

11. COMMERCIAL FISHING AND RECREATIONAL BOATING

The Coastal Act states that the economic, commercial, and recreational importance of fishing activities shall be recognized and protected, and that facilities serving the commercial fishing and recreational boating industries shall be protected, and where feasible, upgraded. The Coastal Act requires that coastal-dependent developments shall have priority over other developments on or near the shoreline. Recreational boating use is encouraged by providing for the development of berthing space, increasing facilities and limiting non-water-dependent uses. Existing space shall not be reduced unless demand no longer exists or substitute space has been provided. The needs of the commercial fishing industry have priority over recreational boating. Recreational boating facilities should be designed and sited so as not to interfere with the needs of the commercial fishing industry. Additionally, uses of the marine environment shall be carried out in a manner that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms.

1) Summary of Preliminary Periodic Review Findings (Exhibit A, p. 351-352)

San Luis Obispo County has three harbors: San Luis Bay, Morro Bay and San Simeon Bay. Each of the three affords support to the commercial fishing industry; Port San Luis and Morro Bay harbors provide docking, mooring, and processing facilities, while San Simeon functions as a marginal shelter during adverse weather conditions. Commercial fishing is an important source of income for the county; it was noted that the commercial fishery landings at the three harbors in 1998 were valued at over \$6.4 million.⁷⁰ However, the Preliminary Report also observed the decline in demand for commercial fishing facilities, due to a decrease in fish landings. At the same time demand for recreational boating facilities has increased.

The *Preliminary Report* noted that since LCP certification, some issues had been raised, including:

- the loss of the small boat ramp in Baywood Park and the impact that a proposed replacement ramp may have on wetland resources;
- the potential impacts that increased recreational boating may be having on wetland and sand dune habitats around Morro Bay;
- the impacts that proposed visitor-serving and commercial development on upland areas owned by the Port San Luis Harbor District might have on the provision of adequate boating and fishing facilities and other coastal resources; and
- Reducing polluted runoff generated by boating activities and facilities.

The *Preliminary Report* suggested the following recommendations:

- Developing a program to educate boaters on the sensitive habitat values of Morro Bay and other aquatic habitats

⁷⁰ San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, *1999 Regional Profile*, October 1999.

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- Coordinating the review of the proposed boat launch ramp in Baywood Park with Commission staff, the Department of Fish and Game, and other involved regulatory agencies and interested individuals
- Updating the Port San Luis Master Plan and associated sections of the San Luis Bay Area Plan.

2) Comments Raised

San Luis Obispo County Response:

The County agrees with the recommendations.

Public Comments:

The Port San Luis Harbor District strongly supports recommendation 11-3, regarding updating the Port's Master Plan and associated sections of the San Luis Bay Area Plan. In addition, the Harbor District raised the issue of assuring that road capacity on Avila Beach Drive is reserved to serve coastal-dependent and other priority uses under the Coastal Act. Additional public comments indicated both support for and opposition to a replacement boat launch ramp in Baywood Park.

Specific Clarifications/Errata:

Minor typographical corrections on pages 349 and 351 (page 351 and 353 in *Preliminary Report as Revised*) will be corrected as suggested by the County.

3) Analysis

Road Capacity on Avila Beach Drive

Regarding Port San Luis Harbor District's comment about reserving road capacity of Avila Beach Drive, the Commission finds that Recommendation 11.3 is the first step in addressing this issue. Nonetheless, in order to clarify the importance of this evaluation, the Commission suggests modifying the recommendation to incorporate specific statements regarding Avila Beach Drive. Much of the impact to capacity on Avila Beach Drive is likely caused by development activities in Avila Valley, which is outside of the coastal zone. However, under the Coastal Act, the County has a responsibility to reserve road capacity and other public services for priority uses such as recreation *within* the coastal zone. To achieve this, sources of impacts to capacity both within and outside of the coastal zone must be identified and addressed. In order to ensure that adequate capacity will be available inside the coastal zone on Avila Beach Drive, the County could evaluate and update the General Plan for the Avila Valley area and ensure the amount and intensity of development will result in preserving road capacity for priority uses. While the Commission cannot require General Plan revisions outside the coastal zone, the Commission finds it is appropriate to include a program in the LCP to encourage that planning efforts to address *all* sources of impacts to capacity on Avila Beach Drive take place, as funding allows.

Recommendation 11.3: Update the Port San Luis Master Plan and Associated Sections of the San Luis Bay Area Plan

Recognizing that circumstances regarding the operation, maintenance, and financing of Port San Luis Harbor facilities have changed since the relevant sections of the LCP were certified, a comprehensive update of the Port San Luis Master Plan and associated LCP provisions is in order. Given the wide range of coastal resource issues raised by future development of uplands owned by the Port San Luis Harbor District, this update should be closely coordinated with Commission and County staff.

The San Luis Bay Area Plan and the Port San Luis Master Plan shall be updated to include a standard to ensure adequate capacity on Avila Beach Road for priority uses under the Coastal Act and LCP. As well, a program should be developed to encourage analysis of the effects of development in Avila Valley on capacity of Avila Beach Road inside the coastal zone. The program should encourage revisions as needed to the General Plan standards for the amount and intensity of development to ensure that adequate road capacity to serve priority uses within the coastal zone will be provided.

Additionally, Recommendation 6.7 of the Public Access section of this report calls for comprehensive recreation planning, which will also speak to this concern. Portions of the New Development section also include more discussion.

Baywood Park Boat Ramp

The Commission reiterates that the preliminary recommendation states that review of the ramp should be coordinated with staffs of the Coastal Commission, County, Department of Fish and Game, as well as *other interested individuals*. Preliminary Recommendation 6-8 also directs that proposed public access developments be reviewed for appropriate habitat management measures. The Commission believes these recommendations are adequate to assure that the LCP will be implemented to protect recreational boating consistent with Sections 30224 and 30230. No modifications are proposed to 11.1 or 11.2.

4) Conclusion

The *Preliminary Report* noted that in order to effectively implement the LCP in conformance with the requirements of Coastal Act Sections 30224, 30230, 30234, 30234.5, and 30255 to protect commercial fishing and recreational boating uses within the coastal zone, the LCP should be updated to address new and emerging issues (Exhibit A, findings incorporated herein by reference). After further evaluation and consideration of public comments, the Commission adopts Recommendations 11.1- 11.3 as modified as appropriate corrective actions for submission to the County pursuant to Coastal Act section 30519.5.

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