

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

ENERGY, OCEAN RESOURCES AND FEDERAL CONSISTENCY
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Th8a

9-25-0512 (City of Fort Bragg)

December 11, 2025

CORRESPONDENCE

Strongly SUPPORTING Coastal Commission Meeting Thursday December 11, 2025 Agenda Item 8a for Application No. 9-25-0512 (City of Fort Bragg - Mendocino County)

From aeboken <aeboken@gmail.com>

Date Fri 12/5/2025 1:09 PM

To ExecutiveStaff@Coastal <ExecutiveStaff@coastal.ca.gov>; Rexing, Stephanie@Coastal <Stephanie.Rexing@coastal.ca.gov>; Henningsen, Luke@Coastal <luke.henningsen@coastal.ca.gov>; Deborah Murphy <bridgelady@earthlink.net>; Charles Head <charlesnhead@hotmail.com>; Dragan Tutic <dragan.tutic@onekawater.com>; Camille St-Pierre <camille@onekawater.com>

TO: Coastal Commission members

cc: Rexing and Heningsen

FR: Eileen Boken,
State and Federal Legislative Liaison

Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods*

*For identification purposes only.

RE: Coastal Commission Meeting Thursday December 11, 2025 Agenda Item 8a for Application No. 9-25-0512 (City of Fort Bragg - Mendocino County)

Position: Strongly SUPPORTING staff recommendation to approve with conditions.

Speaking on my own behalf, I'm strongly SUPPORTING the staff recommendation to approve with conditions agenda item 8a for Application No. 9-25-0512 (City of Fort Bragg - Mendocino County).

This is for a 12 - month pilot deployment of a wave-powered Oneka Iceberg desalination product.

The Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods wishes to extend its appreciation to Oneka Technologies for presenting on its product and on the Fort Bragg pilot project to interested parties in San Francisco on November 12, 2025.

The Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods hybrid meeting was attended by the following:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 9 Administrator and his colleague
- Deputy State Treasurer
- Board member for both the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)

- San Francisco Assistant Deputy Fire Chief for the Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response (ESER) Bond Program

- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission staff

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Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

December 5, 2025
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Public Comment on City of Fort Bragg Iceberg Buoy Pilot Project (SCH 2025030927)

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Sarayu Ramnath. I am a lifelong California resident and a graduate student focused on ecosystem-based adaptation solutions. I have both personal and professional experience with our coastal ecosystems, and understand the potential role of innovative water technologies like the Iceberg buoy in supporting California's water management strategies. My studies and knowledge of the state's coastal habitats have shown me that even small-scale pilot projects must be implemented with rigorous safeguards to ensure the protections of communities that rely on these ecosystems. I am submitting comments in support of the City of Fort Bragg's application for a 12-month pilot deployment of the Iceberg wave-powered desalination buoy.

The Iceberg buoy is a wave-powered device that generates desalinated water from seawater offshore in Mill Bay, near the City's wastewater treatment plant, and conveys it to shore without using electricity from land-based sources. This single-buoy pilot will collect empirical data that could inform the design and permitting of future utility-scale deployments to support the City's water portfolio (1).

Although modest in scale, this pilot must include structured, independent, third-party environmental monitoring before and during deployment, tracking potential impacts on sensitive seafloor habitats, key species, and migrating marine wildlife. Empirical data from the pilot should inform future project evaluations, including the need for Environmental Impact Report (EIR) if the technology is deployed at larger scales. Robust oversight is essential because the pilot is reviewed under a Mitigated Negative Declaration (2), which does not provide the detailed analysis or long-term evaluation that a full EIR requires.

I understand that the CCC has previously required hard-substrate mitigation fees in similar marine development projects. I urge the Commission to require the City of Fort Bragg to provide funds for hard-substrate mitigation if the buoy or its pipelines disturb sensitive benthic habitat. For precedent, the CCC has applied this mechanism in prior projects, including Southern California Edison's mitigation for the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, which funded the SONGs marine artificial reef and oversight by CCC scientists to compensate for impacts to the marine environment (3). If no such fund is yet defined for this project, I request that the Commission commit to establishing one, with benefits directed toward kelp-forest restoration or other benthic habitat recovery.

While I recognize that technology like this can play a role in California's water management strategies, environmental protection and monitoring must not be shortcut, even for a pilot project.

Thank you for considering these comments. I appreciate the Commission's careful review to ensure that pilot projects like the Iceberg buoy are implemented with rigorous environmental safeguards.

Sincerely,

Sarayu Ramnath

Master's Student (Expected 2026)

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References

1. City of Fort Bragg. (n.d.). *Oneka seawater desalination buoy pilot study*. Retrieved December 5, 2025, from https://www.city.fortbragg.com/departments/public_works/current_public_works_projects/oneka_seawater_desalination_buoy_pilot_study.php
2. Miller Marine Science & Consulting, Inc., & TWB Environmental Research and Consulting, Inc. (2025, March). *Initial study/mitigated negative declaration: Oneka desalination buoy pilot project description*. City of Fort Bragg. <https://webgen1files1.revize.com/fortbraggmpca/Documents/Departments/Community%20Development/%20Projects/CoFB%20Iceberg%20Desal%20Buoy%20Final.pdf>
3. California Coastal Commission. (2003). *San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station mitigation projects: Notice of technical review workshop*. <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/energy/songs-2-mm3.pdf>