



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coastal Commission Denies Santa Barbara County Beach Armoring in Resounding 9-1 vote

Local environmentalists applauded the Coastal Commission's denial today of Santa Barbara County's proposed groin project at Goleta Beach. The opposition was led by the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) and its client, the Surfrider Foundation, who were joined by other groups including the More Mesa Preservation Coalition, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and Urban Creeks Council.

"The Coastal Commission has sent a clear message to the County," explained Linda Krop, chief counsel of the Environmental Defense Center. "A hard structure such as groin will rob downcoast beaches of sand, causing bluffs and beaches to erode."

According to EDC environmental analyst Brian Trautwein, "This decision is a victory for beaches and people who love the coast. The proposed groin would have required ongoing dredging off Goleta Beach, causing beach and park closures, as well as air and water pollution."

EDC and Surfrider hired the engineering firm Phillip Williams and Associates (PWA) to critique the County's proposal, and develop an alternative, long term plan for Goleta Beach. PWA designed the Park Reconfiguraton Alternative (PRA) to protect the entire length of beach by relocating threatened facilities and park amenities, while retaining the restaurant, lawn area and parking lot. EDC and Surfrider submitted over 580 letters in opposition to the groin and in favor of the alternative.

Although Commission staff found the alternative to be both feasible and environmentally superior, the staff recommended against the alternative on the grounds that 1.3 acres of turf could be lost. However, this assertion was refuted by EDC and PWA at the hearing.

At the end of the hearing, the Commissioners advised the County to consider an option that respects and incorporates natural processes, and plans for future sea level rise. “We are pleased that environmental solutions are back on the table,” said Scott Bull, Surfrider representative and member of the County’s original Goleta Beach Working Group. “Surfrider remains committed to a plan that protects the beach, the Park, and the environment.”

EDC and Surfrider hope to work with the County to develop a workable, environmentally-sensitive solution.

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The Environmental Defense Center protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy, and legal action and works primarily within Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties. Since 1977, EDC has empowered community based organizations to advance environmental protection. Program areas include protecting the coast and ocean, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health.

Surfrider Foundation is a nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the oceans, waves and beaches for all people, through conservation, activism, research and education. The Santa Barbara Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation was founded in 1990 to protect local beaches, coastal areas, and water quality.