



**CEQA and COASTAL DETERMINATIONS  
and  
NOTICE OF APPROVAL**

Project: Amendment to Sediment Sampling by the City of San Diego at the Laurel Hawthorn Embayment  
Location: San Diego Bay, West of West Hawthorne Street and North Harbor Drive, and South of West Laurel Street and North Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101  
Parcel No.: 017-026  
Project No.: 2020-046a  
Applicant: Kellyn Baker, Environmental Specialist, City of San Diego, 9370 Chesapeake Dr. Ste. 100, San Diego, CA 92123, 619-538-9235  
Date Approved: 5/14/2026

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project involves an amendment to the previously approved sediment sampling project (previous project) by the City of San Diego at the Laurel Hawthorn Embayment in the city of San Diego, California. The previous project (Document No. 72368) involved sediment sampling in response to Investigative Order R9-2019-0040 (IO) issued by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) for the 84-inch stormwater conveyance system outfall in Laurel Hawthorn Embayment. Sediment samples were collected at twenty-three (23) specified locations to characterize sediment quality for benthic community protection. A marine sampling vessel was utilized to deploy the equipment to collect samples at each sampling location. Two collection techniques were utilized at each sediment sampling location including (1) grab samples and (2) core samples, consistent with the requirements of the IO.

Following completion of the previous project, the Regional Board has requested recollection and analysis of sediment samples within the Laurel Hawthorn Embayment to fill data gaps identified during the initial investigation. The proposed project is a supplemental investigation that would include recollection of sediment surface grab and core samples using the same equipment and methods at a subset of the same locations identified in the previous project. The proposed project would include collection of sediment samples from twelve (12) of the twenty-three (23) previously specified locations within the Laurel Hawthorn Embayment. No sampling locations outside of the previously identified locations are proposed as part of this recollection effort.

Bay sampling is anticipated to occur approximately between May and September 2026 and would take approximately four (4) days to complete.

Due to its nature and limited scope, construction of the proposed project would generate a minor amount of vehicle trips and would require limited use of equipment. Therefore, impacts related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and transportation and traffic are not anticipated to occur. Furthermore, the Applicant would be responsible for complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding construction demolition debris, hazards and hazardous materials, and stormwater.

The following categorical determinations are based on the project submittal and all project information known to the District as of the date of this determination.

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**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

***CATEGORICAL DETERMINATION***

Categorical Exemptions: CEQA Guidelines Section 15306 (Class 6)/District Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA Section 3.f: Information Collection; CEQA Guidelines Section 15307 (Class 7)/District Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA Section 3.g: Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources; and CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class 8)/District Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA Section 3.h: Actions by Regulatory Agency for Protection of the Environment

3.f. Information Collection: Includes basic data collection, research, experimental management, and

resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which has not yet been approved, adopted or funded.

AND/OR

3.g. Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources: Includes actions taken by regulatory agencies to assure the maintenance, restoration or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for the protection of the environment. Construction activities are not included in this exemption.

AND/OR

3.h. Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment: Includes actions taken by regulatory agencies to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for the protection of the environment. Construction activities and relaxation of standards allowing environmental degradation are not included in this exemption.

The proposed project is determined to be Categorically Exempt pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines and the Section(s) of the District's *Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA* as identified above. These are appropriate for the proposed project because sediment and bay sampling in accordance with an IO would not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource and would involve procedures for protection of the environment. The District has determined none of the six exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption apply to this project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2).

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15062, a 35-day statute of limitations for this CEQA exemption shall apply from the date a Notice of Exemption is posted with the San Diego County Clerk, or a 180-day statute of limitations for this CEQA exemption shall apply if no Notice of Exemption is filed.

## **CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT**

### ***PORT MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY***

Planning District: 3 - Centre City Embarcadero (Precise Plan Figure 11)

Water Use Designations: Specialized Berthing; Boat Anchorage; and Boat Navigation Corridor

The proposed project conforms to the certified Port Master Plan because it would involve sediment and bay sampling in accordance with an IO consistent with the existing certified Water Use designation(s). The proposed project would not change the use of the site, nor would it interrupt or expand the existing conforming uses of the site.

### ***CATEGORICAL DETERMINATION***

Categorical Exclusion: Section 8.e: Information Collection

8.e. Information Collection: Basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major significant disturbance to an environmental resource.

The proposed project is determined to be Categorically Excluded pursuant to the Section(s) of the District's *Coastal Development Permit Regulations* as identified above. These are appropriate for the proposed project because sediment and bay sampling in accordance with an IO would not result in a serious or major significant disturbance to an environmental resource.

Pursuant to California Coastal Act Section 30717, there is a 10-working-day period to appeal this "Coastal Act Categorical Determination of Exclusion" to the California Coastal Commission.

## **CALIFORNIA PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE**

The proposed project complies with Section 87.(a)(7) of the Port Act, which allows for the establishment and maintenance of those lands for open space, ecological preservation, and habitat restoration. The

Port Act was enacted by the California Legislature and is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine. Consequently, the proposed project is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine.

SCOTT CHADWICK  
President/CEO

Determination by:  
Kelly Cunningham  
Planner I  
Development Services

Signature: Kelly Cunningham  
Date: 5/14/2026

Assistant/Deputy General Counsel

Signature: Shiraz Tangri  
Date: 5/14/2026