at \$5 million but this amount may be increased by the Commission, based on interest and available funding.~~

In all cases, staff will review applications according to the adopted priorities and evaluation criteria, as well as administrative considerations including the sequence of tasks and likelihood of timely completion of the work program; the necessity of each task; and the reasonableness of costs proposed for specific tasks. Applicants are encouraged to work with Coastal Commission staff while developing grant proposals. Applicants with approved grants will be required to coordinate with Coastal Commission staff to develop a grant agreement that is subject to certain program requirements and special conditions, such as requirements for public outreach, review of deliverables, reporting and invoicing, and coordination with Coastal Commission staff. More information on application processes will be provided in grant announcements and on the Coastal Commission website.

C. Rolling Grant Awards to Date

To date, the Executive Director has approved 14 grants totaling \$4,209,755, as summarized below, with multiple other jurisdictions currently working with staff to develop grant proposals. Grants awarded by the Executive Director are described in applicable monthly Executive Director's Reports at Coastal Commission hearings.

Executive Director-Approved Grants

1. **City of Pacific Grove, \$100,000:** The City of Pacific Grove will build on past grant work by completing an updated vulnerability assessment. In particular, the City will fill a data gap by including new SLR modeling for the Asilomar Dunes area (which was not included in previous modeling work) and updating older, now out of date SLR modeling for other parts of the City. Minor updates to the recently certified LCP based on these studies will also be completed, most likely including an updated coastal hazards map overlay. (May 2022)
2. **City of Point Arena, \$100,000:** The City of Point Arena will develop a Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment (SLRVA) for the Point Arena Cove area of the City, and update the Community Health and Safety Element (CHSE) of its LCP. The SLRVA will analyze the impacts of storms and extreme events, changing shorelines, and trends in relative local sea level on vulnerable natural and built resources and facilities, including public access, commerce, recreation, coastal habitats, and navigability. The CHSE update will use information developed in the SLRVA to update coastal hazard LCP policies. (July 2022)
3. **City of Marina, \$100,000:** The City of Marina will build off of previous grant-funded work to assess SLR vulnerabilities and update their LCP. Specifically, the City will update its 2019 vulnerability assessment, including by updating the technical report, adding a social vulnerability assessment, and updating hazard mapping to include in the City's GIS database. The City will also complete its update to the coastal hazards policies of its LCP (both IP and LUP). (August 2022)
4. **City of Arcata, \$100,000:** The City of Arcata will complete a comprehensive update to its LUP and IP. The project will build off of past grant work and includes conducting environmental impact and special studies necessary for certification, revising and submitting a proposed LUP, finishing and submitting a proposed IP, public outreach and tribal coordination on the LCP update, and submission of proposed LUP and IP updates to the Commission. The proposed LCP update will include climate-resilience and sea level rise policies, including potentially a neighborhood-based sea level rise adaptation approach. (November 2022)
5. **City of National City, \$100,000:** The City of National City will complete targeted amendments to the LCP to update General Plan and Zoning Code references, strengthen coastal resilience and support environmental justice, and lay the groundwork for a later comprehensive LCP update. This will include review of completed and in-process technical, environmental, and planning studies to

identify technical study gaps needed to prepare for sea level rise and increase coastal resiliency, as well as to improve coastal access and achieve other Coastal Act goals. Coastal resiliency policies will include (at a minimum) baseline sea level rise policies of the type described by the Local Government Sea Level Rise Working Group. (December 2022)

6. **City of Santa Barbara, \$243,000:** The City of Santa Barbara will complete an amendment to the Airport segment LCP LUP to incorporate sea level rise adaptation policies. This project is considered Phase C of the City's larger sea level rise and LCP update project and will build off of other grant-funded work. The overarching goal of the project is to prepare the Airport and the public for increased storm surges, erosion, and flooding while continuing to provide critical transportation services and coastal resource protection for the next 30 years. This specific grant will incorporate the adaptation options assessed in earlier phases into an Adaptation Plan report and Final LCP update and include continued community engagement. Sea level rise LCP policies will ensure consistency with the Commission's Critical Infrastructure Guidance. (April 2023)
7. **City of Arcata, \$178,000:** The City of Arcata will complete an updated sea level rise vulnerability assessment (SLRVA) and an adaptation plan concept for planned capital improvement projects. The SLRVA will include new analysis to build on the 2018 SLRVA, including in particular more detailed hydrological modeling. The City will also create an adaptation plan for capital improvement projects such as the next phase of improvements to the Arcata Wastewater Treatment Facility. Lastly, the City will update its LCP with the data and adaptation concepts it develops, which will inform implementation of the hazards and sea level rise related LCP policies and concepts that are part of the City's forthcoming comprehensive LCP update, providing, for example, more detailed thresholds and triggers for specific adaptation actions. (May 2023)
8. **Humboldt County: \$499,746:** Humboldt County will finalize an LCP update that builds on earlier grant work to address sea level rise, tsunami safety, ESHA, coastal-dependent industrial lands, and considerations for facilities to support future offshore wind development. This update will also set the foundation for other ongoing grant work led by the County related to regional coordination options for addressing sea level rise Bay-wide in conjunction with Arcata, Eureka, and other key stakeholders. (June 2023)
9. **City of Capitola, \$450,000:** The City of Capitola will perform targeted adaptation planning for Cliff Drive, which is important transportation infrastructure and a key coastal access amenity currently threatened by episodic erosion. The purpose of this project is to identify a preferred alternative to improve the road structure and configuration, which will then be incorporated as an amendment to the LCP. The project will include community and stakeholder engagement; geotechnical studies on SLR, wave runup, and sand supply as well as a survey of topography and utilities; a Biological Resources Assessment and Cultural Resources Assessment to be conducted in coordination with Tribes; an alternatives analysis;

and the drafting and submittal of a targeted LCP amendment that frame the goals for the adaptation of Cliff Drive to lay the foundation for the implementation of a future project/CDP. (July 2023)

10. **City of Pismo Beach, \$500,000:** The City of Pismo Beach will continue work on comprehensive updates to its LUP and IP. The City received two previous LCP grants to complete a Short-Term Rental Ordinance, Draft Low-Cost Visitor Serving Accommodation Study, Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, a Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan, and the initial stages of work on the LCP amendment. The proposed grant would fund continued work on the comprehensive LCP amendment, including local workshops and coordination with Commission staff on both the LUP and IP and submittal of the full, comprehensive LCP amendment. In addition to addressing sea level rise and coastal hazards, the amendment will include strategies to increase housing supply to comply with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation, primarily through mixed use zoning and intensification in the core downtown, as well as a multi-modal plan to reduce traffic and congestion through pedestrian and bicycle improvements. (August 2023)
11. **Mendocino County, \$342,736:** Mendocino County will assess and plan for adaptation of areas vulnerable to sea level rise along the County's coastline. The project will include an initial LCP update to include baseline sea level rise policies; a memorandum synthesizing resources and assets on the County's coast from which to develop a baseline understanding of existing conditions; and a sea level rise vulnerability analysis and risk assessment. A more detailed update to the hazards section of the County's LCP (and other relevant portions) based on information developed as part of this project will be a part of the comprehensive update the County is working on under their Round 8 LCP grant. The grant work will also include coordination with other local jurisdictions within the County. (September 2023)
12. **City of San Diego, \$499,153:** The City of San Diego will complete a vulnerability assessment to lay the foundation for the development of a Citywide Trails Master Plan (TMP) that will inform future community planning to ensure sustainable and equitable access to the City's expansive network of trails and open space. The project will include development of technical information, including with respect to projected climate change and sea level rise impacts to the trail system; significant community outreach with a focus on environmental justice; coordination with Commission staff during the TMP development; and development of policy language to implement the TMP. The City will update LCP policies in all community plans within the coastal zone following completion of the TMP to establish new policies that promote active mobility and equitable access to the City's coastal resources. (October 2023)
13. **City of Marina, \$497,120:** The City of Marina will complete a comprehensive update of their LCP, building off of an ongoing rolling grant the City has to update their SLR vulnerability assessment and social vulnerability assessment and to

W6d (LCP Grant Program Updates)

update the hazards chapter of the LCP. The project will include additional community outreach; comprehensive cleanup of the certified LCP, including synthesizing past amendments into a single, clean, digitized document; analysis of potential re-zoning of three sites, including the CEMEX site; integration of the Monterey Bay Opportunistic Beach Nourishment Program; updates to LCP topic areas including objective design standards, housing, and other topics raised by stakeholders or Commission staff; and incorporation of SLR hazards information to other parts of the LCP. (October 2023)

14. **City of Carmel, \$500,000:** The City of Carmel will complete an LCP update that identifies areas of coastal vulnerability, addresses environmental justice needs, and plans for coastal resiliency and climate adaptation projects. This grant will build upon a City-funded Coastal Engineering and Hazard Assessment study and will describe the sea level rise vulnerability of the City's shoreline, including existing armoring and beaches. The project will include public outreach, a social vulnerability assessment, analysis of adaptation strategy options and development of adaptation pathways, updates to the LCP hazards policies, and an update to the City's coastal hazard mapping. (November 2023)