

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1740 (Zbur) – As Amended April 27, 2026

Policy Committee:	Natural Resources	Vote:	10 - 0
	Housing and Community Development		12 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill, until January 1, 2037, exempts numerous specified activities and types of development, subject to specified conditions, within the City of Santa Monica, from the coastal development permit (CDP) requirements of the California Coastal Act and provides that these activities and types of development do not require an amendment to a certified local coastal program (LCP) or certified land use plan (LUP).

Examples of the activities and types of development enumerated in the bill include, with certain conditions and restrictions, certain parking regulations and requirements, short-term or recurring community events that do not permanently alter land use or access, housing development projects, and outdoor dining, among others.

Provides that (a) the activities described in the bill are subject to approval and regulation by the City of Santa Monica in accordance with applicable state and local laws and do not require review or approval by the California Coastal Commission (Commission) and (b) the provisions of this bill do not limit the applicability of other exemptions from the permitting requirements of the “development controls” chapter of the Coastal Act.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Ongoing annual General Fund costs of an unknown amount, potentially in excess of \$150,000, for the Commission to comply with this bill. For its part, the Commission notes that while the exemptions in the bill may result in potential cost savings to the Commission from not having to process CDPs for exempt projects, these savings would be offset by the need to coordinate with the City of Santa Monica, which does not have experience implementing the Coastal Act, to make the findings necessary to determine whether individual projects meet the bill’s criteria for exemption from the Coastal Act. Unlike the 64 coastal cities and counties that have complied with the statutory mandate to develop an LCP, the City of Santa Monica does not have a certified LCP.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

[This] bill embraces smart climate strategies by incentivizing and supporting investments in transit, bike lanes and pedestrian transportation, rather than imposing unnecessary parking and road improvements. It does this by recognizing and empowering an urbanized, transit-rich community to have the ability to approve housing, bike and pedestrian improvements, outdoor dining and certain building renovations and certain other minor projects without the need for individual coastal development permits. The bill would only apply to areas in Santa Monica without protected coastal resources, such as wetlands, environmentally sensitive habitat areas or coastal bluffs.

- 2) **Background.** The Commission administers the Coastal Act and regulates proposed development along the coast and in nearby areas in the coastal zone. The Coastal Act requires local governments to develop LCPs consistent with policies of the Coastal Act. LCPs are land use planning documents that lay out a framework for development and coastal resource protection within a city or county's coastal zone area. Generally, any development activity in the coastal zone requires a CDP from the CCC or local government with a certified LCP.

In a jurisdiction with a certified LCP, the local government issues the CDP with detailed planning and design standards. However, even when the local government grants a permit, CDP decisions are appealable to the CCC if the development falls within certain defined zones. For a jurisdiction without an LCP, also known as an "uncertified" jurisdiction, the CCC is the permitting authority for CDPs. 90% of the coastal zone is operating under a certified LCP. Each LCP includes an LUP, which contains policies, and an implementation plan, which includes accompanying measures to implement the plan (such as zoning ordinances, zoning district maps, and other implementing actions).

Among others in support, the City of Santa Monica argues the Coastal Act's "one-size-fits-all permitting framework can create unintended barriers to housing production in highly urbanized coastal communities." The city argues that even housing projects that are already consistent with state law, local zoning, and Regional Housing Needs Allocation obligations "can face duplicative [Commission] review. This can delay infill housing, increase costs, and create uncertainty – particularly for projects that include affordable units or rely on time-sensitive financing." The city argues it is actively working to meet its RHNA targets through infill development, adaptive reuse, and housing located near high-quality transit, and that this bill provides a balanced and targeted solution by allowing Santa Monica – given its established multimodal transportation network and adopted climate and safety policies – to "locally approve a limited set of activities that do not impact coastal resources or reduce public access."

Among others in opposition, the Commission (writing in an oppose-unless-amended position) argues, among other things, that the Coastal Act "ensures that sustainable development in urban communities can proceed while also protecting the resources that make those communities world-class destinations to live in, work in, and visit," and that this bill "remove[s] these protections, freely allowing various new or expanded developments to damage or destroy coastal resources." The Commission notes that one of the highest priorities of the Coastal Act is to protect public access to California's coastal lands and waters, and that this bill allows for the "unconsidered elimination of public parking without

ensuring commensurate public coastal access benefit,” which “inequitably prioritize[s] coastal access for local residents and those visitors wealthy enough to afford high-priced parking options, at the exclusion of inland Californians.” The Commission further argues that this bill disincentivizes the city from complying with a recently enacted law requiring all coastal local governments to incorporate sea level rise adaptation policies in their LCPs by 2034. Finally, the Commission notes that despite awarding three grants totaling \$375,000 to the city to complete its LCP, the city has not done so; therefore, the Commission argues, it would be “inappropriate to upend California’s coastal management framework, including all of the important policy priorities described above, in a Coastal Act end-run to accommodate Santa Monica’s development aspirations.”

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