

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
February 6, 2020

VENTURA HARBOR COMMERCIAL FISHING FACILITIES ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Project No. 19-056-01
Project Manager: Sam Jenniches

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$318,600 to the Ventura Port District to install a one-ton derrick crane at the Ventura Harbor Commercial Fish Pier and enhance a commercial fishing gear storage and net repair facility at Ventura Harbor in Ventura County.

LOCATION: Ventura Harbor, City of Ventura, Ventura County

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Urban Waterfronts

EXHIBITS

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

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31300-31316 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed three hundred eighteen thousand and six hundred dollars (\$318,600) to the Ventura Port District (“the grantee”) to install a one-ton derrick crane at the Ventura Harbor Commercial Fish Pier and to enhance a commercial fishing gear storage and net repair facility in Ventura Harbor, County of Ventura.

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.

3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding.
4. Evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained.
5. Evidence that the grantee has entered into agreements sufficient to enable the grantee to implement, operate, and maintain the project.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 7 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding Urban Waterfront Restoration.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$318,600 to the Ventura Port District (District) to install a one-ton derrick crane at the Ventura Harbor Commercial Fish Pier and to enhance a commercial fishing gear storage and net repair facility in Ventura Harbor. The project will improve conditions at the aging facility, and as a result will benefit the greater Ventura community and visitors to the area. As a vibrant working waterfront, Ventura Harbor attracts visitors that drive local and regional economies. Commercial fishing is an iconic part of the community’s heritage; having local, fresh seafood available is critical to attract business into the harbor.

The Ventura Harbor commercial fishing facility is aging, and its infrastructure is not keeping up with usage by the fishing community. The proposed project is part of an effort to enhance existing facilities at Ventura Harbor to improve safety and productivity for commercial fishermen. The cargo containers and storage area that the commercial fishermen use to store their gear and repair their nets have degraded so badly that they are becoming non-functional. In addition, the District needs to install a new derrick crane for offloading landings so they can increase the speed and efficiency of bringing fish to port and moving them to market.

Ventura Harbor’s landings are amongst the highest of California ports on an annual basis both by weight and value. It is home to a thriving commercial fishery that serves national and international markets, as its deep-water capabilities and proximity to the international trade centers in Los Angeles make it a key offloading harbor on the West Coast. For over 45 years, fishermen have utilized Ventura Harbor as their port to offload a variety of fish and seafood including market squid, tuna, halibut, lobster, crab, sea cucumber, prawn, rockfish and sea bass. The primary commercial target species are state and/or federally managed for sustainable harvesting.

In 2016, the California Fish and Game Commission initiated the Coastal Fishing Communities Project in California after a series of stakeholder discussions indicated concerns about impacts to commercial fishing and the sustainability of local fishing communities. These discussions repeatedly highlighted concerns about changing ocean conditions, decreased access to fishing, overall fishery management changes, increased global marketplace competition, changing species diversity and aging infrastructure. The Coastal Fishing Communities Project consisted of a series of in-community meetings from June 2017 to July 2018, including a meeting in Ventura Harbor in October of 2017. Aging infrastructure and access to gear storage were amongst the many concerns highlighted at that community meeting as a priority to address. Gear storage facilities allow fishermen to adapt to other changes in the fishery such as species diversity, management changes, and ocean conditions. The fishing gear storage and net repair facility at Ventura Harbor provides storage for boat parts, dive fishing gear, tools, traps, gill nets, purse seine nets and air dive equipment. The property underlying this facility is privately-owned and leased to the District, which installed the storage and net repair facility in accordance with the lease.

The gear storage and net repair facility enhancement component of the proposed project consists of purchase and installation of twenty-six, 20-foot cargo containers, removal of dilapidated containers and derelict vessels, and repairing asphalt and fencing. The new cargo containers each provide approximately 150 square feet of enclosed storage for commercial fishermen. The removal of derelict vessels from the facility will result in an expansion of gear storage at the facility for participating fishermen. The new cargo containers will be owned by the District and will remain portable after installation, thus enabling their relocation should the District move the storage facility to another location after the current 10-year lease period. The repairs to asphalt and fencing at the gear storage facility are part of the project but will be funded by the District.

The project also includes the purchase and installation of a one-ton capacity, electric-powered derrick crane at the commercial fishing pier in the harbor. The new crane will replace an existing crane that cannot be certified for current safety standards. The new crane will be custom-manufactured by Cushman Contracting Corporation to specifications. The new crane will enhance productivity and safety for commercial fishermen.

Site Description: Ventura Harbor is on the southern coast of California, 68 miles north of Los Angeles and 27 miles south of Santa Barbara. The southwest portion of the Harbor is designated for commercial fishing. The commercial fishing area of the Harbor includes a commercial fishing pier approximately 60 feet x 212-feet for fish offloading and other unloading activities; a fuel dock and a full-service boatyard with a 200-ton travel lift; and a 130-slip marina in the southwest harbor area that is primarily utilized by commercial fishing vessels. The District owns all of these areas, including the pier where the new derrick crane will be installed, although it leases the fuel dock and boatyard to a private entity for operation.

The 1.22-acre fishermen's gear and net repair facility is located directly across the street from the harbor on property owned by Ventura Harbor Storage. The gear and net repair facility is open-air and provides dedicated storage areas for traps and nets, a net repair area, and cargo containers that provide enclosed storage. The District has leased the gear and net repair facility

from Ventura Harbor Storage for many years and is currently in the first year of a ten-year lease.

Grantee Qualifications: The District has significant experience in managing large infrastructure improvements with grant funding or other funding sources. In the first quarter of 2012, the District entered into an agreement with Cushman Contracting Corp. to rehabilitate 1,825 linear feet of shorefront, a revetment at Harbor Village Marina which is owned and operated by the District. This \$650,000 project was financed by the District and oversight was provided by District staff. This project took approximately 90 days to complete.

Additionally, the District is currently involved with a dock replacement project at Harbor Village Marina to replace approximately 50% of its 130-slip marina. This \$4.6 million project will increase the number of larger slips for its commercial fishing fleet. This project required a 20-year private placement financing. The project began May 15, 2019 and is in process.

Project History: In 1980, the California Legislature enacted the Local Marine Fisheries Impact Program to address the cumulative impacts on the commercial fishing industry resulting from the development of oil and gas resources along the state’s coastline. Element 2 of the program called for the Coastal Conservancy to plan for and implement a series of gear storage and vessel repair areas at several locations in Southern California, including at Ventura Harbor. In 1990, the Conservancy board funded construction of the existing commercial fishing gear storage facility within Ventura Harbor. The project funded paving, fencing and the acquisition and installation of cargo containers to provide enclosed storage.

In May 1993, the District entered a ground lease with Ventura Harbor Storage for 1.22 acres to develop a fishing gear storage and net repair facility. After installing the gear storage and net repair facility, the District entered into a sublease with Pete Dupuy dba Harbor Boat and Storage to manage this facility. The facility is considered a critical piece of infrastructure that supports commercial fishing at Ventura Harbor. Mr. Dupuy founded the Ventura County Commercial Fishermen’s Association. Unfortunately, Mr. Dupuy passed away on April 16, 2015. Mr. Dupuy’s wife Karen and his daughter assumed the sublease and the operation of the Harbor Boat and Storage facility. The Dupuy family continues to successfully manage this fishermen’s storage yard, although the facility does not generate revenue sufficient for capital improvements.

After almost 30 years of use, many of the cargo containers are in disrepair and in need of replacement. The District contacted Conservancy staff in late 2018 to enquire about available funding to enhance the dilapidated storage facility. During the ensuing year, Conservancy staff has worked with the District to expand the scope of the project to include the replacement of a one-ton derrick crane that is critical to fisheries productivity.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$318,600
Ventura Port District	\$160,500

Project Total

\$479,100

The anticipated funding source is the FY 2018 appropriation to the Conservancy from the “The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006” (Proposition 84, Public Resources Code Sections 75001, et seq.), which allocates funds to the Conservancy for projects that protect the coastal waters of California (Public Resources Code Section 75060(b)). As defined by Proposition 84, “protection” extends to actions necessary to allow the continued use and enjoyment of coastal property, including “restoration”, also defined to include the improvement of physical structures or facilities. (Public Resources Code sections 75005(m), (n)). The proposed project will enhance the viability and sustainability of Ventura’s commercial fisheries through restoration and improvement of coastal structures and facilities and is thus consistent with the intended purposes of Proposition 84.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 7 (Sections 31300-31316) regarding the restoration of urban waterfronts, as follows:

Section 31301 states that California’s urban waterfronts are in need of restoration in order to be the vital economic and cultural component of the community they once were, and that the encouragement of planned private sector development in these areas is a benefit to citizens of the state as well as the local citizenry in affected urban waterfront areas. The proposed project will facilitate the revitalization of the Ventura Harbor through an enhancement of commercial fisheries facilities.

Section 31307 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to public agencies for the restoration of urban coastal waterfront areas. The proposed grant to the District for the enhancement of the economic vitality of the area’s fisheries and waterfront facilities is consistent with this section.

Under Section 31308, the Conservancy may provide up to the total cost of any urban waterfront project after evaluating the total amount of funding available for urban waterfront projects, the fiscal resources of the applicant, the urgency of the project relative to other eligible urban waterfront projects, the degree to which the project meets the objectives set forth in Section 31305, and the application of other factors prescribed by the Conservancy for the purpose of determining project eligibility and priority. As described in the “Project Funding” section, Conservancy funds are matched seven to one with private, local funding

This project is also consistent with Section 31305, in that it exhibits “innovation in sensitively integrating man-made features into the natural coastal environment.” It is anticipated that the project will improve the functioning of the gear storage and repair facility. In addition to the Conservancy funded project components, the project will reduce environmental impacts by improving and/or repairing asphalt, fencing and lighting. Other factors relevant to selection of this project for the Urban Waterfronts Program are discussed immediately below.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 3, Objective B** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will implement a waterfront revitalization project that supports commercial fishing.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 2, 2014, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** The project will help implement the recommendations of the following state plans:
 - *California @50* (The Governor's Environmental Goals and Policy Report, Office of Planning and Research, 2015), Build Healthy and Sustainable Communities – Key Action #1 to invest in sound infrastructure that is consistent with the state's long-term environmental goals. By planning for infrastructure improvements and fishery practices at the Ventura Harbor to promote sustainable fisheries, the project will help implement this goal.
 - *California Ocean Plan* (California State Water Resources Control Board, 2015). As a water quality control plan, the Ocean Plan identifies water quality objectives and a program to implement these objectives. All of the objectives are meant to protect the beneficial uses of the ocean waters; the Plan defines the beneficial uses as follows: "the beneficial uses of the ocean waters of the State that shall be protected include...water contact and non-contact recreation, including aesthetic enjoyment; navigation; commercial and sport fishing; preservation and enhancement of Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS); rare and endangered species; marine habitat; (and) fish migration."
4. **Support of the public:** The project is supported by California Assemblymember Monique Limon, The City of Ventura, and the Commercial Fishermen of Ventura Harbor.
5. **Location:** The proposed project would be located within the coastal zone of the City of Ventura in Ventura County.

6. **Need:** Without Coastal Conservancy funding, the District would likely defer improvements of the Commercial Fishing Storage Facility.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** Based upon the final California commercial landings for 2017 from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the poundage and value of landings in the Ventura Harbor was the highest in the state, comprising 28 percent of the landings by weight, and 17 percent of the landings by value. Ventura Harbor's landings serve a local fishermen's market as well as national and international distribution.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The location of the Ventura Harbor Commercial Fishing Storage facility is at approximately 15' above Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW), the average of the lower low water height of each tidal day. With projected sea level rise values of 1.8' (2050) and 5.3' (2100) in addition to a +7.5' maximum tide, the facility is not impacted by sea level rise. The proposed Derrick Crane will be located at the Commercial Fish Pier in Ventura Harbor. Its useful life will not extend past 2050 and will not be impacted by sea level rise.

Additional Criteria

9. **Urgency:** The proposed project will replace the Ventura Commercial Fish Pier crane, which could not be recertified to meet safety standards. The replacement crane will improve safety and productivity for commercial fishermen.
10. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
11. **Readiness:** The grantee has placed a deposit for the one-ton derrick crane and it will be fabricated upon award of the proposed grant. The grantee is ready to implement all other components of the project.
12. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" above.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Ventura General Plan (2005) Action 2.18 (2) in that it prioritizes commercial fishing within the Harbor Master Plan area. The Ventura General Plan satisfies State requirements for the City's Local Coastal Program in accordance with the California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code § 30000 et seq.)

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). CEQA Guidelines at, 14 Cal. Code Regs. Section 15302 establish a categorical exemption from CEQA for replacement or reconstruction of existing structures where the new structure will be located on the same site and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. The one-ton derrick crane will have the same location and capacity as the crane it will replace. Similarly, the replacement of gear storage containers involves "like for like" replacement on the same site.

CEQA Guidelines at 14 Cal. Code Regs. Section 15301 establish a categorical exemption from CEQA for the repair or maintenance of existing public or private structures involving negligible or no expansion of use. Enhancement activities at the fishing gear storage facility involve repair and maintenance with no expansion of use.

Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.