

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219
VOICE (415) 904-5200
FAX (415) 904-5400
TDD (415) 597-5885



August 1, 2007



Mel Lane, the Coastal Commission's first Chairman died Saturday, July 28. Mel was a giant in the environmental arena and was without doubt the finest coastal commissioner in its history. He led the inaugural Commission through several incredibly challenging early years. His conservation vision for the coast and other reaches of Nature's riches, his dedication to the law, environmental ethics, skills as a statesman, collegiality, sense of humor and generosity of means and spirit were a combination unmatched. His honesty and integrity are a continuing

inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing him. His sharp wit and political acumen served the Commission, and more importantly, the public and the coast profoundly well.



After passage of Proposition 20 on November 7, 1972, many said the Commission and new law were unwieldy, could not succeed and would fall in a storm of confusion, uncertainty and controversy. That may well have happened but for Mel's remarkable leadership. A Republican appointed by then Governor Reagan, he came to the Commission from his position as Chair of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. The Prop 20 Commission was charged with completing a Coastal Plan by 1975 for submission to the Legislature. Under Mel's stewardship and

after literally hundreds of public hearings the California Coastal Plan was completed on time and under budget. This Plan became the "Constitution" for the coast and represents, perhaps still, the product of the greatest public participatory land use planning experiment anywhere.



Mel Lane's legacy in every endeavor touched by his vision, labor and commitment, whether environmental, social, in business and education, is broad and deep. Certainly his proud legacy conserving California's magnificent coast will endure for generations yet to come. He set a high standard of excellence that those who follow in his wake have committed themselves to maintain.