
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2051
Author: Wicks (D), et al.
Amended: 8/13/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 7-0, 7/1/26

AYES: Becker, Seyarto, Allen, Cabaldon, Grove, Laird, Stern

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 65-6, 5/28/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Public resources: Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group

SOURCE: Bay Area Council
Bay Planning Coalition

DIGEST: This bill requires the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency to convene a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group to develop a Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap by July 1, 2028 with recommendations for process improvements and legislative reforms to enable efficient environmental permitting of coastal resilience projects statewide, as provided.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

1) Establishes the California Coastal Act of 1976 (Coastal Act) which:

- a) Establishes the California Coastal Commission (Coastal Commission) in the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA).
- b) Requires each local government in the coastal zone to prepare a local coastal program (LCP) for that portion of the coastal zone within its jurisdiction, as provided. Requires the precise content of each LCP to be determined by the

local government in full consultation with the Coastal Commission and full public participation. (Public Resources Code (PRC) §30500)

- c) Provides for the planning and regulation of development within the coastal zone.
 - i) A person planning to perform or undertake any development in the coastal zone is required to obtain a coastal development permit (CDP) from the Coastal Commission or local government enforcing a LCP certified by the Coastal Commission.
 - ii) The coastal zone means the coastal land and waters of California, and includes the lands that extend inland generally 1,000 yards from the mean high tide line, as specified, with various exceptions including the San Francisco Bay.
 - iii) Development means, among other things, the placement or erection of any solid material or structure on land or in water.
 - d) Requires the Coastal Commission to take into account the effects of sea level rise in coastal resources planning and management policies and activities in order to identify, assess, and, to the extent feasible, avoid and mitigate the adverse effects of sea level rise. (PRC §30270)
- 2) Establishes the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC): (Government Code (GOV) §§66600 *et seq.*)
- a) BCDC, among other things, is required to address emerging issues and to implement comprehensive plans for the preservation and protection of San Francisco Bay and the Suisun Marsh, including preparedness for, and resilience to, rising sea levels, tides, and storm surge due to climate change. BCDC has adopted the San Francisco Bay Plan, which is a comprehensive plan that addresses the development of the bay and shoreline.
- 3) Requires a local government lying within the coastal zone or the San Francisco Bay shoreline to develop a sea level rise plan as part of a LCP or subregional San Francisco Bay shoreline resiliency plan subject to BCDC's approval, as provided.
- a) Requires local governments to comply by January 1, 2034.
 - b) Requires the Coastal Commission and BCDC to establish guidelines for the sea level rise plan, as provided.

- c) Requires local governments that receive Coastal Commission or BCDC approval of their sea level rise plans be prioritized for funding, subject to appropriation, for the implementation of sea level rise adaptation strategies and recommended projects in the approval sea level rise plan. (PRC §§30985, 30985.2, 30985.5)

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Secretary of CNRA (CNRA Secretary) to develop a Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap (Roadmap) with recommendations for process improvements and legislative reforms to enable efficient and timely delivery of environmental approvals by July 1, 2028.
- 2) Requires the CNRA Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), to convene a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group (Working Group) for the purpose of developing the Roadmap.
- 3) Require that the Working Group consist of representatives from federal, state, and local agencies, including but not limited to:
 - a) The Coastal Commission;
 - b) CalEPA;
 - c) The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and regional water quality control board representatives (Regional Water Boards)
 - d) The California Department of Fish and Wildlife;
 - e) The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation;
 - f) CNRA;
 - g) The Ocean Protection Council;
 - h) BCDC;
 - i) The State Coastal Conservancy;
 - j) The State Lands Commission;
 - k) The State Office of Historic Preservation; and

- 4) Requires that the Roadmap include, at minimum, recommendations that address:
 - a) Administrative reforms that can be implemented by state agencies within their existing authority to improve permit issuance timelines, including, among others:
 - i) Improving efficiency in the process for agencies to determine and communicate that permit applications are complete including through the use of tools, as provided; and
 - ii) Unified applications with a predictable sequence and timeline for review;
 - b) A state process to align agency mitigation requirements and enable in-lieu fees or advance mitigation through which applicants can contribute funding to eligible restoration or mitigation initiatives, as provided;
 - c) Legislative reforms that have the greatest potential to further accelerate permitting for projects that increase coastal resilience, with a focus on current legislative requirements, as provided;
 - d) A coastal resilience project pilot program and any required legislative authorizations, if needed to test alternative approaches;
 - e) An evaluation of whether consolidated coastal resilience permits, similar to those provided for offshore wind, would facilitate timely permits; and
 - f) Workforce assessment and funding options for regulatory staffing positions and as-needed permitting support contracts to supplement staff, as provided.
- 5) Requires, on or before April 1, 2027, the CNRA Secretary, in collaboration with the commission, BCDC, CDFW, and the State Water Board and Regional Water Boards, convene a Coastal Resilience Permit Advisory Group (Advisory Group), consisting of representatives from at least the following:
 - a) State Department of Transportation, State Coastal Conservancy, and other relevant state agencies that seek permits for projects in coastal areas;
 - b) Local governments required to update their LCPs for sea level rise;
 - c) California ports;

- d) Local transportation agencies and wastewater treatment agencies, as specified;
 - e) California Native American tribes that are on the contact list administered and maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission; and
 - f) Other members of the public, including businesses, home and affordable housing builders, commercial and recreational fishers, environmental organizations, and environmental justice organizations.
- 6) Requires the CNRA Secretary, in consultation with the Coastal Commission, BCDC, CDFW, the State Water Board and the Regional Water Boards to conduct a series of public workshops with the Advisory Group or subgroups thereof to:
- a) Solicit feedback regarding challenges with existing permitting processes; and
 - b) Review and seek comment on draft reform proposals from the Working Group's Roadmap.
- 7) Provides that a project alternative should be developed that uses existing natural features and ecosystem processes, or the restoration of natural features and ecosystem processes, to meet a project's goals when developing infrastructure to address adaption, where feasible.
- 8) Defines "coastal resilience project" as a project that maintains, protects, restores, or enables coastal ecosystems, infrastructure, or communities to withstand and adapt to sea level rise and other natural hazards amplified by climate change.
- 9) Makes relevant legislative findings and declarations.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to Senate Appropriations Committee:

- One-time costs, likely in the high hundreds of thousands of dollars spread over 2-3 years (General Fund) for CNRA to facilitate interagency collaboration, public workshops, development of the Roadmap, and other deliverables required by the bill.

- One-time costs, likely in the low millions of dollars spread over 2-3 years (General Fund) for the California Coastal Commission estimates to help develop relevant components of the Roadmap, including recommendations across 10 topic areas, new state agency mitigation processes, proposed legislative reforms, alternatives analyses, evaluation of the efficacy of offshore wind project permitting practices, and more.
- Unknown but significant ongoing costs, possibly in the millions of dollars annually (General Fund, Waste Discharge Permit Fund, or other fund) for the State Water Board and Regional Water Boards to support state and regional board participation in the creation of Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap, including expansive subject matter expertise, developing recommendations, participating in statewide public workshops, providing legal consultation, and ensuring the necessary internal operational support to carry out the bill's provisions. In addition, the State Water Board anticipates that the scale of the required implementable solutions required by this bill's provisions would have significant costs ongoing, with significant information technology resources required to develop unified applications on a statewide or regional scale.
- Ongoing costs, likely around \$1 million annually (General Fund), for the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission.(BCDC) to assist with development of the Roadmap and implement reforms identified by the Working Group. BCDC notes that without additional positions and contracting resources, BCDC may need to utilize its existing permitting staff and its regulatory improvements team to implement this bill, thereby increasing permitting timelines and delaying implementation of BCDC's preexisting efforts to improve permitting processes.
- One-time costs, likely less than \$1 million spread over 3-4 years (General Fund), for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to organize input from the department's coastal regions (specifically, regions one, three, four, five, and seven); participate in the Working Group, Advisory Group, and public workshops; and assist with the development and review of the Roadmap.
- One-time costs, likely less than \$1 million spread over 3-4 years (General Fund), for the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to consult with the members of the Working Group to collaborate on the drafting and recommendations to be included in the Roadmap.

- One-time costs, likely less than \$1 million spread over 3-4 years (General Fund), for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to consultant services to participate in the Advisory Group, participate in public workshops, and assist with the development and review of the Roadmap and legislative reforms resulting from recommendations made in the Roadmap.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/14/26)

Bay Area Council (co-source)
 Bay Planning Coalition (co-source)
 AltaSea
 Association of California Cities –
 Orange County
 California Democratic Party Rural
 Caucus
 California Shore & Beach
 Preservation Association
 California State Association of
 Counties
 City and County of San Francisco
 City of Los Alamitos
 City of Oceanside
 City of Port Hueneme
 City of San Rafael
 City/County Association of
 Governments of San Mateo County
 Coastal Quest
 County of Los Angeles
 County of Marin
 County of Monterey
 County of Orange

East Bay Dischargers Authority
 East Bay Regional Park District
 EConcrete
 Filoli
 Kiewit Infrastructure West Company
 Marin Community Foundation
 McFadden Finch Holdings Company
 One Shoreline
 Orange County Council of
 Governments
 Orange County Transportation
 Authority
 Port of Redwood City
 Port of San Francisco
 San Francisco Bay Ferry
 San Francisco International Airport
 Santa Clara Valley Water District
 The Exploratorium
 The Honorable Todd Gloria, Mayor,
 City of San Diego
 The Nature Conservancy
 Wareham Development
 WILDCOAST

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/14/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the author, “AB 2051 directs the Natural Resources Agency to convene a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group, who will meet to develop a Roadmap for projects proposed along California’s coast and in the San Francisco Bay.”

“Under current law, a project sponsor on the coast may need to secure more than ten separate permits from state, federal, and local agencies. The process is beset by redundant and inconsistent application requirements, no aligned review timelines, sequential rather than concurrent permit processing, no single lead agency to coordinate or resolve conflicts, and chronic staffing vacancies in agencies that require highly specialized expertise.”

“Decades worth of well-meaning permitting processes are overlaid on top of one another, and it is still too expensive and time-consuming to move with the speed and cost efficiency our coastline is going to need to adapt to sea-level rise and an altered climate.”

“AB 2051 does not change existing permitting requirements or weaken any environmental protection. An advisory group mandated in the bill is specifically charged to ensure that streamlining efforts do not weaken protections for fish and wildlife habitat, tribal cultural resources, or public access. The bill sets California on a path that will lead to actionable recommendations that improve permit issuance timelines, align mitigation requirements, accelerate permitting, and assess how to recruit and retain essential permitting staff.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 65-6, 5/28/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: DeMaio, Dixon, Johnson, Macedo, Sanchez, Tangipa

NO VOTE RECORDED: Castillo, Ellis, Flora, Hadwick, Lackey, Patterson, Quirk-Silva, Celeste Rodriguez, Ta

Prepared by: Katharine Moore / N.R. & W. / (916) 651-4116
8/17/26 10:47:39

**** END ****