

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

NORTH COAST DISTRICT OFFICE
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ARCATA, CA 95521
VOICE (707) 826-8950



W13b

CDP 1-24-0662

(Caltrans – Blues Beach Land Transfer Project)

April 9, 2025

CORRESPONDENCE

California State Senate

SENATOR MIKE MCGUIRE

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S SECOND SENATE DISTRICT



April 02, 2025

Dr. Justin Cummings, Chair and Coastal Commissioners
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219

Dear Chairman Cummings and Distinguished Members of the California Coastal Commission,

I write to express my strong support for the approval of coastal development permit application 1-24-0662 as conditioned, regarding the proposed transfer by CalTrans of the coastal area known as Blues Beach, in Mendocino County, to Kai Poma. This transfer fulfills the intent of Senate Bill 231 (Chapter 289, Statutes of 2021) and represents an important step forward in strengthening ongoing partnerships between the State of California and the tribal nations on the North Coast.

Returning this land of cultural significance is not only the right thing to do, but it will also lead to enhanced stewardship, historical preservation, and protection of sacred sites at the Blues Beach property. Blues Beach holds deep historic and cultural significance for the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, the Round Valley Indian Tribes, and the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians. Discussions regarding this transfer have been occurring locally since 2019. Recognizing the sacred nature of this land, its stewardship by Kai Poma—a tribally chartered, non-profit corporation governed by members of these federally recognized tribes—ensures that the traditions, cultural heritage, and historical ties of these communities are preserved and respected.

I am confident that this transfer will not only honor the cultural legacy of the Native American tribes but also enhance the management and protection of this coastal area for all Californians. By entrusting stewardship of Blues Beach to Kai Poma, we are taking an important step toward safeguarding Native American cultural resources while simultaneously ensuring that public access and natural habitat are preserved for future generations.

Our shared commitment to collaborative governance and environmental stewardship is fundamental to the long-term health of our people, our economy, and our planet. I applaud the efforts of Kai Poma, the Department of Transportation, and the California Coastal Commission, and encourage you to support this initiative as a model of effective partnership and respect for California's rich indigenous heritage.

Thank you for your dedication to protecting our coastal resources and for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MIKE MCGUIRE".

MIKE MCGUIRE
Senator



PO Box 2058 Fort Bragg, CA 95437

March 31, 2025

Dr. Justin Cummings
Chair
California Coastal Commission
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Sent via email to sean.drake@coastal.ca.gov

Re: Blues Beach Transfer to Kai Poma, CDP Application No. 1-24-0662

Dear Dr. Cummings,

Mendocino Land Trust strongly supports the transfer of the Blues Beach property from Caltrans to Kai Poma.

Caltrans proposes to divide 172 acres of beach and bluff property under its ownership located in rural Mendocino County west of State Highway 1 about 12 miles north of Fort Bragg near the community of Westport. After dividing the property, Caltrans will transfer 136 acres of contiguous, ocean-fronting land to Kai Poma, a tribally chartered, non-profit corporation governed by members of three federally recognized California Native American Tribes: Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Round Valley Indian Tribes, and Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians. Upon receiving ownership of these lands, Kai Poma will implement a public access management plan designed for providing public access, maintaining natural habitat, and protecting Native American cultural resources.

The State property proposed for division and transfer to Kai Poma includes a large stretch of coastal bluffs and a beach area known as Blues Beach. The State of California acquired the subject lands in the 1960s for development associated with Highway 1 and to provide a scenic viewshed for highway travelers. Since that time, the lands have been managed by Caltrans for highway purposes. The property has also been popular for accessing the coast, particularly at Blues Beach, a sandy beach on the northernmost parcel, which can be accessed from Highway 1 via an informal dirt road. While this informal access has occurred in various locations and intensities, unauthorized vehicular access and other activities around Blues Beach have resulted in significant impacts to sensitive natural and Native American cultural resources on site, as well as at times causing public safety emergencies.



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Senate Bill 231 authorizes Caltrans to transfer the portions of its property that are not necessary for maintaining Highway 1 to Kai Poma at no cost, requires the land to be maintained by Kai Poma as natural habitat, and limits use of the land to public access, natural habitat, and protection of Native American cultural resources.

Mendocino Land Trust's mission is to conserve and restore habitat, scenic areas, and working lands while also providing public access to beautiful places. The transfer of the Blues Beach property will protect important coastal natural resources as well as sensitive Native American cultural resources, while ensuring continued public access to the popular Blues Beach. Mendocino Land Trust is working closely with Kai Poma to acquire and return to Kai Poma additional undeveloped land north of the Blues Beach property, just south of Westport, known as Bell Point, with support from the State Coastal Conservancy. We strongly support CDP Application No. 1-24-0662, which will result in the return of 136 acres of coastal lands to Native American stewardship, and allow for the transfer of multiple areas of sensitive natural and cultural resources to Kai Poma. Through implementation of its public access management plan, Kai Poma will manage the Property for the collective benefit of tribal members, the public, and coastal resources.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (707) 962-0470 or emily@mendocinolandtrust.org.

Sincerely,

Emily Griffen
Director of Land Protection
Mendocino Land Trust

From: [Thad Van Bueren](#)
To: NorthCoast@Coastal
Cc: [Sean Drake](#)
Subject: Application No. 1-24-0662 (Caltrans Blues Beach Land Transfer Project)
Date: Thursday, April 3, 2025 11:54:07 AM

Honorable Members of the California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to urge your strong support for the cited application. Coastal Permit No. 1024-0662 will divide 172 acres of state property, transfer 136 acres of that land to the Kai-Poma tribal nonprofit, and authorize implementation of a management plan that facilitates public access and resource conservation in perpetuity on the transferred property.

The Blues Beach property is a place of incomparable beauty that has been enjoyed by human populations for many thousands of years. As a professional archaeologist and long time resident of Westport, I'm well acquainted with the property's lengthy cultural history, rich natural resources, and beauty. I know members of all three of the federally-recognized tribes that formed the Kai-Poma nonprofit and believe they will make ideal stewards. Their commitment comes from enduring ancestral ties to this property and cultural values that emphasize careful conservation of resources and shared access.

The proposed Management Plan linked to the land transfer is a thoughtful, living document that may be altered as the need arises through ongoing engagement among the Kai-Poma, California Coastal Commission, State Coastal Conservancy, Caltrans, and the public. To ensure management challenges are successfully addressed as that Kai-Poma works to realize the goals and objectives in the plan, it will be crucial that the involved state agencies provide ongoing support and funding to the Kai-Poma.

To sum up, I ask that you approve this worthwhile permit application. Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,

Thad M. Van Bueren, M.A.
Registered Professional Archaeologist
PO Box 325
Fort Bragg, CA 95437-0325