

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
February 19, 2026

SANTA BARBARA OCEAN COLLECTIVE SHORESIDE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Project No. 25-046-01
Project Manager: Irvin Tang

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$507,500 to Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara to undertake the Santa Barbara Ocean Collective Shoreside Infrastructure Planning project, consisting of engaging tribes and other stakeholders; conducting technical studies; preparing permit applications; and advancing to 60% design plans to develop an unused 16,000 square foot lot on the Santa Barbara City College campus into a community boat yard.

LOCATION: Santa Barbara City College, Santa Barbara

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Site Photos](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Preliminary Site Plan](#)
- Exhibit 4: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes a grant of an amount not to exceed five hundred seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$507,500) to Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara (“the grantee”) to undertake the Santa Barbara Ocean Collective Shoreside Infrastructure Planning project, consisting of engaging tribes and other stakeholders; conducting technical studies; preparing permit applications; and advancing to 60% design plans to develop an unused 16,000 square foot lot on the Santa Barbara City College campus into a community boat yard (the “project”).

Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, this Conservancy resolution is effective only if legislation is enacted that exempts program guidelines and selection criteria for the disbursement of funds from the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (“Proposition 4”), Public Resources Code Sections 90000-95015, from the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act at Government Code sections 11340-11361.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding public accessways.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
3. The Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara is a nonprofit organization organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize a \$507,500 grant to the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara (CFSB) to undertake the Santa Barbara Ocean Collective Shoreside Infrastructure Planning project, consisting of engaging tribes and other stakeholders; conducting technical studies; preparing permit applications; and advancing to 60% design plans to develop an unused 16,000 square foot lot on the Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) campus into a community boat yard (the “project”). The project site is located less than half a mile from the Santa Barbara waterfront (see Exhibit 1).

The Port of Santa Barbara, home to one of the top seafood producing waterfronts in California, has close to 160 resident boats that use the harbor. In addition to fishing, Santa Barbara’s robust blue economy is made up of commercial diving, small-scale aquaculture, coastal management and restoration, clean energy and maritime supply chain workers. However, cost of entry, lack of access to storage, and few training opportunities contribute to a greying fleet and limited industry participation by women, people of color, and lower-income residents. Affordable designated maritime storage is needed to support the next generation of fishers who lack access to affordable storage space. In addition, sea level rise and increased coastal flooding threaten CFSB’s existing 9,000 square foot storage yard. Expanding shoreside storage has been a long-term goal of the City Council, civic planners, and community leaders. Local

Chumash peoples have expressed a future need for storing both traditional and modern vessels and accessing training that enable cultural and commercial ocean-based activities.

To address the above needs, the CFSB, City of Santa Barbara, and SBCC established the Ocean Collective, a partnership to develop and manage shoreside infrastructure, specialized workforce training, and employer engagement to achieve environmental and economic resilience for Santa Barbara's blue economy. The boat yard facilities and Ocean Collective training program will support new and existing participants in sustainable fisheries and other blue economy industries, fostering community and climate resilience, economic stability, and food security. SBCC's Marine Diving Tech program and other programs at SBCC will share use of the site to expand community blue economy education and workforce pathways. Tribal uses will also be formally incorporated into site usage policy.

The project will advance the designs to develop a multiuse boat yard with added parking bays for trailered boats, storage lockers, and workshop space for tools storage and gear repair. Specifically, the project includes conducting technical studies, including site surveys, arborist and biological reports, parking, and noise study to advance conceptual designs; preparing permit applications and completion of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Review. The project will actively engage local tribes; engage other stakeholders through in-person and online workshops, social media, and other mediums; and advance the project through 60% design plans. Once constructed, the project will add 16,000 square feet of shoreline infrastructure to the Santa Barbara Waterfront (see Exhibit 3). The project will serve vulnerable community, a priority under the 2024 Climate Bond (Proposition 4), by providing tribal access to shoreline boat storage that support tribal stewardship and expand community blue economy education and workforce pathways.

Site Description: The proposed project is located on a vacant lot on Santa Barbara City College campus adjacent to the Santa Barbara waterfront. The 16,300 square foot lot is undeveloped and unmaintained with grass, a few shrubs, and two oak trees that border the uphill boundary. The property is on the east side of Loma Alta Street, between Santa Barbara City College's Marine Diving Tech building and the footbridge spanning Loma Alta (see Exhibit 2).

Grant Applicant Qualifications:

CFSB has extensive experience managing projects and grants in its over 40 years of work to build capacity and resilience of local Santa Barbara fisheries. Successful project partnerships with local, state agency, and foundation grants include US Department of Energy, University of California Santa Barbara, CA Jobs First, Santa Barbara Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, US Department of Agriculture, and the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Family Foundation. CFSB has also built working partnerships with local partners including Santa Barbara City College, the City of Santa Barbara, the Economic Development Collaborative, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, and Santa Barbara County Food Action Network. It has demonstrated its capacity to organize local partners, facilitate community outreach and engagement, navigate project procurement and permitting, and carry out proposed project activities.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, in the following respects:

Selection Criteria

1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.

See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Strategic Plan" section below.

2. Project is a good investment of state resources.

The proposed project will support Santa Barbara's blue economy and increase its resilience to climate impacts. The inclusion of cold storage facilities expands production and consumption of local seafood which contributes to local food security and community resilience. Addition of shoreline infrastructure will help attract and retain new entrants to maritime trade. This will build economic capacity at the waterfront. The Santa Barbara waterfront is a popular regional and global tourist destination, and, as such, the project will serve a greater than local need.

3. Project includes a serious effort to engage tribes. Examples of tribal engagement include good faith, documented efforts to work with tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area.

The first phase of preliminary designs for the project included engagement with the local Chumash people. The proposed project will continue to engage the local Chumash community to plan for storage of both traditional Tomol and modern vessels on site. Tribal access will be formally incorporated into site usage policy. Tribal access to shoreline boat storage will create opportunities for cultural ocean-based activities and enable traditional stewardship on ancestral land.

4. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.

The design for the project includes developing unused and unmaintained land to a boat storage space with drainage for flood control and erosion abatement. The project also includes a bioswale in the design which would reduce stormwater runoff and coastal erosion and pollution. Combined, drainage design and bioswales would improve the resilience of both surrounding infrastructure and ecosystem.

5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

The project will provide multiple benefits, including the increased climate resilience for Santa Barbara's blue economy, facilitation of SBCC workforce development programming, redevelopment of an unused lot into a community boat yard to expand the shoreside infrastructure for boat, gear and cold storage, and creation of a maritime storage space for Chumash community members.

6. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.

For 15 years, CFSB and the City of Santa Barbara have worked together to find a suitable location for new maritime storage and training space near the harbor, with no other viable

space identified. A 2022 survey of 65 commercial fishermen and maritime businesses, funded by the US Department of Agriculture and City of Santa Barbara, articulated the community's specific high-priority needs for proposed infrastructure, including trailered boat parking, gear storage, a fabrication workshop, cold storage, commercial kitchen access, career training, and co-working and meeting space. Broader community engagement will be conducted in person with commercial fishermen, maritime businesses, and local Santa Barbara residents. Further, there will be social media posts and a webpage about the project. Project materials at outreach events will be offered in Spanish and English.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$507,500
Uplift Central Coast Coalition	\$200,000
Project Total	\$707,500

Conservancy funds are anticipated to come from the fiscal year 2025/2026 appropriation to the Conservancy from the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 ("2024 Climate Bond" or "Proposition 4"), codified at Public Resource Code Sections 90000-95015. These funds are available as described in Section 92010 of the Public Resource Code, which sets forth a detailed description of the purposes of the Proposition 4 funds for coastal resilience projects and programs, such as grants through the Conservancy's Climate Ready Program. The proposed project is consistent with this funding source because it is authorized under the Conservancy Climate Ready Program as described in the Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation section below.

Public Resources Code Section 90140 specifies that at least 40% of 2024 Climate Bond proceeds must be spent on projects that provide "meaningful and direct benefits" to disadvantaged communities or vulnerable populations. The proposed project benefits disadvantaged communities, consistent with the 2024 Climate Bond, because it will provide tribal access to shoreline boat storage to support tribal stewardship and expand community blue economy education and workforce pathways.

CFSB has secured \$200,000 in a Catalyst Pre Development Phase grant from the Uplift Central Coast Coalition for technical drawings, project management, and curriculum development of the project.

Unless specifically identified as "Required Match," the other sources of funding and in-kind contributions described above are estimates. The Conservancy does not typically require matching funds or in-kind services, nor does it require documentation of expenditures from other funders or of in-kind services. Typical grant conditions require grantees to provide any funds needed to complete a project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed authorization is undertaken pursuant to and is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, specifically Chapter 3 Section 31113, regarding the Climate Ready Program. Section 31113 authorizes the Conservancy to fund the projects that address impacts and potential impacts of climate change on resources within the Conservancy's jurisdiction. Section 31113(b) authorizes the Conservancy to fund projects that address climate impacts including sea level rise, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities and infrastructure. Sections 31113(c) and (d) identify several Climate Ready priorities, including reducing hazards to ports and harbors, protecting communities, and providing recreational opportunities. In accordance with Section 31113, the proposed project will reduce coastal hazards to infrastructure and maximize public benefit, in part because current facilities are threatened by increased coastal flooding due to sea level rise.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN:

Consistent with **1.4 Incorporate Workforce Development in Our Projects**, the proposed project will support the development of a sustainable workforce in ocean industries pathway.

Consistent with **2.6 Piers and Waterfronts**, the proposed project will design infrastructure for boat, gear and cold storage that expands the capacity of Santa Barbara waterfront.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR), Section 15262, which exempts projects that involve only planning studies and feasibility analyses for possible future actions that have not yet been approved or funded. Consistent with this section, environmental factors will be considered in the studies undertaken pursuant to this authorization. The proposed project is also categorically exempt under 14 CCR Section 15306, which exempts basic data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities that will not result in disturbance to an environmental resource.

Upon approval of the project, Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Exemption.