



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
CALIFORNIA

October 29, 2021

California State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-1401

Re: Opportunity to Comment on Revised Coastal Access Project Guidelines

Dear California Coastal Conservancy Board Members,

I write on behalf of the California Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, the voice for our wild public lands, waters, and wildlife. We thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment regarding the revised Coastal Access Project Guidelines.

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers is a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to our wild public lands, waters, and wildlife. We seek to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting through education and work on behalf of fish, wildlife, and wild places. With more than 400,000 supporters and chapters in 48 states, Washington D.C., two Canadian provinces and one Canadian territory, BHA is one of the fastest growing hunting and fishing organizations in North America and attracts sportsmen and women from across the continent. BHA also represents the next generation of conservationists; nearly 70 percent of our membership is 45 or younger and our members share a passion for wild public lands, waters, and wildlife.

We commend the Conservancy for their proposed revisions which recognize the wealth of the California Coast and the numerous recreational opportunities it presents to individuals and families from all walks of life within our state. We are encouraged to see the Conservancy seek to prioritize access and opportunity for all Californians, including those in underserved communities, as well as its renewed commitment to Indigenous peoples and recognition of their historic uses along the coast.

We are concerned, however that the proposed standards do not mention or make any apparent accommodations for anglers and their families to continue to commune with the coast and its bountiful resources. We impress upon the Conservancy the importance of preserving (and increasing) access and opportunity in support of the traditional practices of fishing and hunting on and along the California coast, activities that have been an integral part of this landscape for thousands of years.

The California Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers advocates for the following additions to the revised Coastal Access Project Guidelines:



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- Prioritize and mitigate for loss of any current and historic fishing sites when considering new projects, especially those located adjacent to underserved and frontline communities.
- Incorporate areas for small craft launching and unloading gear. These areas are especially important for hunters and anglers who cannot afford a boat or prefer to access their favorite hunting and fishing grounds using a carbon-neutral vessel, like a kayak.
- Include fish cleaning stations and waste fishing gear receptacles near popular fishing locations to prevent littering and reduce human-wildlife conflict and dependency.
- Provide clear notice to the public regarding the right to hunt and fish on public lands and waters to reduce conflict and confusion among various users.
- Maintain and invest in fishing piers and fishing infrastructure on piers to support the diverse and important communities who rely on fishing piers for recreation and the opportunity to provide a meal to their families.
- Prioritize fish and wildlife habitat and water quality as characteristics of paramount importance when evaluating new projects and potential construction along the coast.

The hunting and angling community is a wonderful melting pot of California's diverse communities, many of whom share the same priorities – to provide food for their families and to preserve the resources that they rely upon, not only for recreation, but also a healthy, sustainable food source year after year. They also provide the State with hundreds of millions of dollars to support conservation programs and habitat for wildlife, a critical revenue stream for the Department of Fish & Wildlife and other State & Federal Agencies tasked with managing the State's fish and wildlife. In fact, funds from the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as "Duck Stamps" have directly contributed to the conservation of thousands of acres of wetlands and wildlife habitat along the California coastline.

We appreciate the opportunity to bring these items of great importance to the Conservancy and hope to be a resource for the board moving forward as advocates for all hunters and anglers in the state. We impress upon the Conservancy the need to continue to recognize the common consumptive user, including the cultural and historic importance of their activities and need for access, by including them in all literature.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our policy team at california@backcountryhunters.org or (415) 246-5329.

Sincerely,



Eric B. Hanson
Co-Chair & Policy Lead, California Chapter
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

