



# SMART COAST REPORT

AUGUST 2023

## Mid-Year Recap 2023



Stakeholder Meeting  
March - Special Guest Speaker  
Coastal Commissioner Meagan Harmon



2nd Annual Policy Summit  
"One California, One Coast"  
May 18-19



Stakeholder Meeting  
June - Traversing the Coast:  
SLR Impacts on Critical Infrastructure

1

New CEO

2

Where did the first half of the year go?! Smart Coast California has been busy providing education and information through our two virtual stakeholder meetings and our 2nd Annual Policy Summit. Hiring our first CEO has allowed us to focus on creating a Homeowners Association Collaborative, launching our new Municipal Collective, all while continuing our efforts on reviewing upcoming Local Coastal Program Amendments and Sea Level Rise Plans.

3

Meetings with  
Executive Coastal  
Commission Staff

Smart Coast  
California Media  
Mentions

4

We are looking forward to hosting our final 2023 Virtual Stakeholder meeting on October 25th, meeting with HOA's, expanding our Municipal Collective, all while reviewing, educating and communicating on Local Coastal Program Amendments and Sea Level Rise Plans.

Read in-depth recaps in this issue.

5

Letters to  
Government  
Entities

Presentations to various  
organizations

Remember, Smart Coast California is available to give presentations about our organization and local coastal solutions.



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## Over 150 Participants



Over 150 people attended the 2nd Annual Smart Coast California Policy Summit held in Newport Beach in May.

## Expert Panels



Over a day-and-a-half, there were 10 sessions of elected officials and decision makers presenting what is working, what isn't, and the direction our

communities are taking to address SLR. Expert panels presented the environmental, legal, economic, planning policy and engineering considerations that inform effective decision making in our coastal communities as we prepare for rising seas in California.

## 2 Keynote Speakers



Dr. Serge Dedina, WILDCOAST and Dr. Laura Engeman, Scripps Institution of Oceanography shared insights on the importance of looking outside the box for solutions to sea level rise.

## Amazing Sponsors



We are so appreciative of our generous sponsors! Their sponsorship enables us to make a lasting impact on those around us, and it is absolutely invaluable.

We cannot express enough gratitude for their generosity!

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Smart Coast California Board of Directors

# 2ND ANNUAL POLICY SUMMIT RECAP

*By John Frith, The Write Stuff Communications*

The 2023 Smart Coast California Policy Summit – One California, One Coast, showed how much progress has been made by local governments, nonprofit organizations, and the Coastal Commission in the past year to find common ground about how to protect the coast against sea-level rise.

More than 150 people, including senior Coastal Commission staff, elected local officials, city and county planners, environmentalists, attorneys, engineers and others attended Smart Coast's second-annual summit, this year held in Newport Beach.

Particularly significant were comments from recently appointed Coastal Commission Executive Director Kate Huckelbridge and two of her top aides.

"This is the challenge of our generation, and we must be both practical and visionary if we are to succeed in making our coastline resilient for generations to come," Huckelbridge said. "And that is what makes forums like this so important. It provides an opportunity to come together, roll up our sleeves and find workable solutions and build trust so we can collectively do the hard work that is ahead of us."

Coastal Commission Chief Deputy Director Madeline Cavalieri indicated the Commission is easing back from its previous view that managed retreat – doing little to protect coastal development other than critical infrastructure like wastewater treatment facilities and transportation – was the only answer.



"We're going to need combinations of strategies over time to effectively carry out the goals and objectives of the Coastal Act and appropriately protect our coastline," Cavalieri said. "So if we accept that there has to be a mix of strategies in different areas over the next decades, from shoreline armoring to managed retreat and everything in between, then the challenge becomes how can we work proactively to ensure that the mix of strategies adequately meets the needs of the community and protects coastal resources over time."

She added that the Commission also recognizes the importance of planning appropriate solutions on a neighborhood basis and not parcel by parcel.

"Nature-based adaptation strategies like dune restoration and sand replenishment don't work on a parcel-by-parcel scale, but when done across a larger area can be both an effective approach to phased adaptation and can protect coastal resources and enhance public access," she said.

"Similarly, if we have armoring that's allowed, we can better design that armoring if we look at a neighborhood-scale area to protect and enhance public access and mitigate impacts as we move along in the phases of adaptation. And finally, if we have managed retreat over a neighborhood area, we can design projects to protect private property rights, ensure properties are not subject to severe hazards over their lifetime and create meaningful benefits to habitats and recreational areas. (It's) a more proactive approach that would protect resources and property over time until sea-level rise makes that protection too difficult to maintain and further changes are needed."

At the end of the two-day Summit, held on May 18 and 19, Don Schmitz, Smart Coast's consultant highlighted the change in philosophy compared to last year. "(At last year's Summit, an) important takeaway was that there might be options (besides managed retreat), that there were things that we could do that wouldn't necessarily require these communities to fall into the sea," Schmitz, said.

"This year, I got the feeling that there are definitely options. A number of cities and counties are moving forward with these alternatives, such as living breakwaters, artificial reefs, things of that nature. I'm just getting a sense all across the board that there's a new optimism that we can make this happen."

Smart Coast 2023 President Paul Grisanti said developing alternatives and working with all stakeholders to find appropriate responses for different communities was a key reason Smart Coast was formed.

"From our beginning in 2019, it's been our goal to work with the cities, the counties, and the Coastal Commission to find solutions to the impacts of sea-level rise and to support private property rights," Grisanti said. "At this year's Summit, we were so pleased to see a growing appreciation by all the stakeholders that there are solutions other than simply allowing the ocean to swallow coastal development. We will continue working to be a resource to move this effort forward."

Local government officials said some of the adaptive strategies they are looking at include elevating homes and utilities, building seawalls, and constructing nature-based strategies such as living shorelines and re-creating sand dunes as buffers.

Schmitz warned that if state and local officials don't work together to protect developments where feasible, the result will be costly litigation and massive payments to property owners who are not allowed to protect their property.

"The attorneys will benefit mightily, and resources will be squandered and wasted by fighting as opposed to pulling together as a state and coming up with creative solutions," Schmitz said. "So I think we've got two clear paths here and I vote for the one where we get together and find those alternatives to managed retreat that work."

The Summit was sponsored by the Orange County Realtors, C.A.R., the Pajaro Dunes and Pajaro Dunes North Associations and several Realtor associations: Newport Beach, South Bay, Greater Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Mateo County, Ventura County Coastal, Malibu, Santa Cruz County, Marin County, and Laguna. Also sponsoring the event were Seadrift at Stinson and Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP.



## THIS IS THE CHALLENGE OF OUR GENERATION,

*and we must be both practical and visionary if we are to succeed in making our coastline resilient for generations to come, and that is what makes forums like this so important. It provides an opportunity to come together, roll up our sleeves and find workable solutions and build trust so we can collectively do the hard work that is ahead of us.*

~ Dr. Kate Hucklebridge,  
California Coastal  
Commission  
Executive Director



## MISS THE SUMMIT?

VIEW THE  
RECORDINGS AND  
SLIDE DECKS

[WWW.SMARTCOASTCA.ORG/  
2023-POLICY-SUMMIT.HTML](http://WWW.SMARTCOASTCA.ORG/2023-POLICY-SUMMIT.HTML)



# STAKEHOLDER MEETING *recap*



In June, Smart Coast California stakeholders received an update on what is being done in different parts of the state to address the impact of sea-level rise on the state's transportation network.

Hank Seemann, Humboldt County's deputy public works director, kicked off the June Zoom call with an update on plans to ensure Highway 101 remains open along Humboldt Bay between Eureka and Arcata in the decades to come.

Seeman noted that the highway was built parallel to a now-abandoned rail line that skirted the east side of the bay and which today serves as a levee that partially protects the highway from king tides and storm surges. But as sea levels increase and the land continues to slowly subside due to tectonic forces, much more will need to be done.

In fact, Seemann said in 2005 high tides combined with strong winds caused the bay to overtop the rail corridor, flooding the southbound lanes of the coastal highway. An interim solution is to complete the transformation of the railroad into a bike trail, which will see a concrete embankment built in critical areas that will provide an additional one- or two feet of protection.

"That should buy us some time," he said. "Retreating on Highway 101 isn't feasible, and the impacts of it flooding are unacceptable. We have to protect the highway and accommodate for sea level rise.

"The long-term solution is probably a causeway, but that won't happen in our lifetimes. It will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. But we can't wait for the ultimate solution – we have to plan for incremental measures now."

One solution being considered is creating a living shoreline that will extend 300-400 feet into the bay that would add friction to storm surges to reduce the intensity of the waves and the chance of further erosion. The waves currently lap up to the edge of the railroad in many places.



Existing Conditions



Concept for Adaptation Project

- Initial feasibility study complete (\$250k from NFWF/OPC)
- Advanced feasibility study and environmental study starting (\$750k from State Coastal Conservancy)

Humboldt County: Salt marsh creation design concept ("living shoreline" or "nature-based solutions")  
From June 14, 2023 Stakeholder Presentation

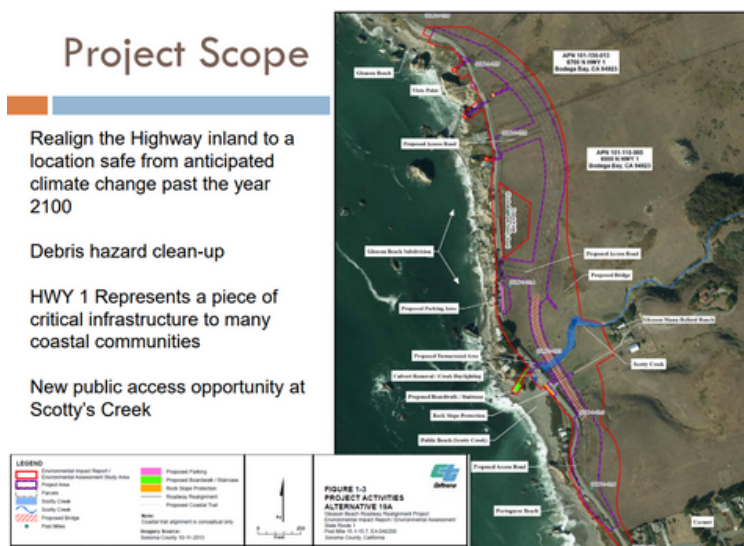
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Further south in Sonoma County, Caltrans and the county worked together to realign Highway 1 inland at Gleason Beach, about halfway between Bodega Bay and the Russian River.

“A combination of wave action, groundwater intrusion and surface water runoff from surrounding areas had caused rapid bluff erosion in the area. In fact, despite significant armoring of the bluffs, roughly half the oceanfront homes that were there in 1990 have been destroyed, county Project Review Manager Cecily Condon told the approximately 75 stakeholders on the call.

After 15 years of discussions, she said Caltrans realigned a half-mile stretch of highway as much as 400 feet east of the previous alignment, and the new road opened to traffic in March. The new alignment is expected to be safe from further erosion caused by sea-level rise past the year 2100.



In San Clemente, at the south end of Orange County, the transportation challenge has been to keep a critical commuter and freight rail line open. Cecilia Gallardo-Daly, the city's community development director, said the rail line in San Clemente runs along the water's edge on top of a revetment, with coastal bluffs

However, the rail line – designated a strategic rail corridor critical to national defense – has been out of service for most of the past two years, Gallardo-Daly said.

"The disruption is due to beach and bluff erosion. Ancient landslides were reactivated due to the loss of the sandy beach, which was a natural buffer against wave energy. Surges over the past few years have caused the loss of the beach, and a landslide in September 2021 halted rail service."

Crews deployed rip rap to stabilize the toe of the bluff along with two rows of ground anchors, and the line reopened in April – only to be shut down again weeks later after another bluff landslide – which slipped again the day after emergency repairs were made.

In the short- and medium term, studies are being conducted to determine ways to protect the rail line and adapt to sea-level rise, including replenishing and maintaining wider beaches. In the long run, the Orange County Transportation Agency will embark on a study to realign the rail corridor inland – which will be a difficult and expensive project as the bluffs are densely populated.

## VIEW THE RECORDING AND SLIDE DECK

<https://www.smartcoastca.org/archived-meetings--presentations.html>

Register for the next  
Stakeholder meeting





# UPCOMING EVENTS 2023



*Smart Coast California*  
Virtual Stakeholder Meeting

**REGISTER HERE**

**October 25, 2023 @ 10a**



Visit Our Website For More  
[smartcoastca.org](https://www.smartcoastca.org)



Email Us  
[info@smartcoastca.org](mailto:info@smartcoastca.org)

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[www.smartcoastca.org/events](https://www.smartcoastca.org/events)

# *Exciting* ANNOUNCEMENT Municipal Collective

**Be a partner with Smart Coast California**

Smart Coast California can assist with effective decision making in our coastal communities as we prepare for rising seas in California.

## *Includes*

Insight to coastal communities Local Coastal Programs and Sea Level Rise Plans including an engagement list and timeline.

1 ticket to the annual Policy Summit and opportunity for municipal recognition at Policy Summit and other events.

1 participant & alternate to municipal forums.

**Partner with us at**

**<https://www.smartcoastca.org/partners.html>**

Access to the Coastal Municipalities Planning Compendium:

- Statewide Status of LCPAs Addressing Sea Level Rise
- Jurisdictional Statuses Explained
- Projections for Sea Level Rise Projections: Sources
- Milliman – Key Findings and Evaluating Probabilistic Projections, Phase I and II
- Locally Proposed/Adopted Adaptation Policies
- Nature-Based Solutions
- Tiered Response
- Managed Retreat
- Defining “Existing Structures”
- Provisions for Just Compensation
- Collaborative Local Government Sea Level Rise Working Group Activity
- Neighborhood-Scale Adaptation
- Geologic Hazard Abatement Districts (GHADs)
- Major Remodels
- Coastal Edge Setbacks



# UPCOMING LCP EFFORTS

Smart Coast California updates our website with our upcoming Local Coast Program Amendments (LCPA), Sea Level Rise Programs (SLR), and Coastal Hazards about once a month. We are providing this information so you know where your jurisdiction is in the process and the need for critical engagement.

## Priority ONE

Item is set for Coastal Commission Agenda (or awaiting scheduling)  
OR

Item scheduled for local hearing with date set, anticipated soon, or in important progress stage

### Arcata



### Carlsbad



### Santa Cruz City



## Priority TWO

Item in process with no hearing date set

Imperial Beach  
Marin County  
Pismo Beach  
Avalon  
Carpinteria  
Eureka  
Hermosa Beach  
Laguna Beach  
Marina  
Monterey  
Monterey County  
National City  
Oceanside  
Pacific Grove  
Santa Barbara  
Ventura County

## Priority THREE

Item in process with no hearing date anticipated

Goleta  
Humboldt County  
Huntington Beach  
Marina  
Oxnard  
Seal Beach  
Sonoma County  
City of Ventura  
Coronado  
Dana Point  
Grover Beach  
Los Angeles - Venice Segment  
Mendocino County  
Newport Beach  
Solana Beach  
Trinidad

### LCP Process





# Website STAY INFORMED

## **CURRENT LCP/SLR EFFORTS**

Efforts of local municipalities within California and status of SLR/LCP process.

## **POLICIES**

Policies that have been adopted by the Smart Coast California Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLES OF INTEREST**

Find articles related to sea level rise, coastline policies, and interesting local news.

## **SIGN UP**

Stay on top of what's happening by joining our newsletter and responding to calls for action. Your voice needs to be heard.

## **SOLUTIONS TO MANAGED RETREAT**

Read our scientific reports and existing alternatives to managed retreat.

## **PARTNERS**

We have accomplished a lot, but there's much more to be done to protect property rights. Please contribute today?

## **CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!**



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