

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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W10a

Prepared April 23, 2024 for the May 8, 2024 Meeting

TO: COASTAL COMMISSIONERS AND INTERESTED PERSONS

FROM: Shana Gray, Deputy Director
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SUBJECT: Caltrans Informational Briefing

At the May 8, 2024 Commission meeting, the Commission will be given a briefing as part of the North Coast Deputy Director's Report by Caltrans staff on their progress on preparing a comprehensive adaptation plan the Eureka-Arcata Highway 101 Corridor along Humboldt Bay to address anticipated sea level rise related flooding hazards. A previous Commission briefing on this topic was given July 13, 2022.¹

On August 7, 2019, the Commission approved CDP No. 1-18-1078 with special conditions.² The CDP authorized various safety improvements along the six-mile-long transportation corridor between the cities of Eureka and Arcata, including installation of median crossing closures; construction of new interchange at Indianola Cutoff; extensions of highway acceleration and deceleration lanes; replacement of southbound Jacoby Creek Bridge; replacement of bridge rails on northbound Jacoby Creek and Gannon Slough Bridges; replacement of tide gates; and other improvements.

The Commission's findings for approval recognize that most segments of the existing low-lying highway corridor are projected to experience flooding resulting from sea level rise (SLR) in the coming decades if no modifications are made to either the roadway or the surrounding dikes and railroad berm located on other properties around the highway that provide some protection to the roadway from inundation. Based on the medium high risk and extreme scenario SLR projections, the most vulnerable sections of the corridor are at risk of periodic (several times annually) flooding as early as 2030-2040 and more frequent (monthly or more) flooding between 2050-2070.

¹ A link to the presentation from the January 13, 2021 briefing is accessible from the Commission's website: <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2022/7/W10a/w10a-7-2022-report.pdf>.

² The original staff report for CDP 1-18-1078 is accessible from the Commission's website: <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2019/8/W11a/W11a-8-2019-report.pdf>.

The Commission granted its approval of the CDP subject to certain special conditions (shown in the attached Appendix), including two related to SLR. Special Condition 1 requires that Caltrans monitor ongoing conditions related to water elevations and any flooding events or other coastal hazards responses. Special Condition 2 requires Caltrans to develop and submit a full Comprehensive Adaptation and Implementation Plan for the transportation corridor by December 31, 2025, which develops an adaptation alternatives analysis that considers various adaptation strategies, including, but not limited to, accommodation strategies (viaducts, overpasses, etc.), protection measures (dikes, living shorelines, or other natural or engineered features), and relocation of the development to an area safe from flooding and other coastal hazards.

Furthermore, Special Condition 1 requires Caltrans to submit annual monitoring reports on May 1 of each year to the Executive Director that document the monitoring of SLR conditions and Caltrans' progress in developing the Comprehensive Adaptation and Implementation Plan (CAIP). The Baseline Report and 2020-2023 Annual Monitoring Reports are attached (Exhibits).

At the May 8, 2024 meeting, the Commission will be invited to offer comments on the latest reporting and information presented by Caltrans regarding its progress to date on monitoring, reporting, and planning for SLR in the Eureka-Arcata Highway 101 Corridor.