



City of San Clemente Community Development

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Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Boating and Waterways Commission
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT: ITEMS VII.E. – SHORELINE EROSION AND RESTORATION PROGRAMS; ITEM IX
– DISCUSSION AND APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEE(S)**

Dear Chair Ehrman and Members of the Commission:

On behalf of the City of San Clemente, I would like to provide comments for your consideration on the importance of the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) public beach restoration and shoreline erosion control grant programs.

California residents from cities throughout the state rely on these essential grant funds to protect and restore our public beaches. Additionally, with this dedicated funding source, cities like San Clemente are able to heavily leverage federal funds as the local cost share is 35% while the federal cost is 65%. Protection of the public beach is essential for all Californians as well as visitors and is also an Environmental Justice issue since many people use public beaches as a vital and “free” recreational outlet. Never has this been so obvious and important than during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, due to the necessary closure of gyms, swimming pools and other recreational opportunities state-wide, taking our public beaches, the ocean and adjacent trails has been actively encouraged by Governor Newsom as well as other elected officials during the past several months.

As background, the Public Beach Restoration Program was created by AB 64 (Ducheny – 1999) and was an effort by the Legislature to fund critical public beach sand replenishment programs that protect critical infrastructure and protect public health and safety, as well as create a funding source that could be used as the State’s share for attracting/ensuring federal funding for beach sand nourishment projects which are widely implemented on the East Coast and Gulf Coast of the US. The Public Beach Restoration Grant is an essential grant program to local coastal jurisdictions, such as San Clemente, and the people of the State of California.

Non-funding of the Public Beach Restoration Grant Program is counterintuitive to protecting and preserving vital recreation and environmental resources. San Clemente is working with the Army Corps of Engineers on a San Replenishment project, the foundation and cornerstone program for protecting the public beach, implementing a key component of their sea level rise adaptation strategy and ensuring long term coastal resiliency in their City. Having access to Public Beach Restoration Grant Program funding will help San Clemente implement the project.

The main benefits offered by the sand replenishment project include public safety, environmental enhancement and maintenance of a wide sandy beach enjoyed by the public as a no-cost public recreational resource. This project, along with other similar public beach restoration projects, is essential for providing important co-benefits to public health and low-cost recreational opportunities since the increased beach width will protect beach goers, maintain public beaches, and ensure access to and along the shoreline. Further, the coastal resiliency project will also provide environmental benefits by restoring sandy beach habitat which supports a wide variety of species and shorebirds. Our planned beach restoration project also protects and enables existing public and private infrastructure and other structures to remain in place thereby avoiding the need to construct new shoreline protection devices to protect it. In fact, other recent bluff collapses in San Diego County have closed and threatened the continued operation of critical public transit and rail infrastructure. Projects like ours can protect this vital infrastructure.

DBW has funded its coastal protection programs mainly through the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund (HWRF) for the last 20 years. However, the HWRF is in a long-term structural deficit, which is affecting DBW's ability to fund some of its programs, including these coastal programs. No state funding was provided for these programs in the state's fiscal year 2020/21 and 2021/22 budgets. DBW has been working with various state agencies to address the HWRF's issues, and the BWC is now seeking to help identify solutions by organizing subcommittees of its own members.

As a local government, the City of San Clemente understands the funding challenges facing the State. However, we are also aware that the State has, thus far, weathered the "economic storm" and is now projecting a \$25 billion surplus. Now is the time to fund the Public Beach Restoration Program which is absolutely critical to the entirety of the State of California to protect public safety and public infrastructure, and the our precious sandy beaches which are an essential public recreational resource used by millions of Californians and visitors every year. If HWRF is not used for funding this critical program, another replacement revenue source must be immediately identified to replace the funding source.

Thank you for allowing San Clemente to share our perspective with the Commission about the particular importance of the public beach restoration and shoreline erosion control

programs. If you have any questions regarding San Clemente's Coastal Resiliency Plan, please contact me at (949)361-6106 or by email at Gallardo-DalyC@San-Clemente.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cecilia Gallardo-Daly". The script is cursive and fluid.

Cecilia Gallardo-Daly
Community Development Director