



Virtual Public Meeting: Evaluation of the California Coastal Management Program

August 12, 2026

These public comments were taken from the written transcript produced by the Adobe Connect recording of the meeting. The introductory remarks from the NOAA moderators were copied from the written script they read, not the recording.

Spelling errors were corrected and some dialog between moderators and commenters related to audio problems or inability for commenters to unmute their microphones was removed. Where NOAA reviewers could not identify specific words, the transcript is marked [unintelligible].

Keelin Kuipers

My name is Keelin Kuipers, Acting Director of NOAA's Office for Coastal Management. I'll be introducing today's virtual public meeting on the evaluation of the California coastal management program. For today's agenda, I will talk about the background and purpose of today's meeting. Then I will turn it over to my colleague, Josh Lott, to cover the meeting logistics and explain how participants may use the Adobe Connect raise hand function to provide comments. After that, Josh will moderate the public comment portion of the proceedings.

Due to the number of registered participants, NOAA has decided to extend the meeting time by one hour. The meeting will conclude today, either when the last comment is heard or at 6 p.m. Pacific time, whichever comes first. We cannot extend the meeting beyond 6 p.m. Pacific time. As a reminder, NOAA is accepting written comments on this evaluation via email until 11:59 Pacific time on August 22nd, 2026, to this email address czma.california-evaluation@noaa.gov

California's coastal management program is part of the national coastal zone management program. The national program authorized by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 is a voluntary partnership between the federal government and coastal and Great Lakes states and territories. State and territorial coastal zone management programs balance the demands of coastal resource use, economic development, and conservation. California's coastal management program is administered through three agencies, California Coastal Commission, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and the California State Coastal Conservancy.

Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act requires NOAA to conduct a continuing review of the performance of federally approved coastal zone management programs, including California's coastal management program. During the evaluation, NOAA considers the extent to which the State of California has implemented and enforced the approved program, addressed the coastal management needs identified in the CZMA, and adhered to the terms of any grant, loan, or cooperative agreement funded under the CZMA.

On June 26, 2026, NOAA published a *Federal Register* notice announcing an in-person public meeting in Santa Monica held on August 10th and two virtual public meetings, yesterday and today.

In order to gather any new input on the performance of California's coastal management program, particularly regarding five specific areas; spaceport infrastructure, offshore oil production, pipeline maintenance, desalination projects, and undersea cables. These public meetings will add to the input obtained from the previous public meeting held in August of 2024 as part of NOAA's evaluation. When the evaluation is complete, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management will place a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the availability of the final evaluation findings. With that, I will turn it over to my colleague Josh Lott to explain the logistics and begin the public comment portion of today's virtual meeting.

Josh Lott17:11

Thank you, Keelin.

My name is Josh Lott, I'm the Acting Chief of the Policy, Planning, and Communications Division within NOAA's Office for Coastal Management. I will be moderating the public comment portion of today's virtual meeting.

All of today's participants are muted and cameras are turned off. As this is a public meeting to collect public comments only, we will not be taking questions or responding to comments. Due to the number of participants, we will be unable to assist you with individual audio or visual needs. This virtual public meeting is being recorded and a transcript of today's comments will be made available upon request at that same email address Keelin mentioned: czma.california-evaluation@noaa.gov.

For any media outlets joining today, inquiries should be directed to our Public Affairs Office email at oceanservicepress@noaa.gov. That's oceanservicepress@noaa.gov.

Please use the raise hand function to enter the queue to make a comment. From there, those who wish to make a comment will be called on by name in the order the virtual hand is raised and you

must unmute your own microphone to speak. Please note that your microphone icon will appear only when your name is called. All names will be read out loud and will be included in the transcript of the public meeting. Each speaker will have three minutes to provide a comment and you will be muted at the three minute mark.

Speakers must ensure comments are free from abusive, profane, threatening, or harassing language. Individuals engaging in language of this nature will have their line muted and will not be permitted back into the queue. Each speaker may provide one comment only. This includes any individual who has registered multiple times under the same name. Any groups sharing a single registration will still be held to the three minute time limit for that registration.

This virtual public meeting will conclude today either when the last comment is heard or at 6 p.m. Pacific time, whichever comes first. Thank you, and now we will begin the public comments.

The first speaker in the queue is Samantha Burton and second in the queue is Miho Ligare. Samantha, please unmute your mic at the top of your Adobe Connect screen.

Samantha, if you can hear me, you may begin speaking. Okay, we'll come back to Samantha.

The next speaker in the queue is Miho Ligare. Miho, if you can hear me, please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Miho Ligare20:52

Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Miho Ligare and I'm a resident of El Dorado County, California, as well as Surfrider Foundation's Senior Plastic Pollution Institute of Manager. I've been lucky to grow up close to the coast and surfing with my friends any chance we got at San Onofre is still one of my favorite high school memories and has also helped shape my career path. Now that I live over three hours away from the closest beach, it's even more special when I get to spend time near the coast with my family. I'm grateful for California's coastal program and the California Coastal Commission. Through their tireless work, the whole state has more accessible and cleaner beaches to enjoy.

In particular, I want to highlight some exciting and forward-thinking work that the Commission has recently engaged in that will help reduce plastic pollution on our beaches. In November 2025, the Commission approved a new guidance document for addressing plastic pollution and coastal development permits and local coastal programs. The guidance document builds on the Commission's decades of leadership in tackling marine debris, from California Coastal Cleanup Day to the year-round Adopt-a-Beach program, while incorporating lessons learned from past permitting and local coastal program actions. Notably, it also drew inspiration from Surfrider

Foundation's ocean-friendly restaurants and hotel programs, which the Commission has recently required several project applicants and enforcement action recipients to enroll in. The guidance provides a clear roadmap for reducing plastic pollution along California's coast, with an emphasis on source reduction. Just as you concluded in your draft findings last year, and as this recent example demonstrates, the Commission is effectively and properly implementing the Coastal Act and doing exceptional work to protect clean beaches and safe recreation throughout California. Thank you.

Josh Lott22:47

Thank you for that comment. Apologies for skipping Samantha Burton. Samantha, if you can hear me, please unmute your mic and you may begin commenting.

Samantha Burton23:37

Okay. Good afternoon, staff. My name is Samantha Burton. While I currently reside in Durham, North Carolina, I was born and raised in Southern California. Growing up, I spent a lot of time in Laguna Beach, Dana Point, and San Clemente. I also lived in San Luis Obispo, during which time I frequented Shell Beach, Pismo Beach, Morro Bay, and Avila Beach. While I'm no longer a resident of California, I return often to visit family and friends and for my job. My family loves to spend time swimming, sitting by the water watching surfers ride, building sandcastles with the kids, and looking for whales and dolphins on the horizon. I deeply appreciate and support the work the Coastal Commission is doing to protect California beaches. The beaches and water that my family and I recreate in are cleaner and safer, thanks to the Coastal Commission and California's coastal program. Without the Commission, there may not be local beaches to go to.

A recent Commission action that has benefited coastal access occurred in Dana Point. In December 2025, the Commission approved a coastal development permit for demolition of an existing beachfront single-family residence and construction of a new home on Beach Road in Dana Point. It imposed important conditions for the new construction on this rapidly eroding shoreline consistent with the Coastal Act, including a requirement that the property owner not be permitted to use shoreline armoring to protect the development, which would interfere with public beach access and accelerate erosion. This decision is just one example of the Coastal Commission properly carrying out its responsibilities under the California Coastal Act to protect the beaches and coasts I care about and also want to enjoy being able to spend time on in a clean and safe way with my family.

Living in North Carolina, where coastal erosion is threatening many local communities, I appreciate the California Coastal Commission even more. Their regulation of coastal land and water allows people to live, work, and enjoy the shore safely. Many other states lack strong bodies like this to keep beaches safe, protected, and accessible to everyone. Thank you.

Josh Lott25:44

Thank you, Samantha. Our next two commenters are C.J. O'Brien Weddle, and then Alex Verón Mignogna. CJ, you may begin your comment. Unmute your mic and begin your comment.

CJ O'Brien Weddle26:04

Good afternoon. My name is CJ O'Brien Weddle. I'm the Ocean Friendly Programs Manager at the Surfrider Foundation, whose headquarters are in San Clemente, California. Surfrider's ocean-friendly restaurants and hotels programs help businesses reduce single-use plastic and make more sustainable choices for the ocean.

I live in Florida now, but the California coast holds a special place in my heart. I attended California Lutheran University for undergrad where I would frequently visit Zuma Beach and go scuba diving at the Casino Point Dive Park on Catalina Island. I also visit California annually for Surfriders All-Staff meeting where I surf with my coworkers at Sano and Doheny beaches.

I strongly support the California Coastal Commission and today I'd like to call attention to an enforcement action the Commission took and the positive outcome we saw after that enforcement which will help reduce single-use plastic at a heavily visited part of Santa Monica Beach. This example involves a small bar and grill on the Santa Monica Pier called Patio 66. The restaurant developed its patio without first getting a coastal development permit. In December of 2025, the Commission took action. It approved an after-the-fact coastal development permit for the previously unpermitted work. The permit imposed strong conditions to protect public access and reduce ocean pollution. Specifically, the permit requires multi-lingual signage in at least English and Spanish, clearly informing peer visitors that the seating area is available for general public use without purchase. The permit also prohibits single-use plastics, requires reusable foodware for on-site dining, and bans plastic straws, bags, bottles, and expanded polystyrene.

Given that food service ware represents nearly 37% of items found on California beaches, this condition directly addresses a major source of marine pollution threatening wildlife and ecosystems. This enforcement action, which is consistent with the California Coastal Act, ensures that the beaches and coasts that I love and that Surfrider's grassroots volunteers enjoy are plastic-free and accessible for generations to come. Thank you.

Josh Lott28:15

Thank you, CJ. Our next two commenters are Alex Ferron Mignogna and then Lizzie Porter. Alex, you may unmute your mic at the top of your screen when ready.

Alex Ferron Mignogna28:30

Great. My name is Alex Ferron Mignogna. I'm a property owner and small tourism business owner in Ocean Beach, San Diego. I'm speaking today because I rely on the Coastal Commission doing its job well, and in my experience, it very much so does.

This June, the Commission unanimously approved the city's request for a coastal development permit covering more than 35 existing public parking lots along San Diego's coast, including lots at my neighborhood beaches. The city needed this permit to address a very real problem, unauthorized long-term overnight vehicle habitation that's made these lots both unsafe and sparsely available to families and day use visitors who rely on our public beaches as cooling zones. On condition of supporting these overnight closures, the Commission required the city both to expand access, including reopening a stairway in La Jolla that's been closed since 23, adding bike parking, installing mobility mats for beachgoers with disabilities, and creating maps of access points and transit so people can more easily visit our beaches. That's the coastal access mandate working exactly as intended and determining how best to support conflicting needs and our state constitutional right to the ocean, our greatest public trust resource.

I'd also like to speak for my professional capacity. I am the Coastal Adaptation Manager at the Surfrider Foundation, where I work on preparedness to coastal hazards and specifically nature-based shoreline resilience projects up and down the California coast. One of those projects is at San Onofre State Beach, which you've heard about a couple of times, home to Panhe, a sacred site for the Acjachemen Nation, the birthplace of modern-day surfing, and the fifth most visited California State Park, despite chronic erosion that impacts and threatens the very parking and access that make it usable. Also worth noting, this site was saved from many years ago by a Commission decision and is now an important home for endangered species and the last of very few remaining unaltered rivers in San Diego County.

In January, the Commission properly issued a de minimis permit waiver allowing our team to conduct geotechnical borings on the beach, work needed for coastal engineers to understand the site's sediment layers, and inform the design of a nature-based shoreline stabilization project that will ensure the beach's accessibility into the future. That action let us move efficiently from planning into the technical groundwork this project requires without sacrificing the Commission's oversight of a sensitive and historic site.

Both of these examples show the same thing, a Commission that takes the Coastal Act's balance seriously between development, access, and resource protection, and that moves efficiently when a project deserves it. That's a program doing exactly what it was approved to do, and I urge NOAA to recognize that record in this evaluation. Thank you.

Josh Lott31:19

Thank you, Alex. Our next two speakers are Lizzie Porter and then Kelsey Furman. Lizzy, please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Lizzy Porter31:32

Hello. My name is Lizzy Porter. I'm a resident of Los Angeles, California. I'm originally from Pacific Palisades, California. I support the work that the California Coastal Commission is doing to protect my local beaches.

I grew up on the beaches of the Palisades. My family and my community really center on those beaches. It's where we have big family dinners and celebrations, play beach volleyball, surf, find quiet moments to ground and reflect. As a kid, it was a primary place of socializing outside the bubble of my school and to learn independence and resilience. The beaches and water that my family and I center ourselves and our communities on are cleaner and safer, thanks to the Coastal Commission and California's coastal program.

A couple recent examples of the Commission's actions that have benefited my beach and local coastal access. First, in August of 24, the Commission unanimously approved a permit for the Gladstones restaurant and the Pacific Palisades to use the state's parking lot for private parking purposes. But conditioned it on the creation of additional parking and required the restaurant to engage in a plastic pollution reduction program. Through this permit, the Coastal Commission played an important role in limiting the disturbance to public parking and therefore public access.

Then in October of 25, after the fires, the Commission approved a redevelopment of that same restaurant. The approval properly required strong beach protection conditions, including the removal of existing rock revetment, and that the development be built in a way that no future armoring can be approved.

These decisions, which are consistent with the California Coastal Act, protect these beaches and the coasts that I care about and the ability for me and my community to continue using them. Particularly after the destruction and disruption of the fires in January 25, and as my Pacific Palisades community rebuilds, this work to ensure access, protection, and oversight of responsible development is more important than ever. Thank you.

Josh Lott33:46

Thank you, Lizzie. Our next two speakers are Kelsey Furman. Then Kyle Lishock. Kelsey, you may please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Kelsey Furman34:02

Good afternoon. My name is Kelsey Furman and I live in Seattle, Washington. I'm speaking today as staff attorney with the Surfrider Foundation and as someone who regularly visits California. I support the work the Coastal Commission is doing to protect the California coast. I've had the pleasure of visiting California's coast over the years from San Diego up to Eureka. In addition to my personal travel, I visit California's coast at least once a year for my job where we intentionally set aside time to visit and enjoy the beaches and ocean, places Surfrider has dedicated 40 years working to protect. The places I walk and swim when visiting are cleaner and safer thanks to the Coastal Commission and California's coastal program.

This review implies potential problems with California's program implementation, particularly following the spaceport federal consistency decision that the federal government did not like. But the Commission properly exercises that authority. For example, in December 2025, the Commission approved 20-year federal consistency for the Diablo nuclear facility on California's Central Coast. While the mitigation fell short of what Surfrider preferred, Commission staff negotiated major improvements to PG&E's mitigation package that paved the way for full conservation over time, leading to a 9-3 vote approving continued plant operations. This is just one example where the Commission properly exercised its federal consistency authority for a major energy project. This example illustrates that the Commission doesn't always go as far as Surfrider advocates, but we understand that the Commission balances interests and appreciated the Commission's thoughtful mitigation improvements.

We also recognize that removing federal funding for the program or going as far as to withdraw program approval simply because the Commission didn't make our preferred decision would be unjustified and would significantly hamper California's ability to protect our members' coastal recreation opportunities. The same goes for their decision not to approve federal consistency for increased rocket launches. The fact that the Commission disagreed with the federal government does not justify funding sanctions or program withdrawal.

Finally, this reopening process creates a chilling effect on other states' ability to protect their coastline and further impacts their [unintelligible] coastal recreation outside of California. As a resident of Washington, the first state to obtain coastal management program approval under the CZMA, it is important to me that states maintain their existing authority, including federal consistency authority to review and regulate projects that involve its coastline. NOAA praised California's program in 2025, and the public has shown overwhelming support. Please reaffirm your support for California's coastal management program so the beaches and waters remain clean, safe, and accessible for residents, visitors, and the next generation. Thank you.

Josh Lott36:50

Thank you, Kelsey. Our next two speakers are Kyle Lishok and then George Leonard.

Kyle, please unmute your mic at the top of your Adobe Connect screen and begin your comment.

Kyle Lishok37:05

Good afternoon, staff. My name is Kyle Lishok and I'm a resident of San Dimas, California. I support the California Coastal Commission's efforts across the state to protect our beaches and our coastlines. My wife and I enjoy visiting Los Angeles and Orange County beaches to surf, swim, walk with our dog, and spend valuable time with our friends and family. Thanks to the Coastal Commission and California's coastal program, the beaches and waterways that my family and I recreate in are cleaner, safer, and more enjoyable than ever before.

I'm sharing a recent example of a Commission action that has benefited Southern California coastal access. In November 2025, the Commission took action to enforce and resolve violations at a hotel in Santa Monica, California. Because of the Commission, the hotel will deliver more enduring public benefits, including transit reimbursement for employees, designated bike and carpool parking spaces, installation of EV charging stations, elimination of single-use plastics, and funding for new beach wheelchairs. These on-the-ground measures will provide lasting benefits for public access, coastal resource protection, and environmental sustainability. This case also shows that the Commission enforcement paired with cooperative property owners can deliver meaningful outcomes for both the public and for the coast. This is just one of many decisions consistent with the California Coastal Act that protects the beaches and coastlines I care about and preserves them for future generations of surfers, swimmers, beach goers, and families from around the country. Thanks for your time.

Josh Lott38:43

Thank you, Kyle.

Our next two speakers are George Leonard and then Cyrus Soltani. George, please unmute your mic at the top of your screen.

George Leonard38:59

Good afternoon my name is George Leonard and I'm a resident of the city of Santa Cruz and for 30 years, I've lived on the Central Coast and studied and researched and worked professionally to protect the California coast. But I didn't grow up here, I grew up in Massachusetts on the East Coast, and when I first came to California, I was amazed at the vast stretches of the open coast with limited development and public access over nearly 1,100 miles of shoreline. And [lost audio] it was because of the California Coastal Act. We didn't have a California Coastal Commission in New England and as a result many of our beaches were private. Coastal development both residential and commercial was rampant and our coastal economy was largely dominated by private interests, not industries that were aligned with the well-being of local residents.

Now, for 50 years, California has collaborated effectively with the federal government to ensure that proposed federal action on ocean and coastal projects are aligned with California values. And in fact, only 4% of the 3,700 federal projects that have been considered by the California Coastal Commission over its lifetime have not been approved. This really isn't evidence of a flawed system, rather it's clear evidence that the system as designed by Congress in 1972 through the Coastal Zone Management Act is in fact working and it's working well. The Trump administration has been brazenly transparent in wanting to expand offshore drilling off the California coast, but doing so would have a negligible impact on the national supply of oil. It would have virtually no impact on national gas prices, which are set, of course, in the international marketplace and it would run counter to California state policy that is to prioritize renewable energy sources in the face of what is clearly an accelerating climate crisis. And doing so would also be in direct conflict with the expressed wishes of nearly two thirds of California residents who oppose offshore drilling.

So you can mark me down today as one of the hundreds of thousands of California residents who are adamantly opposed to what is essentially a nakedly political process to strip California of its federally given right to review and object to federal projects that are deemed to be in conflict with state policy and the wishes of the state's residents. Thank you.

Josh Lott41:28

Thank you, George. Our next two commenters are Cyrus Soltani, then Sydney Pitcher, Cyrus, please unmute your mic at the top of your screen.

Cyrus Soltani41:44

Thank you. My name is Cyrus Soltani. I'm an ocean conservation intern with Environment California, a statewide environmental group that works for all Californians to ensure clean air, clean water, and a livable future. And this requires a healthy coast. I'm also a student at UC Davis studying political science, and I'm a professional diver.

California's coast is home to many incredible species of wildlife, where many of these species are already in significant decline. According to NOAA, Pacific gray whale populations have declined by nearly 50% in the past decade, and humpback whales have declined by nearly 20% in the past decade as well. Unfortunately, these species will be further threatened by the oil industry if it is allowed to expand the California coast at a time they cannot afford any more external pressure. Not only does oil drilling destroy whale habitat and feeding grounds, but high energy seismic noise from drilling can injure whales, causing permanent hearing loss and crippling them.

Furthermore, increased vessel traffic in these drilling areas will result in high levels of underwater noise and potential ship strikes, further harming and killing these incredible

creatures. In addition, oil spills can disrupt whale behavior as well as harm or kill them. And not only are oil drilling and spills harmful to whales, but they also harm fish, seabirds, marine mammals such as otters and seals, krill, and our coastal communities that all rely on the ocean.

And oil drilling off the coast of California will also hurt entire marine ecosystems that are already in significant decline. Kelp forests are one of these ecosystems threatened by oil drilling. Drilling stirs up the seabed, where sediment then interferes with kelp being able to photosynthesize and survive. Furthermore, these spills are also extremely toxic to kelp forests, placing further risk on an ecosystem already ravaged by climate change and urchin barrens. The threat that oil spills and drilling pose to California's coast is why following the worst spill in our state's history, President Nixon enacted the Coastal Zone Management Act, giving state and local governments a say in what happens to our oceans. More than 50 years ago, Californians decided to protect our coast and passed the Coastal Act with overwhelming support on the ballot. California has since continued to support protecting our oceans, but in order to continue to do so, local communities and residents need to retain their rights to have a say in what happens to our oceans and not just the federal government and the whims of the Trump administration. And in doing so, we can prevent oil drilling on the California coast.

Californians deserve to have a voice in what happens to our oceans, and this is why I myself and the organization I represent strongly oppose any changes through the Coastal Zone Management Act that would cut out the voice of local communities and residents from having a say in the future of our oceans and treasured communities. Thank you.

Josh Lott44:27

Thank you, Cyrus.

Our next two commenters are Sydney Pitcher and then Deborah Jones. Sydney, please unmute your mic and begin your comments. Sydney, if you can hear me, please unmute your mic.

Okay, we'll move on to Deborah Jones and after Deborah Jones, Katy Webb. Deborah, if you can hear me, please unmute the mic at the top of your screen.

Deborah Jones45:10

Good afternoon, staff. Thank you for the opportunity to comment today. I want to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation for the California Coastal Commission and the work it's done to implement California's coastal management program and protect public access to our coasts. The Commission's accomplishments are very tangible. It has required more than 2,000 public access easements through coastal development permits, creating opportunities for beach access, trails, overlooks, and portions of the California Coastal Trail. It's also helped provide beach stairways, restrooms, parking, accessibility improvements, and signage so that people can

actually reach and enjoy the coast. It has worked to protect historic public access where the access has been threatened.

As a San Diego resident, I personally benefit from that work. I swim in the ocean, I snorkel, I tide pool, I boat, I spend time on our beaches, in our coastal waters because access to the ocean is an important part of my life. And I know I'm just one of thousands of San Diegans who use our coast for recreation, exercise, relaxation, education, and their livelihoods. These aren't abstract benefits to me. The protections and access provided through California's coastal management program and the hard work of the Coastal Commission are what makes these experiences possible. So I want to thank you. I want to thank the California Coastal Commission for decades of hard work protecting the public's ability to get to the coast and enjoy it.

I urge NOAA to recognize what California has accomplished through its coastal management program, and I support the Commission's continued ability to do this work. Please don't weaken a program that's working. Please don't silence Californians and their right to the coast. Our coast is one of California's greatest public treasures. It belongs to all of us, and we have a responsibility to pass on healthy, accessible, and protected coasts for the next generation. Thank you.

Josh Lott47:37

Thank you, Deborah. Our next speaker will be Katy Webb, and then we'll go back to Sydney Pitcher. Katy, please unmute your mic and begin your comment.

Katy Webb47:50

Good afternoon. My name is Katy Webb with the Climate Center commenting on the performance evaluation of the California coastal management program.

California's coastal management program has been federally approved since 1978 and has consistently received strong evaluations for balancing coastal protection, public access, economic opportunity, and environmental stewardship. This program encompasses the California Coastal Act and the State Conservancy, which together balances the protection of agricultural lands, significant coastal resources, and California's \$51 billion coastal economy. Protecting our natural coastal resources keeps communities safe from environmental extremes, supports industries such as tourism and fishing, and ensures our beautiful landscapes are available to all who visit and live in California, both now and in the future.

NOAA specifically requested feedback from stakeholders regarding offshore oil drilling and other industrial developments along and offshore the California coast. The Climate Center is opposed to any expansion of offshore drilling. The state is moving towards a clean energy future, and these efforts cannot be undermined by the expensive, destructive, and unnecessary expansion

of offshore oil drilling.

The types of industrial development proposed by the Department of Commerce will threaten the livelihoods of millions of coastal Californians due to an increase in pollution and decrease in revenue from existing coastal businesses. Major oil spills resulting from offshore oil drilling have occurred in 1969, 1997, 2015, and 2021, totaling nearly 4.5 million gallons of oil spilled. These spills severely impacted thousands of acres of shoreline, forced the closures of local fisheries, killed thousands of marine animals, and left toxic tar balls washing onto beaches for many miles along the coast. If oil drilling were to resume and be expanded, it would only be a matter of time before another such disaster occurs. I grew up swimming, surfing, and hiking along the coast of Ventura County, and I can attest to the importance of this program as a critical tool in protecting our coastal communities, businesses, and environment.

For nearly 50 years, California's coastal management program has helped ensure that decisions affecting the state's coastline balance local community priorities, tribal interests, economic opportunity, public access, and environmental protection. A review of this same program was just conducted in 2024 and draft findings were published in 2025. Therefore, this is not a necessary review and we ask that NOAA respect the longstanding partnership with California and the positive findings of the 2025 report in their final decision. In order to maintain California's strong coastal economy and to support affordability and resiliency for all California communities, we must preserve our existing coastal resources. Thank you.

Josh Lott50:39

Thank you, Katy. Our next speaker will be Sydney Pitcher and then Azi Sharif. Sydney, if you can hear me, please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Azi, please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Azi Sharif51:25

Hello, good afternoon everyone! My name is Dr. Azi Sharif, founder and executive director of Wildlife Jewels, a California nonprofit dedicated to protecting wildlife from human caused threats.

For more than two decades, I have observed, documented, and worked to protect California's coastal wildlife. Today through Wildlife Jewels Eyes, engage your eyes for sea life program and rescue crew, our team conducts near daily coastal monitoring, search scout surveys, and seabird rescue response throughout the California coast. What we're seeing is alarming. Coastal and marine wildlife is already under extraordinary stress from starvation, harmful algae blooms, changing ocean conditions, and disruptions in prey availability. On top of these pressures, we

repeatedly document preventable human-caused threats including fishing line and hook entanglements, marine debris, wildlife disturbance, and pressure on sensitive habitat.

The La Jolla coastline offers a sobering example. We've documented injuries in distressed seals and sea lions, disturbance of marine mammals attempting to rest on shore, and a devastating rise in fishing gear entanglements among wildlife. Many distressed animals remain in locations where rescue access is unavailable. The Coastal Act and the Coastal Commission's implementation and enforcement of it have played a critical role in protecting and restoring sensitive coastal habitat and wildlife.

As NOAA evaluates California's coastal management program, we urge NOAA to recognize the importance of maintaining a strong, federally certified program and preserving California's ability to implement and enforce effective coastal protections including the vital role of the California Coastal Commission.

What we witness in the field makes the stakes very real. Strong coastal protections preserve critical habitat, protect wildlife from harmful development and pollution, enable injured animals to be rescued, and ultimately protect species and ecosystems. At a time of overlapping threats, California urgently needs strong coastal protection, implementation, and enforcement. Thank you so much.

Josh Lott53:52

Thank you, Azi.

Our next speaker is Laurel Irvine, and then after that, Carla Avila. Laurel, please unmute your mic and begin your comment.

Laurel Irvine54:03

Hi there, my name is Laurel Irvine, speaking out on behalf of the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network in Marin County. I'm also a fourth generation Californian, specifically from the Palisades. And on top of that, I'm also a professional scuba diver and a pinniped animal care volunteer.

On behalf of the Salmon Protection Watershed Network, we strongly oppose any efforts to weaken the California coastal management program or the state's authority to protect our coastal resources. Wildlife has no political boundary between watersheds and the ocean. What happens upstream ultimately affects our coastal ecosystems and vice versa. California's coastal protections provide an important layer of oversight to ensure that federal projects consider such connections and their long-term environmental impacts for not only wildlife, but also our coastal communities. These protections are not barriers to responsible economic development. They are

safeguards that help us ensure development does not come at the expense of ecosystems and public resources that make California so special and biodiverse. Thanks.

Josh Lott55:18

Thank you.

Our next commenter is Carla Avila, and after that, Thomas Becker.

Carla, please unmute your mic and begin your comment.

Carla Avila55:39

Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Carla Avila and I have lived in California all of my life, 16 years in Humboldt and down south. And I'm here in support of the California Coastal Commission's work protecting healthy beaches and their collaboration with communities to implement nature-based solutions to address erosion threatening our coastline.

I've been lucky enough to spend countless hours along our beaches, exploring tide pools, watching wildflowers bloom across the dunes, and enjoying the adorable shorebirds scuttling along the shore. I've been lucky to backpack the Lost Coast, drive down Highway 1 with the windows down, and spend just so many evenings watching the sunset. And I've also had the opportunity to lead the bilingual coastal dune walks in Spanish, and it's been incredibly moving to see families enjoy and feel inspired by our beautiful coastlines. We're so incredibly lucky to have these special spaces to explore and enjoy, while also protecting the healthy habitats that make them so special.

So what we have in California is truly special. I am also here as Surfrider Foundation's Climate Action Program Manager. I support our network to restore our coastlines nationwide. So as someone who works on coastal restoration efforts across the country, I am consistently struck by the challenges that communities face in other states. Strict, confusing public access, weakened coastal protection, coastlines managed for private interest rather than public good. And it just makes me so grateful for the protections that we do have here and for the ability to enjoy our beaches that are healthy, open, and protected for everyone. And I see every day what happens when those protections are weaker and those impacts are harmful to both people and our coastal ecosystems.

So the Coastal Act and the Coastal Commission are a big part of why we have these protections. And it's something that I never take for granted. And our beaches are more resilient and protected thanks to the forward thinking of California's coastal program and the Coastal Commission. And they play a critical role in improving and strengthening coastal restoration projects up and down our coastline, ensuring that nature-based solutions are implemented thoughtfully and that the public access is protected and our shorelines are as resilient as they can

be for generations to come. And these standards result in stronger, more ecologically sound outcomes for our coasts.

This Commission is approving and supporting countless efforts that make our coastlines more resilient, more biodiverse, and more accessible for everyone who loves them. The Santa Monica Living Shorelines project, establishing 40 acres of coast of dunes, to the Windy Beach Dune Restoration Project, to the Surfer's Point Restoration Project, and the incredible dune work... [microphone turned off due to time limit]

Josh Lott58:41

Thank you, Carla.

Our next two commenters are Thomas Becker. Then Tim Charters, Thomas, please unmute your mic and begin your comment.

Okay, Thomas has dropped off. Our next commenter is Tim Charters. Then Naomi Meurice. Tim, please unmute your mic and begin your comment.

Tim Charters59:12

Good afternoon. My name is Tim Charters. I'm a director of upstream policy for the American Petroleum Institute. API represents approximately 600 companies involved in all segments of America's natural gas and oil industry, and we appreciate the action by NOAA today, and thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on NOAA's evaluation of the California coastal management program.

API supports the goals of the Coastal Zone Management Act and its cooperative federalism framework. Congress designed that framework to balance protection of coastal resources with the important national interests, including domestic energy production, interstate commerce, national security, and management of federally owned outer continental shelf resources. We encourage NOAA to use this evaluation to determine whether California's coastal management program is maintaining that critical balance. Our primary message today is that offshore energy issues should be evaluated not only as coastal policy questions, but through the broader lens of American national energy security, regional and national fuel reliability, and federal resource management.

California's coastal management decisions can have impacts far beyond state boundaries because they affect domestic energy production, marine transportation, pipeline infrastructure, and the ongoing maintenance and decommissioning of offshore facilities. While there are many critical issues facing US energy markets, a key issue of importance is the reliable fuel supplies to the West Coast. The region has experienced declining domestic crude oil production and increasing dependence on foreign imports. Existing refinery systems already face challenges securing

affordable and reliable supplies to the West Coast and remain more dependent on imported jet fuel than most other regions of the country. At the same time, California hosts major military installations, ports, and transportation hubs that rely on dependable fuel availability. Decisions affecting offshore energy infrastructure therefore have direct implications for fuel reliance, supply chain reliability, and military readiness throughout the Pacific.

We urge NOAA to place a particular emphasis on ensuring that California's program allows access for appropriate management of offshore decommissioning and existing infrastructure management. From API's perspective, regulatory certainty is essential. Delays and inconsistent standards or the use of review processes to impede lawful activities can create operational challenges and increase environmental and worker safety risks. NOAA should carefully evaluate whether the California coastal management program provides a transparent, efficient, and predictable pathway for infrastructure maintenance, pipeline work, and decommissioning activities that are required by federal law.

If NOAA takes only one message from API's comments today, it should be that offshore decommissioning and energy infrastructure management should require regulatory certainty. These facilities exist today and they must be maintained and ultimately removed under federal requirements. A predictable review process that protects workers, the environment, and coastal communities, while at the same time, California's broader infrastructure plays an important role in supporting West Coast fuel reliance and broader national security objectives.

In closing, we believe NOAA's evaluation presents an important opportunity to reaffirm the balance that Congress established in the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Josh Lott01:02:15

Thank you, Tim.

Our next two commenters are Naomi Meurice and then Marty Farrell. Naomi, please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Naomi Meurice01:02:32

Hello. Good afternoon, NOAA representatives, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Naomi Meurice, and I'm a water quality data analyst for Heal the Bay, an LA-based environmental nonprofit with over 41 years of experience. Heal the Bay has worked to make our coastal waters and watersheds safe, healthy, and clean.

As someone who grew up in the Midwest, I remember the first time coming to the beach in California. I was just eight years old and was on a family camping trip, and I remember walking down the stairway to Sunset State Beach and playing in the waves and watching the sunset over

the ocean. That experience has stuck with me, and it spurred my love for the ocean and all it has to offer. Now that I've been living in California for the past seven years, I've visited many of the beaches up and down our coastline. I'm constantly reminded of the amazing diversity that we have here in beach landscape, in activity, in animal and plant populations. And I'm so grateful for the protections provided to the California coast by California's coastal management program, which helps ensure that these beaches remain in these conditions.

The current review of the California coastal management program is inappropriate. The coastal management program was just evaluated in 2024, and the evaluation found that the program was working exactly as intended. This is a waste of taxpayer dollars and goes against your agency's own findings. And in doing so, you're placing the California coast at risk of irreparable damage to the precious coastline and economy that depends on these protections.

California's coast and oceans are already under attack from pollution, ocean warming, sea level rise, ocean acidification, and more. Organizations like Heal the Bay and people like myself are trying hard to address these threats and to protect the ocean and the services that they provide for us all. So please leave California's coast alone and let us get back to the important work instead of defending the coast from our own federal government's special interests.

Thank you for the work that you all do and for the opportunity to provide comment today.

Josh Lott01:04:41

Thank you, Naomi.

Our next two commenters are Marty Farrell and Derek Brockbank.

Marty, please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Marty Farrell01:04:54

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to comment today. My name is Marty Farrell, and I'm a staff attorney with California Coastkeeper Alliance.

The nature and apparent intent of this current review are unprecedented. In over 50 years of CZMA administration across 11 presidential administrations of both parties, through major federal-state disputes over coastal uses, NOAA has never involuntarily decertified a state coastal management program, but that's exactly what's at stake here. Executive Order 14335 explicitly directed the Secretary of Commerce to assess whether state approvals under the Act should be revoked. And the Commerce Department's own press release announcing this proceeding confirms this review follows that executive order, while characterizing California's coastal management as obstructionist and driven by environmental extremism. But the record flatly contradicts that characterization. California has concurred with every single undersea fiber optic cable project that it's reviewed. It has approved dozens of desalination facilities, and it has

concluded with 133 out of 135 aerospace and space launch projects since 1980. That is not obstruction. That's not extremism. That's a program doing exactly what Congress asked. Carefully weighing coastal protection against economic development and reaching independent professional judgment on merits.

As recently as 2024, NOAA itself conducted its statutory review, site visits, public meetings, stakeholder surveys, document review, and concluded that California is successfully implementing and enforcing its federally approved coastal management program. No necessary actions, no compliance deficiencies, essentially the gold standard outcome.

So we are being asked to look at the facts, a program with a near perfect concurrence record, independently validated by NOAA just a year ago, and somehow call it obstructionist. It's not just a factual record that contradicts the federal government's characterization of California's coastal management program. The law itself does not support their theory. The CZMA requires states to give proper consideration and adequate consideration to economic development and federal agency views. That is the language of process, of weighing interest, not of mandating outcomes. NOAA's own regulatory criteria for sanctions describe procedural and administrative failures, not conducting reviews, not following procedures, not monitoring compliance. Not one of those describes reaching a conclusion that the federal government disagrees with.

Congress enacted the CZMA to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible to restore or enhance the resources of the nation's coastal zone. Federal consistency authority is the mechanism to achieve that, ensuring that federal actions with foreseeable effects on coastal resources are consistent with the state's approved policies. Stripping California of that authority would cause direct irreparable harm, not just to our organizations, but to the coastal resources and the communities that this law was written to protect. Thank you for your time.

Josh Lott01:07:47

Thank you, Marty. Our next two speakers are Derek Brockbank and Zakiyyah Smith. Derek, you may unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Derek Brockbank01:08:00

My name is Derek Brockbank. I am the Executive Director of Coastal States Organization. We represent the 34 coastal states and territories with approved coastal zone management programs.

I'm going to limit my comments today to the irregularities in how NOAA has reopened this Section 312 evaluation and the concerns that raises for all coastal states with approved coastal zone management programs.

Our first concern is that NOAA's notice of reopening a substantially completed program evaluation deviates from established review procedures without clear statutory, regulatory, or procedural basis. This evaluation was reopened after an extensive review that was done in 2024 with no clear answers as to why NOAA was opening it up and with no clear explanation for why a final evaluation was not provided within the 120-day requirement of the CZMA. This would be analogous to me reviewing one of my employees without any regard to when and how those staff evaluations should be conducted. It would be very understandable if my staff was concerned that I was reviewing them in July for what should have been an end-of-year review.

Our second concern is that the CZMA is very detailed and very explicit in what can be reviewed in a 312 evaluation. And the only justification that we have seen for reopening this review was in a letter by Secretary Lutnik to NOAA, where Secretary Lutnik explicitly states or claims California's long record of obstructing technological innovation, economic development, and related federal efforts. Our concern is that obstructing federal efforts and obstructing technological innovation, whether or not California has done this, is not something to be considered under a Section 312 review. This would be analogous to if I tried to justify a staff evaluation by noting that one of my staff was impeding his efforts of his co-workers, was wearing a blue shirt, and was wearing glasses. My staff would reasonably conclude that my evaluation was going to take into account his appearance. And that is not acceptable. And so our concern is that this review will expand beyond the scope of the CZMA and we have strong concerns about that, not just for California, but for all coastal zone management programs. Thank you very much.

Josh Lott01:10:48

Thank you, Derek.

Our next two speakers are Zakiyyah Smith, and then Annelisa Moe. Zakiyyah, you may unmute your mic and begin speaking.

Zakiyyah Smith01:11:02

Thank you. Good afternoon, staff. I'm Zakiyyah Smith. I'm a resident of Long Beach, California and support the work the California Coastal Commission is doing to protect my local beaches. I enjoy visiting my local beaches for walks, riding bikes, and playing with my kids. I have spent my entire life visiting California beaches all year long. The beaches and water that my family and I recreate in are cleaner and safer thanks to the Coastal Commission and California's coastal program.

As just two recent examples of Commission actions that have benefited my beach and local coastal access. First, in 2022, the Commission unanimously denied a permit for a 50 million

gallon per day seawater desalination plant in Huntington Beach, just down the coast from me, which would have greatly impacted marine life in the area.

Second, just last month, the Commission reached an enforcement settlement to resolve a bayfront public access violation by an HOA in Long Beach. The HOA was required by a prior permit to provide access along the Alamitos Bay waterfront, but it was not doing so. In properly enforcing and resolving the violation, the Commission required removing gates and signs that blocked the access and required adding more than two dozen new public access signs, ADA accessibility improvements, and more.

These decisions, which are consistent with the California Coastal Act, protect the beaches and coasts that I care about and my ability to continue using them and spending time on clean, plastic-free beaches. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:12:33

Thank you, Zakiyyah.

Our next two speakers are Annalisa Moe, then Barbara Salzman. Annelisa, please unmute your mic and begin your comment.

Annelisa Moe01:12:50

Hello, my name is Annelisa Moe. You just heard from my colleague from Heal the Bay, Naomi Meurice. But as a reminder, we are a nonprofit organization that has worked for over 40 years to protect the coastal waters and watersheds of Southern California. I myself am a lifelong resident of California, a beach lover, scuba diver. I've spent decades now getting to know the incredible coastline of California.

The Coastal Zone Management Program and the Coastal Zone Management Act have played a really important role in protecting a healthy, accessible, and resilient coastline. Over the past 50 years, California's coastal protections have helped to ensure that development can occur while still protecting public access, water quality, habitat, the long-term health of our coast. That balance is incredibly important to protect the environmental and economic health of California's coastline.

And I want to emphasize that at Heal the Bay, we believe this review is really inappropriately timed. The California coastal management program was just evaluated in 2024, and that evaluation found that the program is functioning as intended. We absolutely support continued evaluation, ongoing improvement, but we should be thoughtful about whether another review so soon after a successful evaluation is really necessary, particularly when California is already

balancing tremendous development pressures along one of the nation's most valuable and vulnerable coastlines.

Protecting our coast does not mean standing in the way of progress. It's about making sure that when projects move forward, we take the time to understand the pros and cons of construction and evaluate how it will serve the people and the ecosystems of California. It offers an opportunity to minimize avoidable harm and account for some of the unavoidable impacts to coastal resources and communities when we do develop. So that's the value of a strong coastal protection program. It provides a framework for thoughtful decision-making and not an obstacle to progress.

So we urge NOAA to recognize the success of California's existing program and to avoid changes that could weaken these longstanding protections. Our coastline is too important to treat it as an afterthought. Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.

Josh Lott01:15:18

Thank you, Annalisa. Our next two commenters are Barbara Salzman, then Brittany McWhorter. Barbara, if you can hear me, you may unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Okay, at this time, we'll move on to Brittany McWhorter. And then after Brittany will be Philip Musegaas. Brittany, please unmute your mic and begin your comment.

Brittany McWhorter01:16:01

My name is Brittany McWhorter. I hold a Master's of Science in Marine Biology and I'm speaking on behalf of Turtle Island Restoration Network. The coast of California is extremely special to me and is one of the driving ecosystems that made me want to pursue marine biology and led to me working with Turtle Island Restoration Network, which is an ocean conservation and advocacy organization headquartered in California.

We strongly oppose any effort to weaken California's coastal management program or the state's authority to protect our coastal resources. The coast of California along the Pacific Ocean is one of the most species-rich ecosystems in the world and is home to the Pacific leatherback sea turtle. The Pacific leatherback population is at most risk of extinction due to compounding threats from fisheries, oil and gas exploitation, and coastal development. Turtle Island Restoration Network won a major victory for Pacific leatherbacks in 2001 with the implementation of the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area, which reduced the number of leatherback deaths related to bycatch in the fishery from 112 between 1990 and 2001 to near zero between 2001 and 2012. We were able to limit the threat from one hazard that the Pacific Leatherback faces in California but fracking along the coast adds additional compounding threats to this already overburdened species. Direct physical contact, toxic inhalation, and ingestion of

tar balls or contaminated prey all contributed to over 5,000 sea turtle deaths following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf. California's wildlife has already faced devastating losses following the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill which released hundreds of thousands of barrels of crude oil into the ocean. This devastating oil spill led to the marine protections still in place today that have protected so many species that call the coast their home. We shouldn't need another devastating oil spill to gain better protections for our wildlife.

In a time when we should be focusing on moving towards sustainable and renewable energy solutions, this proposal instead extends pollution, and because of the risk to endangered marine wildlife and coastal communities, I'm here to ask the Commission to formally object to the current proposal to start fracking in the Pacific Ocean for the first time in over a decade. Thank you for your time.

Josh Lott01:18:29

Thank you, Brittany.

Our next speaker will be Phillip Musegaas. Then after that will be Elizabeth Lamb. And after Elizabeth, we will go back to Barbara Salzman. Phillip, please unmute your mic and begin your speaking.

Phillip Musegaas01:18:47

Thank you. My name is Philip Musegaas, and I am the executive director of San Diego Coastkeeper. Coastkeeper has worked for 30 years to protect and restore coastal waters in San Diego County using education, community science, grassroots activism and enforcement of clean water laws to hold polluters accountable.

We oppose any effort by NOAA to weaken or undermine California's authority under the Coastal Zone Management Act and through the coastal management program. Coastkeeper opposes this CZMA review process because NOAA has utterly failed to provide any factual basis for its decision to threaten this program's future. NOAA conducted a review of California's coastal program in 2025 and found no problems, highlighting the fact that this is an arbitrary and capricious federal action that is nothing more than naked political aggression. The goal here is to fabricate an excuse for defunding or revoking California's coastal program so that offshore drilling and other harmful industries can take hold despite overwhelming opposition from two thirds of Californians.

California's coastal program has been a success for nearly 50 years, balancing economic development and protection of coastal resources. San Diego, for example, is home to the largest US naval bases on the West Coast, demonstrating that federal activities vital to our national interests are not inconsistent with protection of our precious coastal waters. In San Diego, we

have made great strides to protect coastal marine ecosystems. 11 marine protected areas were established along our coast over 10 years ago, and actually along the entire California coast. And a recent statewide review found California MPAs were a huge success, resulting in increased biodiversity, fish populations, and protection of sensitive habitat. Our beautiful MPAs, beaches, and coastlines support a multi-billion dollar tourism industry that is reliant on clean beaches and healthy marine ecosystems. All of this would be a grave risk from offshore drilling, which Coastkeeper absolutely opposes.

I'd like to conclude my comments with a few lyrics from a Woody Guthrie song. I'm gonna tell you fascists, you may be surprised. The people in this world are getting organized. You're bound to lose, you fascists, bound to lose. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:21:17

Thank you, Phillip.

Our next commenter will be Elizabeth Lambe and then back to Barbara Salzman. Elizabeth, please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Elizabeth Lambe01:21:32

Thank you. My name is Elizabeth Lambe. I'm executive director of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust, and I'm speaking on behalf of our organization. Our mission is the protection and restoration of coastal wetlands located between Long Beach and Seal Beach.

The vast majority of Southern California wetlands have been lost forever to development and infrastructure. Thus, it's very important that we protect those that remain not only as habitat for threatened and endangered species, but also as a nature area for people to go to enjoy time with their families in a natural setting, something that's very difficult to achieve in Southern California.

I am here to express our strong support for California's coastal management program, and we urge NOAA to continue supporting the successful federal-state partnership. California's coastal program has a decades-long record of approving well-sited projects while objecting only when there is documented harm.

We find that this review is redundant. NOAA evaluated California's program in 2024 and found that it was being successfully implemented and enforced. This review could undermine California's authority to manage its coastal resources under the Coastal Zone Management Act, which is a federal law. A negative finding could suspend federal funding to the California Coastal Commission and related state agencies and lay the groundwork to weaken the state's federal consistency authority.

On behalf of my organization, the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust, we ask that you please ensure that California's highly successful and balanced coastal management program stays intact. Thank you for your time.

Josh Lott01:23:30

Thank you, Elizabeth.

We'll go back to Barbara Salzman as the next commenter, and then Christina Aranguren.

Barbara Salzman01:23:43

My name is Barbara Salzman and I'm representing the Marin Audubon Society. We'd like to join the hundreds of others who have testified over the last few days in support of the coastal zone management program in California, the effective federal and state partnerships that have existed for many years, and the agencies being evaluated here today.

Marin Audubon has a long history of participating with these three agencies and this evaluation has nothing to do with their performance. We've been commenting to the Coastal Commission on projects for many years. We've advocated for protection of the Bay before BCDC for the last 40 years and interacted with BCDC as a permittee for 30 years. We've been interviewed as part of the coastal zone management evaluations a number of times. And the Coastal Conservancy, over the last 30 years, we have received many millions of dollars which have enabled us to restore and permanently protect 1,000 acres approximately to tidal marsh along the San Francisco Bay shoreline. We know firsthand the value of these agencies. An important reason California's economy does so well is because of the work of these agencies and what they do in maintaining and enhancing our coastal resources.

A healthy ecosystem supports a strong economy, clean waters and beaches, thriving marshes, aquatic and coastal vegetative communities, diverse and abundant wildlife populations attract people for living, working, and recreating. They even support the commercial uses that go on. These uses and the projects they require coexist with the birds and the fish and the marine mammal populations because they are subject to review by these agencies. Sometimes we don't agree with the agencies, but the projects that are approved are subject to extensive review and usually turn out much better. We need these agencies to continue their oversight.

Offshore oil and gas drilling, spaceports, undersea cables, and the like can adversely impact the marine environment, directly destroy habitat, impede movement of wildlife and people, risk contamination of coastal waters, and the survival of fish mammal and marine mammal populations. Such projects need to be reviewed by these agencies. So since we agree with the

2024 evaluation. That should stand. And the program, California's coastal zone program should remain in place and be finally approved. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:26:25

Thank you, Barbara.

Our next two speakers are Christina Aranguren, and then Theresa Ryan.
Christina, please unmute your mic at the top of your screen and begin your comment.

Good afternoon. The Institute for Conservation, Advocacy, Research, and Education would like to voice its serious concerns for the sudden and baseless reopening for review of California's coastal management program under the Coastal Zone Management Act, currently being advanced by your agency's Department of Commerce.

I'm iCare's president, Christina Aranguren. I live, work, and recreate on the rugged edge of Northern California's coast in Mendocino County, where I'm grateful for every protection, state or federal, which has been created to protect and preserve our coastal, marine, and public trust resources. The communities, residents, and tourists who visit here, one of the state's most beloved coast lines, continue to benefit from these protections.

My own family has defended state water resources for six decades now with my late father, Robert Baiocchi, recognized by NOAA's Department of Commerce in 2001 as an environmental hero for his lifelong efforts and accomplishments in fisheries conservation. And I must say, never have any of us considered ourselves extremists or obstructionists.

California's authority for the management of its coastal resources cannot become a political target to attack and weaken in order to fast track onerous industries in the guise of economic development, activities which Californians have long and repeatedly rejected as compatible for our coastline, fossil fuel production, offshore drilling, desalination projects, and the undersea cables and equipment some require, rocket launches and nuclear projects. Instead, the state agencies authorized for coastal management should be strengthened and better funded and enforced as models of successful and effective stewardship not only with protecting existing resources, but in restoring what's needed and redeveloping when necessary with ample environmental review. This is especially relevant now in the face of coastal migration and growing pressure for development. We thank you for the opportunity to comment today and urge that NOAA reaffirm its confidence in and commitment to California's coastal management program.

Josh Lott01:29:08

Thank you, Christina.

Our next two speakers are Theresa Ryan, then Katie Thompson.

Theresa Ryan01:29:49

Thank you. Good afternoon. Thank you staff for the opportunity to comment. My name is Theresa Ryan. I'm chair of the Redwood chapter of the Sierra Club Water Committee, and that represents nine Northern California counties. I'm a retired public health nurse, and I hold a degree in environmental studies.

I'm here to support California's coastal management plan and respectfully urge NOAA to conclude that California continues to effectively implement and enforce its federally approved coastal management program.

I live in Sonoma County, about 45 minutes from Bodega Bay. I've lived near the coast my entire life. In 1969, I was in high school in Santa Barbara when the oil spill disaster occurred off the coast there. Santa Barbara is a world-famous recreation destination. Years later, we are still wiping oil off our feet when going into the ocean.

As others have mentioned, the Santa Barbara spill sparked the creation of the Coastal Zone Management Act signed by Nixon. In his State of the Union address, he said, because there are no local or state boundaries to the problems of environment, the federal government must play an active positive role, but Washington must not displace state and local initiative. The people who work, live, and recreate near the coast that engenders 51 billion dollars a year for the coastal economy are the ones legitimately who understand what development occurs.

Because of the Santa Barbara spill being indelibly marked in my memory and the knowledge that the California Coastal Commission has worked towards preventing other oil drilling pollution, I'm asking that we keep the California Coastal Management Act intact. It was reviewed two years ago. The review gave top marks to the three agencies that administer the Act. It has worked well for 50 years, approving most federal projects. 82% of Californians say it is working well.

The increasing warming of our temperatures making summers miserable here and around the globe, the January 2025 catastrophic Pacific Palisades fire in LA, as well as others this summer, and the rising sea level indicate that climate change is a threat to our survival. The California coastal management plan and the agencies that work under it are a significant support that we look to to protect California from oil drilling that contributes to this climate change, not to mention the financial and environmental damage from the inevitable spills.

The California Coastal Commission has worked with the Sierra Club in California that I have volunteered for 15 years. I've witnessed it actively protecting us from other industrial pollution that could damage sea life and marine lands. Thank you for considering my comments. I respectfully request that NOAA affirm California's coastal management plan as consistent with Coastal Zone Management Act.

Josh Lott01:32:53

Thank you, Theresa.

Our next commenter is Katie Thompson. And then after that, David Gurney.
Katie, please unmute your mic at the top of your screen.

Katie Thompson

Thanks. Good afternoon. My name is Katie Thompson, and I'm executive director of Save Our Shores, a grassroots nonprofit based in Santa Cruz that has worked to protect the Monterey Bay region for nearly 50 years.

Monterey Bay is one of the most extraordinary marine environments on the planet. A national marine sanctuary, a working waterfront, a place people build their lives around. But it's also deeply personal. Every weekend, families walk these beaches, surfers paddle out before work, kids do their first tide pool exploring on these rocks. A protected accessible coast isn't an abstract policy goal for us. It's daily life.

Save Our Shores has been close to this community since our founding, so we know how much residents want a coast they can visit and enjoy. Every year, close to 5,000 volunteers show up for us on beach cleanups and they do it because they are adamant about what this coast means to them. The California coastal management program is a big part of why this coast is still worth protecting. Over nearly 50 years, it has approved the vast majority of projects it reviews and objected only when there was documented harm to the coast. That is a program working as intended, not a pattern of obstruction.

I am constantly impressed with how the Coastal Commission is able to delicately balance the needs of economic development and environmental conservation so that our beaches are accessible and healthy for future generations and for everyone. The Commission is fair and always keeping all stakeholders in mind.

Projects like spaceport infrastructure, offshore oil production, pipeline maintenance, desalination projects, and undersea cable carry real risk to our coasts. Offshore oil production and pipelines have a documented history of spills that foul beaches and kill marine life for years afterwards. Research shows it is not a matter of if, but when an oil spill will occur. Desalination plants can

suck in and destroy marine organisms at the intake and discharge concentrated brine that harms nearshore ecosystems. Undersea cables and spaceport infrastructure disturb seafloor habitat and disrupt the coastal environment during construction and launch activity.

The state's ability to determine consistency and have control over projects that would have far reaching and long-lasting impacts is exactly what this program is for. On behalf of Save Our Shores and the thousands of volunteers who show up for this coast, we stand in support of the California coastal program. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:35:52

Thank you, Katie. Our next two speakers are David Gurney and then Camilla Rang.

David, you may unmute your mic and begin speaking.

Okay, we'll move on to Camilla Rang. And then Chris Desser.

Camilla, if you can hear me, you may unmute your mic and begin speaking.

Camilla Rang01:36:24

Good afternoon. I'm Camilla Rang from San Diego County. I want to join in with the overwhelming chorus of opposing NOAA's suggested extra audit of the California Coastal Management Act and the Coastal Commission. That audit feels like an attempt of an anti-environmental coup d'état. There was an audit just two years ago. Certify and officiate that audit before starting a new one.

Every state is entitled to protect its rights. To protect our coast, wetlands, and environment does not equal standing in the way of national interests. The California Coastal Commission is not standing in the way of national interests. If anything, they are standing up for and protecting national interests. The California coastal wetlands are visited and enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of Americans from outside California each year. It's everything from surfers, kayakers, sailors, sunbathers, to birders. Those ecological areas have to be protected for all Americans and future generations.

I also feel this is not only a question that we should have, of oil rigs and more SpaceX shoot-offs or not. It's a question of who should decide whether we should have any of those. And that is the people who live here, the people of California, and who we put in charge of that voice, the California Coastal Commission. If the people of California, the Coastal Commission, decides that offshore oil rigs is something we can live with if we get major mitigation, so be it. But that should be up to us, the people of California, not the federal government. Hands off. This is our land. We decide. If the government wants something from us, give us an offer we can't resist.

Without the California Coastal Commission, our wetlands would have been a mere memory and the coastline would not have had nearly as much public access. They have negotiated incredible deals that have benefited both production, transportation, and nature. To badmouth them and call them extremists is shameful. Let them continue doing their good work. Mother Nature needs them. If anything, California's coast needs more protection, not less. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:38:47

Thank you, Camilla.

Okay, we'll move on to the next speakers, Chris Desser, and after Chris is Mary Valdemar. Chris, you may unmute your mic at any time and begin speaking.

Chris Desser01:40:04

Okay. My name is Christina Desser. I live in Point Reyes Station, California. I'm a former commissioner on the California Coastal Commission, and I'm speaking now to urge NOAA to maintain California's current Coastal Commission authority within the California coastal management program.

This kind of review has often been largely pro forma, this time it must be taken seriously. NOAA has singled out offshore oil production, pipeline maintenance, spaceport infrastructure, desalination, and undersea cables for special attention. Those are not random subjects. They're precisely the areas where a strong Coastal Commission is essential. The Commission's authority is not a bureaucratic technicality. Federal consistency review is one of California's principal tools for ensuring that federal activities and federally permitted projects comply with the California Coastal Act. It gives our state a public lawful process for protecting coastal resources, public access, marine life and community safety. That authority is particularly vital for offshore oil and pipelines. Offshore drilling is never only about an oil platform, it means pipelines, spill risk, onshore facilities, industrialization of the shoreline, and long-term threats to marine ecosystems, fisheries, recreation, and the public trust. California must retain the ability to require that such projects meet our coastal standards and to object when they do not.

As a former Commissioner, I've seen why this authority matters. I led the Commission's denial of a proposed marine amphibious landing exercise on a beach in Monterey County. The Commission's responsibility was not to automatically defer to federal power or institutional momentum. It was to determine in public and under California law whether that proposed use was consistent with the protection of the coast. It was not. The beach remained a beach. The same principle applies to the other issues under review. I urge NOAA to reaffirm California's full coastal certification, preserve the Coastal Commission's existing federal consistency authority, and recognize rigorous state coastal oversight as a strength and not a flaw of California's program. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:42:23

Thank you, Chris.

Our next two speakers are Mary Valdemar. And then Elena Tillman. Mary, you may unmute your mic and begin your comment.

Mary Valdemar01:42:39

Hi, my name is Mary Valdemar. I'm a lifelong resident of Southern California, out here in the Inland Empire at San Bernardino Valley College, where I work really closely with local youth through an organization called the Environmental Education Collaborative and CHICA, which is a Chicano Indigenous service co-op here in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. We work closely with youth, Chicano, Indigenous, Native. We work with elders, Black community, API, LGBTQ, youth, disabled, second language learners. And we've done this work for almost a decade now. And many of the folks in our region, you know, as we're inland, you know, don't get to go to the beach often. So we take young people from the Inland Empire to the coast. I was raised up in Lakewood and Long Beach, and so, you know, biking to the beach and enjoying the coast from those areas through the Santa Riverbed all the way to Bolsa Chica was something I grew up doing my whole entire childhood and teenage years.

And we watched over the years, you know, decisions being made, you know, that harm and decisions being made that protect the coast. I've heard several speakers over the last couple of days I've been listening uh you know since the comments have been beginning and I've heard folks say that many say that we need uh you know oil, we need infrastructure, we need you know energy, we need development and I'm just here to say that many, many more people say that we need the Coastal Commission. We need the protections that are in place for future generations. We should not be prioritizing infrastructure and economic greed and the goals of profiteers that do not live here. And we should not suffer the consequences of emergency orders that safeguard energy and military over the lives, health, and welfare of people and ecosystems, especially in the name of children and youth.

As someone who's an elder here in our community and has been working alongside young people, to talk about how we as humanity can be more in balance with nature and how we can look to the first people, Native people, and Indigenous peoples as the guides to be in better balance and working with our environment instead of against it, I strongly urge you to keep the Coastal Commission in place and to continue to work with all of us to make sure that we have the coast in place for future generations. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:45:39

Thank you, Mary.

Our next two speakers will be Elena Tillman, and then Kathleen Wheeler.
Elena, you may unmute your mic and begin speaking.

Elena Tillman01:45:52

Good afternoon. My name is Elena Tillman from San Diego, and I'm here to speak in strong support of the California Coastal Commission and coastal management program. I spend much of my time, my free time, advocating for our coast and volunteering as a marine mammal docent in Southern California. I have firsthand seen what this coast means, not only to wildlife but to the millions of people who come here to walk, swim, surf, watch wildlife, fish, and just simply experience the ocean.

The Coastal Commission is one of the most important safeguards we have for keeping that experience available to everyone while protecting the ecosystems that make our coast extraordinary. Our kelp forests, of course the sea lions, harbor seals, shorebirds, and other wildlife are already facing enormous pressures from climate change, pollution, disease, fishing impacts, and increasing human activity. We cannot protect the coast by weakening the agency charged with protecting it. The Coastal Commission represents the principle that California's coast belongs to all of us, not just developers, special interests, or the loudest voices in the room. It protects public access while ensuring that wildlife and fragile coastal habitats have a future.

And protecting the coast is not anti-economy, it's actually economic policy. California's beaches, wildlife, recreation, and public access support tourism, local businesses, jobs, and billions of dollars in economic activity. So, the Coastal Commission also protects all of that, the natural assets that make the economy possible. So I urge you to stand firm against any efforts to undermine the Commission's authority. California's coast is, as many of these folks have said, irreplaceable. And once these protections are lost, we simply can't get them back. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:47:40

Thank you, Elena.

Our next two speakers are Kathleen Wheeler, then Wes Truong.
Kathleen, you may please unmute your mic and begin your comments.

Kathleen Wheeler01:47:54

The process of performance evaluation itself can be a very positive experience when it's not driven by an agenda other than improvement of the parties involved. And I'm talking about the party doing the evaluating and the party being evaluated. But this performance evaluation is inappropriate not just because of the recency with which the last one was conducted, but because there is not enough trust in the system.

This review is more of an attempt to remove any and all guardrails on this administration's currying of favor with the oil industry and their blatant disregard for the environment. They've earned that distrust through their repeated actions reflecting that disregard. They've effectively destroyed trust to the point where they really can't possibly get citizen buy-in for this review. A review that frankly has nothing to do with getting better at protecting the California coast and ocean waters. Thank you.

Josh Lott01:49:05

Thank you, Kathleen, for your comment.

Our next two commenters are Wes Chuang, then Sydney Pitcher.

OK, we'll move on to Molly Culton. And after Molly will be Kay Arnold.

Molly Culton01:49:51

Okay, thank you. I want to raise that there are some accessibility issues with the Adobe Connect platform, so folks might be having a hard time unmuting themselves.

So thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. My name is Molly Culton. I am an ocean and coastal lover. It's in my blood as a lifelong resident of California.

The California coastline is world famous for a reason. It's because Coastal Act protections and regulation work, and provide real results to protect public access resources and preserve coastal ecosystems. The California coast generates a \$51 billion economy through tourism, recreation, commercial and recreational fishing, agriculture, hospitality, maritime commerce, and many local businesses. California is the fourth largest economy in the world, and that's no thanks to offshore drilling or Elon Musk's space rockets. Californians don't want those things here, and we will continue to make that loud and clear at every opportunity we have.

The CZMA program in California had just undergone a periodic review two years ago and found no issues. The program is working exactly as intended. This present effort amounts to little more than political theater and we're all very well aware of it. The Coastal Zone Management Act was signed into law in 1972 in the wake of the devastating Santa Barbara oil spill in 1969. And as much as this current federal administration is trying to set us back decades in every conceivable way, California refuses to go back. Hands off the California coast. Keep California coastal protections and the CZMA program intact. Thank you.

Joelle Gore - NOAA01:51:36

Thank you, Molly.

This is Joelle Gore. I am the Stewardship Division Chief for the Office for Coastal Management, and I will be calling on speakers for a little time here. Our next speaker is Kay Arnold. After Kay, Katie Venoni.

It looks like Kay has dropped off. Katie Venoni, if you can unmute your line and provide your comments.

We will come back to Katie. And having heard, there might be some accessibility issues, we'll keep speakers who are lined up in the lineup and we'll return to you as we can.

Next two speakers are Brady Bradshaw and Amy Erlich. Brady, if you can come off of mute and provide your comments.

Brady Bradshaw01:53:18

Thank you. Hi, my name is Brady Bradshaw. I'm speaking to you today as a resident of Santa Cruz, California, also as a national champion freediver for the United States. I train in multiple locations up and down the Pacific coast, including San Diego, Redondo Beach, and Monterey Bay. I've also taught many people to swim in the ocean off of our coast of all ages from all different backgrounds and it's been a place of spiritual refuge for me for the past 10 years.

The Pacific coast is under major threat right now from industry of every kind, including the oil and gas industry, which has subjected our coast to major oil spills, has caused the gruesome deaths of marine mammals, large quantities of fish, and has caused major damage to the California coastal economy already, which provides over 600,000 jobs for people, including myself, who have run businesses to make a living off of sharing the ocean with people who wouldn't otherwise know how to access it. To take away the heart and soul of California by attacking our Coastal Commission is not only shameful and disgusting, it would harm the higher economy of the United States.

California is a shining example of what can be done when the economy and the ecology of the area are in harmony. The way that the coastal tourism and recreation economy has functioned is based on a sustainable practice of attending to our coastline while also serving people's needs.

So I just want to encourage the folks working at NOAA, I know you're under a lot of pressure from the Trump administration to attack California's programs that are working so well for us, but I am asking you out of the goodness of your hearts to make the finding required to allow our Coastal Commission to continue to function as it has been in protecting coasts and keeping it the way that it is for all of our benefits. And come out in the ocean with me and then you'll see for

yourself, if you haven't already, how magnificent it is to interact with some of the wildlife out here.

Joelle Gore - NOAA01:56:17

Thank you.

Next up, we have Aimee Erlich. Then we will go to Sydney Pitcher, who had a technical difficulty earlier. After Sydney we'll go to Katie Venoni again to see if those technical difficulties can correct. So Aimee Erlich.

Aimee Erlich01:56:49

Hi, everyone. I am speaking to express my strong opposition to the unprecedented and highly unusual federal review of the California coastal management program. I grew up in the San Fernando Valley where having reliable public coastal access provided a vital and necessary respite from intense inland heat. My connection to these waters runs deep. I am a former intern with the California Coastal Commission, and I actively surf, fish, and dive along this coastline.

I know firsthand that the intrinsic value of our coastal ecosystems is worth far more than any oil extraction the administration is seeking to force upon us. Many of the dedicated professionals working daily to protect our coast share this deep connection as recreationists, residents, and stewards. For an administration that explicitly prioritizes the prevention of government overreach and the protection of small businesses, this sudden federal intervention represents a staggering contradiction of these core principles. California's coastline is already managed by multiple highly effective dedicated bodies, including the California Coastal Commission, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and the State Coastal Conservancy, which have successfully protected our coastal resources for over 50 years.

Contrary to mischaracterizations, the Coastal Commission does not work to obstruct development. Rather, its mandate is to guide development in a way that actively protects the public and environmental interest. Forcing additional politically motivated layers of federal oversight directly undermines this time-tested framework of balanced local control and state-level determination. Furthermore, this [unintelligible] poses a direct threat to California's multi-billion dollar coastal economy. Our ocean industries, coastal tourism, and small businesses rely entirely on the predictable, balanced oversight that our state programs provide.

California's world-class academic institutions, including UCSD, UCSB, UCSC, and Stanford, amongst many others, have been instrumental in ensuring that our coastal science and policy advance hand-in-hand to support conservation and economic development in tandem. Because of our state's collaborative academic ecosystem, California relies on real-time cutting-edge science to safely advance critical industries including food production, maritime innovation, and

complex nature-based climate solutions like the south bay salt pond restoration project right here in San Francisco Bay area. Simultaneously, our existing management framework has already facilitated the deployment of robust modern green energy infrastructure that is active and online and currently available for use. Given that California has proven it can build a forward-looking green economy while safeguarding local ecosystems, this federal intervention is entirely unjustified. It is entirely transparent that this is a wolf for oil disguised as a legitimate policy intervention, a targeted effort state environmental guardrails in order to open up our protected coastline to fossil fuel interests. The current federal intervention creates unnecessary regulatory uncertainty that harms businesses, recreationists, and communities while completely ignoring decades of successful state and federal cooperation. I strongly urge NOAA to respect the principles of limited federal intervention, honor the successful 2024 review, and halt any effort to decertify, weaken, or bully California's coastal authority.

Joelle Gore - NOAA01:59:58

Thank you, Aimee.

Next up, we have Sydney Pitcher followed by Katie Venoni.

Okay, we will move on. The next speaker is Peter Adame. After Peter is Hilary Stamper. Peter, if you can click the mic icon, bring yourself off mute and provide your comments.

Peter Adame02:03:04

Hello, my name is Peter Adame, and I work for a West Coast seafood wholesaler and processor called Lusamerica Foods. We source local seafood from our dock in Monterey Bay's Moss Landing Harbor, as well as Fort Bragg's Noyo Harbor. Our hardworking American fishermen are facing several hardships already, and I believe California's coastal program is currently working properly to review projects and evaluate their threats effectively on our working waterfronts, local fish populations, and marine ecosystems.

Outside of work, I love to surf and play beach volleyball along our beautiful coastline, and I support California's coastal program that has a decades-long record of approving well-sited projects and objecting only when there's documented harm. I also volunteer as the chair of the Monterey County Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, where we work to protect our coastline and host beach cleanups regularly. As I'm volunteering my time for what I love, I'm here today speaking as I believe real authority is at stake. A negative finding could suspend federal funding to the Coastal Commission and related agencies and lay the groundwork to challenge the federal consistency authority that allows Californians to weigh in on offshore drilling and federal infrastructure projects.

The California coastal management program is critical for protecting the coastline that makes our state spectacular. This review is also redundant as NOAA evaluated California's program in 2024 and found it successfully implemented and enforced. The report was never finalized and this new review comes less than two years later, far sooner than the typical five-to-10 year cycle. These protections through the California coastal management program are very important to me as a surfer, beach lover and seafood industry professional. Thank you.

Joelle Gore - NOAA02:05:06

Thank you, Peter.

The next speaker is Hilary Stamper, followed by Lisa Wiggins.
Hilary, please bring yourself off mute and provide your comment.

Hilary Stamper02:05:26

I'm Hilary. I'm a California runner, walker, biker, beach volleyball player, and a Parks and Rec Commissioner for the city of Half Moon Bay. And I'm also the communications manager for the nonprofit Cal Wild. And I enjoy California's coast almost every single day. And I thank the California Coastal Commission for my ability to do so.

I'm asking you to continue with our coastal management as California has been enacting it to date because they do a phenomenal job. I've traveled all over this country and all over the world, and I have seen the unique and incredible impact that California's Coastal Commission has had on protecting our access to our coast and the lives of the wildlife that matter so much to me as a Californian. Because of the way we protect our coast and the public's access to it, all visitors are able to run, surf, swim, walk, and play along our oceans and beaches, not just people who buy beachfront property. And that is so important to our standard of living here in California, because when homes go up and block our coastal trails or oil spills ruin our sandy beaches, we lose one of the assets that makes California one of the best places to live and visit. And that's our beautiful, healthy coastline. So I ask you to please keep the coastal management program intact. They do a great job and every day I'm so thankful for them.

Joelle Gore - NOAA02:06:48

Thank you, Hillary.

The next speaker is Lisa Wiggins, followed by Yehuda Ben Hamo. Lisa, bring yourself off mute and provide your comment.

Lisa Wiggins02:07:26

OK, thank you. I'm a beekeeper on the southern Mendocino coast, and I understand that the

productive partnerships are critical for maintaining the beauty and economics of our region. The Coastal Commission was a partner in the construction of our home 10 years ago here, and currently we're under review for a permit to take down some trees. Yes, the Commission was at times frustrating because of its slow bureaucratic structure, but we understood and moreover highly appreciated that they are here to protect the various interests of our shared environment.

Each in our own way, we live by regulating our inputs and outputs along the coastline to keep our interests in the best balance we can. I maintain only three honeybee hives so that our native bumblebees have enough food sources for themselves along the coastline. Tomorrow the salmon fishery opens for probably the last time this season with limits on their catch so that we will have more salmon for the following season. And I occasionally go down to the tide pools to feast on the urchins proliferating on the threatened abalone kelp sources.

And now we are facing the opening up of drilling with unfettered access that has a long history of destruction, and oil spills that kill our coastal creatures and plants. As my husband and I have invested in more solar panels on our home to help lessen the need for oil, it won't be enough to preserve our waters. We desperately need a strong Coastal Commission to continue to be our state partner as we all work together to find our best sustainable way forward for all of us. Thank you for everyone who's contributed their comments today, and hopefully we will meet again in our efforts.

Joelle Gore - NOAA02:09:40

Thank you, Lisa.

Next speaker is Yahuda Ben Hamo.

Next speaker, Wes Chuang. Wes, please take yourself off mute and provide a comment.

Wes Chuang02:12:02

So my comment would be, to leave the California Coastal Commission to do the job and I as a Los Angeles resident, as a resident of this state, we want to be able to have jurisdiction over our own coast and not have an administration, a president that doesn't have the public's best interest in mind and is completely wrong about how to go about energy independence as a national security or economic engine. We in California have been good at managing our own coast. It's not perfect, but certainly better than what President Trump wants to do, which is bad for the economy, bad for the environment, bad for the wildlife, bad for all communities.

So just leave California to do its own job. We are doing much better than the federal government right now. And it might be even economically good for him because If we're doing well economically, we're paying better taxes instead of having one industry controlling our coast and

then not actually benefiting the residents or this country. We should be doing more blue economy, like tidal wave energy, offshore wind when it's planned right and not affecting wildlife like whales and other marine mammals or other non charismatic marine life. Thank you.

Joelle Gore - NOAA02:14:53

Thank you, Wes.

Okay, let's go again to Yehuda Ben-Hamo. Please bring yourself off mute and provide your comment.

Yehuda Ben-Hamo02:17:22

Yeah, so my name is Yehuda Ben-Hamo. I'm a lifelong surfer, angler, and ocean lover whose livelihood depended on this coast for a long time. Also speaking as behalf of Coastal Conservation Manager at Wild Coast, a bi-national conservation team, protecting over 40 million acres of coastal marine habitat in the U.S. and Mexico.

I just wanted to say we should call this what it is. The effort to dismantle the CZMA is a reckless attempt to open California's coastline to oil and gas. And we know how that can end, from deep water horizon in the Gulf to Refugio and Huntington Beach, here on home turf. We know that when it comes to offshore drilling, a spill is never a question of if, it's a matter of when. And the economic risk is enormous. A single major oil spill off of Southern California is estimated to cause more than \$30 billion in market losses and \$7 billion in environmental damage. That's only a partial estimate. The full statewide and national economic consequences of a major spill have not yet been fully assessed or publicly reported. The U.S. economy cannot afford to gamble with these risks. We do know that a single spill could disrupt major industries in California, including ports handling nearly 50 percent of U.S. containerized imports and exports, representing roughly about 500 billion U.S. dollars annually. And new drilling isn't necessary. BOEM currently reports about over 2,000 active leases, but only 400 are producing. That means about 1,500 unactive leases. So why would we risk this catastrophe when these releases remain untapped. And also, domestic offshore drilling, we know, has no negligible impact on consumer prices at the pump. Even a full restart of California's idle offshore platforms would not meaningfully change U.S. energy supply or prices, as it currently only provides about 0.05% of U.S. daily petroleum consumption. And if this lease sale occurred today, new offshore production typically takes three to five years for exploration, permitting, and infrastructure, and about 7 to 10 years before new oil reaches consumers. So this cannot meaningfully address today's gas prices. The CZMA is working. It's worked for decades. It's protected our coasts and our economy and our livelihoods for many years and should continue to do so. Thanks for this opportunity to provide comment.

Joelle Gore - NOAA02:19:45

Thank you, Yehuda. Our next speaker is David Gurney.

David, please take yourself off mute and provide your comment.

David Gurney02:20:00

I guess the third time's the charm. My name is David Gurney. I have been a commercial salmon and tuna fisherman as well as a sea urchin diver off the north coast of California in Mendocino County. I've also had a 100 gross ton captain's license from the US Coast Guard for 10 years. And I was there at the Santa Barbara oil spill in 1969, and the previous caller said it was a few hundred thousand gallons of crude oil, but it was more like four million. And a lot of seabirds, sea lions, dolphins, even whales were killed in the most horrific way. The people stepped up and tried to clean up as many birds as possible, but it's a pretty hard task and that was the beginning of the environmental, quote unquote, really the ecology movement.

Anyways, this looks like something we've seen before a few times, federal government trying to pressure the state of California to allow oil drilling offshore. Definitely should not happen and the state of California needs to stand up strong and make sure this doesn't happen. And I'll be submitting some written comments as well. So, thank you.

Josh Lott02:21:39

Thank you, David. This is Josh Lott again coming back.

A reminder for people who are having technical difficulties, we are accepting written comments until the end of the day on August 22nd and at the conclusion of this meeting I will send an email reminder with that information to all the registrants for today's meeting.

We have had someone else join the queue, Mark Green.

Mark, if you can hear me, please unmute your mic and give your comment.

Mark Green02:23:16

[began speaking before the microphone was on] .. organization dedicated to the protection of our public lands and natural landscapes. And I am flabbergasted that this review is even taking place.

The California coastal program has been one of the great success stories in public policy related to conservation in the entire country. And it's important that we be thinking in the long term about the tremendous economic engine that the coastline is for California and therefore for the country, as well as all of the natural resource values that they provide to us. This review should not be taking place. And I cannot communicate strongly enough how important it is that the

review find that the California coastal program is actually very effective and very good and should therefore not be changed in any way. Thank you.

Josh Lott02:24:23

Thank you, Mark.

At this point we don't have anybody else in the queue. NOAA will remain on the line for a few minutes to see if anybody else decides to join the queue.

NOAA will hold the virtual meeting room open at least for a few more minutes while we wait to see if anybody else decides to join the queue.

At this point, we have nobody else in the queue, and so NOAA is going to be ending today's virtual public meeting.

Thank you for participating in today's meeting. Again, since we had some technical difficulties, NOAA will resend to all participants the instructions for providing written comments. Those written comments will be accepted until 11.59 PM Pacific time on August 22nd, 2026. And also as a reminder, a transcript of today's meeting will be available by request via email to czma.california-evaluation@NOAA.gov. That email address again is czma.california-evaluation@NOAA.gov.

Thank you. This concludes the virtual public meeting.