

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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TO: COASTAL COMMISSIONERS AND INTERESTED PERSONS

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

At the September 9, 2026, 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. The Commission has been receiving these annual briefings from Caltrans for the past several years as required by special conditions of the CDP for the Eureka-Arcata Highway 101 Corridor Improvement Project.

On August 7, 2019, the Commission approved CDP No. 1-18-1078 with special conditions.¹ 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 the highway remains in its existing configuration. 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.

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

¹ The adopted findings for CDP 1-18-1078 is accessible from the Commission's website: <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2020/2/F10a/F10a-2-2020-appendix.pdf>.

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 complete a Comprehensive Adaptation and Implementation Plan (CAIP) for the highway corridor. Further, Special Condition 1 requires Caltrans to present annual monitoring reports each year that document the monitoring conducted to document flood conditions and to report on Caltrans' progress in developing the CAIP.

The purpose of the CAIP is to identify a suite of strategies necessary for protecting, relocating, or otherwise adapting the development authorized by CDP 1-18-1078 as necessary to maintain safety from flooding and other coastal hazards over the long-term (at least through 2100). The most recent Caltrans update on CAIP and monitoring was given to the Commission on October 10, 2025. At that time, the Commission also approved an amendment to the CDP to allow Caltrans more time to complete the final CAIP, required by Special Condition 2, to allow submittal of the final CAIP by December 2027 rather than 2025.² However, Caltrans was able to recently complete a final draft CAIP in August 2026 and is able to present a draft final plan in this update³.

The CAIP was developed using the best available science to evaluate a range of flood scenarios and adaptation strategies for the transportation infrastructure in the corridor, including, but not limited to, accommodation strategies (viaducts, overpasses, etc.), protection measures (dikes, living shorelines, or other natural or engineered features), and relocation of segments or development components to areas safe from flooding.

At the September 9, 2026, meeting, the Commission will be invited to offer comments on the latest reporting and draft CAIP presented by Caltrans regarding its progress to date on monitoring, reporting, and planning for SLR in the Eureka-Arcata Highway 101 Corridor. The most recent monitoring report is attached here as Exhibit 2, and the final draft CAIP is attached here as Exhibit 3.

² A link to the materials and presentation from the October 10, 2025, briefing is accessible from the Commission's website: <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2025/10/F8a/F8a-10-2025-report.pdf>; https://cal-span.org/meeting/ccc_20251010/.

³ A link to the draft final CAIP can be accessed here: <https://www.northcoastclimateaction.org/eureka-arcata-county>