

# Overview of Coastal Development Permits

March 27, 2025 Meeting of the  
Board of Harbor Commissioners

**THE PORT**  
OF LOS ANGELES 

# The California Coastal Act

- The California Coastal Act governs the California coastal zone.
- Its purpose is to protect coastal resources
- Development within the coastal zone requires a Coastal Development Permit (CDP)
- The standard for review is consistency with the policies of the Coastal Act in Chapter 8 (for port developments) or Chapter 3 (for non-port developments)



# Coastal Development Permit Authority



- The Coastal Commission delegates its authority to issue CDPs to local governments with a certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) and to ports with a certified Port Master Plan (PMP)
- LCPs and PMPs are certified by the Coastal Commission to ensure that local standards of review for CDPs are consistent with the Chapter 3 or Chapter 8 policies of the Coastal Act



# The Port of LA Port Master Plan



- The PMP is the document that contains the allowable land uses on the properties within this Port's Coastal Development Permit jurisdiction. It also contains the rules for issuing CDPs consistent with those land use maps.
- There are two levels of CDPs issued by the Port:
  - Level II CDPs are for major projects with the potential for significant impacts, and these require that the Board hold a public hearing before a CDP can be issued
  - Level I CDPs are for minor projects with minimal impacts, and these can be issued by the Executive Director without a public hearing, but the CDPs still do not become effective until reported to the Board.

# Port of Los Angeles Level II CDPs



- If a proposed project will do one of the following:
  - involve significant coastal resources;
  - cause major changes in land and/or water use and in the density or intensity of the use;
  - have the potential of creating significant environmental impacts that can or cannot be mitigated;
  - be a type of development appealable to the Coastal Commission
    - Very large LNG or crude oil facilities; wastewater treatment facilities; non-port roads; non-port office and residential buildings; hotels, motels, and non-water-oriented shopping facilities; commercial fishing facilities; recreational marina facilities; oil refineries; and petrochemical plants
- Then a public hearing on the CDP must be held – a Level II CDP

# Port of Los Angeles Level I CDPs



- If a project meets all three of these requirements:
  - minimal coastal resources are involved;
  - only minimal change in land and/or water use and in the density or intensity of use of land and water may occur;
  - there are no significant environmental impacts
- Then the PMP gives the Executive Director the authority to issue a Level I CDP
- The Executive Director reports all Level I CDPs issued since the previous Board meeting to the Board, at which point they become effective

# Authority to Issue Level I CDPs

- Two Board members can agree to take back the Executive Director's authority to issue a particular Level I CDP
- If they do so, then the CDP will be put on the agenda for the Board's next meeting
- Any person can also appeal the determination of the Executive Director. Upon appeal, the matter is calendared for a public hearing before the Board

# Standard of Review for All CDPs

- Whether issued by the Executive Director or by the Board of Harbor Commissioners, the standard for review is consistency with the PMP and the Coastal Act
- All decisions of the Board relating to permit applications shall be accompanied by written conclusions about the consistency of the application with the certified Plan and the Coastal Act, and findings of fact and reasoning supporting the decision (as per Section 6.7.3 of the PMP)

# Summary

- When evaluating development in the Coastal Zone, the Board is acting with the authority delegated by the Coastal Commission
- The Board must act in accordance with the PMP and the Coastal Act on behalf of the Coastal Commission
- The standard for review is consistency with the PMP and the Coastal Act, and the Board's decisions and findings of fact should reflect that standard.