



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 1/27/2026

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Scott Orr, Director, and Jacob A. Sedgley, Planner, (707) 565-1900

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Fifth

Title:

Permit Sonoma File No. CPH25-0013 California Marine Sanctuary Foundation - Request for Coastal Permit Consolidation by the California Coastal Commission, at multiple locations across the Sonoma Coast.

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the California Coastal Commission to consolidate approvals required for signage throughout the Coastal Zone related to Marine Protected Areas into a single Coastal Development Permit to be processed by the California Coastal Commission.

Executive Summary:

On December 3rd, 2025, Permit Sonoma received an application from Ella Merkle (Applicant) for a Coastal Permit with hearing for informative signage related to Marine Protected Areas, to be located in priority locations included harbors, marinas, coastal access points, and interpretive centers. The proposal includes 18 signs at various locations along the Sonoma Coast. Content of the signs varies between regulatory signage that includes rules for the area such as fishing or collecting regulations, and mixed signage that includes both regulatory and educational information. Permit Sonoma determined that, due to the geographic locations of the proposed work, the project requires two Coastal Development Permits, one issued by Sonoma County, and another issued by the California Coastal Commission. Many development projects within the California Coastal Zone require permits from both the local government agency (e.g., city or county) and the California Coastal Commission. Under the Consolidated Permit Process, applicants have the option to integrate the local permit application process with the Coastal Commission's permit review process. This integration allows the Commission to consider the local permit application concurrently with its own review, avoiding duplication of efforts and expediting the overall permitting timeline.

The Applicant has requested consolidation of the permits. The Coastal Act permits this consolidation provided that the consolidation does not substantially impair public participation. The proposed resolution finds that the consolidation will reduce the number of hearings on related issues and facilitate public participation. Staff recommends approval of the request, authorizing the California Coastal Commission to consolidate approvals required for this into a single Coastal Development Permit to be processed by the California Coastal Commission.

Discussion:

The Coastal Act allows for the consolidation of Coastal Commission and County permits in certain circumstances. The Coastal Conservancy seeks to consolidate approvals required for this project into a single

Coastal Development Permit to be processed by the California Coastal Commission. The current project proposal includes 18 informative signs related to Marine Protected Areas, to be located in priority locations included harbors, marinas, coastal access points, and interpretive centers along the Sonoma Coast. There are two different types of signs in terms of content. First there are “regulatory signs” that provide regulatory information for the area, such as rules for as fishing or collecting. Second there are “mixed signs” that provide both regulatory and educational information. These terms are used in the chart below.

Permit Sonoma determined that four of the eighteen signs are located entirely within the retained permit jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission. The project would require two separate coastal permits and is therefore eligible for permit consolidation.

Sign Locations

The proposal includes a mix of 18 signs that vary in terms of location, content, and permit jurisdiction. Letters assigned below correspond to mapped locations included in Attachment 3. Please note that the provided coordinates are approximations, and all sign locations will be verified to be on State Parks property upon installation.

Symbol	Sign Description	Sign Coordinates
A	Mixed sign at the beach access off of Bodega Dunes Campground on an existing post.	38.3428664, - 123.06772
B	Mixed sign at the beach access at the end of West Side Road on an existing post.	38.30328, - 123.06485
C	Regulatory sign at the south side of the parking lot off of West Side Road on an existing post.	38.30323, - 123.06458
D	Regulatory sign south of the parking lot off of the West Side Road overlooking the cliffs on an existing post.	38.3026484, - 123.06407
E	Mixed sign at the end of the Salt Point Trail on an existing post.	38.5658215, - 123.33214
F	Regulatory sign on the south side of Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve on an existing post.	38.5658644, - 123.32901
G	Mixed sign at the parking lot at State Park Road on an existing post	38.44123, - 123.126
H	Regulatory sign off of Highway 1 at Sonoma Coast State Park on a new post.	38.4575202, - 123.1396
I	Mixed sign at the southwest corner of the parking lot on Sonoma Coast State Park Rd on an existing post.	38.4458024, - 123.1263
J	Mixed sign at the trail head walking towards Russian River State Marine Recreational Management Area on an existing post.	38.4465956, - 123.12596

K	Regulatory sign at the trail head off of Highway 1 on a new post.	38.5918496, - 123.34246
L	Regulatory sign off of Highway 1 on a new post.	38.5878718, - 123.34091
M	Regulatory sign off of Highway 1 on a new post.	38.5840423, - 123.33758
N	Regulatory sign off of Highway 1 on a new post.	38.5798483, - 123.33395
O	Mixed sign on the Salt Point Trail on a new post.	38.5675384, - 123.33322
P	Regulatory sign at the trail head at the pull off of Highway 1 on an existing post.	38.5988023, - 123.35001
Q	Regulatory sign at South Salmon Creek Beach on an existing post.	38.335, - 123.06775
R	Regulatory sign at Highway 101 pull out on an existing post.	38.6102774, - 123.3635652

Permit Consolidation

Many development projects within the California Coastal Zone require permits from both the local government agency (e.g., city or county) and the California Coastal Commission. Under the Consolidated Permit Process, applicants have the option to request to integrate the local permit application process with the Coastal Commission's permit review process. This integration allows the Commission to consider the local permit application concurrently with its own review, avoiding duplication of efforts and expediting the overall permitting timeline.

If the County chooses to maintain local control, the project approval requires the County to process the local Coastal Permit. After the County process is complete, a separate Coastal Permit would be processed by the Coastal Commission for the portion of the project that is within their jurisdiction. When both a local permit and a Coastal Commission permit are required, the Consolidated Permit Process allows for the integration of these permits into a single comprehensive review process. Under Section 30601.3 of the Public Resources Code, the Coastal Commission may process and act upon a consolidated coastal development permit application if the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The proposed project requires a coastal development permit from both a local government with a certified local coastal program and the commission; and,
2. The applicant, the appropriate local government, and the commission, which may agree through its executive director, consent to the consolidated permit action, provided that public participation is not substantially impaired by that review consolidation.

On November 6th, 2025, the applicant submitted a letter to planning staff requesting consolidation

(Attachment 2). During conversations including Permit Sonoma staff and the Coastal Commission, Coastal Commission staff have indicated initial acceptance of the consolidation request. Staff does not believe that public participation will be substantially impaired by the consolidation. The proposed resolution finds that the consolidation will reduce the number of hearings on related issues and will facilitate public participation.

Staff recommends adoption of the proposed resolution authorizing the California Coastal Commission to consolidate approvals required for this into a single Coastal Development Permit to be processed by the California Coastal Commission.

Prior Board Actions:

None.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This is an At-Cost Project application for which the applicant pays for the costs of processing the application. There will be no new fiscal impacts as a result of this action.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Not applicable.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Draft Board of Supervisors Resolution

Attachment 2: Consolidation Request from the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

Attachment 3: Sign Location Maps

Attachment 4: Sign Examples

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

Not applicable.