

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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***For Immediate Release***

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**Check the Box – a New Way to Protect the California Coast!**

**Governor signs AB 754 by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance) to create a “Protect Our Coast and Oceans” check-off box on state tax returns.**

*(San Francisco, September 25, 2013)* — Starting next year, Californians will have a new way to contribute to the protection of the coast. When you fill out your state personal income tax form in 2014, look for a new charitable contribution “check box” for the **Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund**. The new check box will make it easy for the many Californians who love clean beaches and who want to protect and restore our magnificent coast and ocean to do their part.

Governor Brown signed the bill, which was authored by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance) on an auspicious day – Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, California Coastal Cleanup Day, sponsored by the California Coastal Commission and many others. Year after year, Californian’s demonstrate their dedication to the coast and waterways by turning out en masse for this event and Saturday was no exception. In spite of inclement weather in the northern part of the state, and with results still coming in (70% have reported), the statewide count stands at over 52,000 volunteers, who turned out to clean our beaches and waterways of more than 500,000 pounds of debris.

"The Coastal Commission thanks Governor Brown and Assemblyman Muratsuchi for offering Californians a new, simple way to contribute to coastal conservation," said Commission Chair Mary Shallenberger. "Californian’s love their coast, and now it will be easy to make a tax-deductible donation to support the Coastal Commission’s popular Whale Tail Grants Program, which promotes coast and ocean education and provides underserved kids with field trips to the beach."

Examples of some of types of projects that have been funded by Whale Tail Grants include: school programs emphasizing stewardship of the coast and ocean, marine science summer camps, community and student-led coastal habitat restoration, trips to the beach for children from inland and underserved communities, coastal and waterway cleanups, ocean-related museum exhibits, water pollution prevention programs, and beach wheelchair purchases.

*The mission of the California Coastal Commission is to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance environmental and human-based resources of the California coast and ocean for environmentally sustainable and prudent use by current and future generations. It works in partnership with coastal cities and counties to maximize public beach access and recreation, provide for priority coastal development, and assure that new development will protect coastal resources including wetlands, wildlife on land and in the sea, water quality, coastal tourism, and scenic vistas. The Public Education Department administers the Whale Tail Grants Program and organizes Coastal Cleanup Day, which help to raise public awareness of marine and coastal resources and promote coastal stewardship.*