

Coastal Commission Unanimously Approves Historic Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan *Environmental justice leader requests action to protect Arroyo Alamar*

August 9, 2012 – Santa Cruz, Calif. – Today the California Coastal Commission unanimously approved the historic [Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan](#), the largest new land-use plan in the California Coastal Zone. Working toward this decision for nearly 15 years, [Environmental Health Coalition](#) (EHC) and the Chula Vista Bayfront Coalition support the massive revitalization plan that will boost the local economy and create natural community space for nearby residents. Today's approval stems from over a decade of collaborative work between community, environmental, labor, government and business groups to create a vision of what the new bayfront would provide for nearby neighborhoods, sensitive species and lands and the local economy.

In addition to public open space and natural habitat protection, the 556-acre land use plan is projected to generate \$1.3 billion for the local economy during its first 20 years. Implementing the plan will create more than 2,200 permanent jobs, nearly 7,000 construction jobs and numerous indirect jobs in the region. Chula Vista resident Lynda Gilgun participated as a key EHC community member, attending meetings throughout the lengthy but successful process, including the final meeting today in Santa Cruz.

"I really love our bayfront, and this is an opportunity to enhance it in order for more people to enjoy the benefits of our bay." said Gilgun. "I'm happy to be here to support this today."

One key moment in the collaborative process occurred when Pacifica Companies, a real estate developer owning land near National Wildlife Refuge lands, withdrew its original plan and committed to a multi-year community planning process. This innovative move resulted in Pacifica Companies, the City of Chula Vista and the Port of San Diego engaging in a land swap to move development away from sensitive habitat and into a previously developed area better suited for building and density.

The land exchange helped contribute to 230 acres of the project area dedicated to parks, open space and habitat, with 130 acres set aside for publically accessible parks and open space.

The process also resulted in several community benefits agreements that will ensure environmental protection and community enhancement will result from the development of the bayfront.

"This project is proof of what an empowered community taking strategic action can accomplish," said EHC's Laura Hunter. "We are so proud of our committed EHC Chula Vista members. They worked for over 10 years driven by a fierce sense of duty to the generations of the future—of all species—and drove the project in the right direction. They are simply amazing."

At the hearing, EHC representatives commended the Port and Chula Vista staff and leaders for opening their process to a new way of operating. It was a truly collaborative approach, they said.

Groups participating over the last 10 years include the Chula Vista Bayfront Coalition, comprised of the Environmental Health Coalition, the San Diego Audubon Society, Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association, San Diego Coastkeeper, Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation, Surfrider Foundation, San Diego Chapter, EMPOWER San Diego, and almost 2,000 local residents, as well as the City of Chula Vista, Port of San Diego and Pacifica Companies. Today's Coastal Commission approval amends both the Port Master Plan and the Chula Vista Local Coastal Plan, which will drive development and environmental protection for the next 30 years. The demolition of the now defunct South Bay Power Plant is already in progress since the Coastal Commission and City of Chula Vista approved permits to demolish above ground structures earlier this year.

EHC will continue monitoring implementation of the approved Bayfront Plan as Chair of the Port of [San Diego's Wildlife Advisory Committee](#). As part of the Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan Settlement Agreement, this group formed to advise the Port on the development of a Natural Resources Management Plan. For more information about the Environmental Health Coalition's role in the Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan, please visit our website at: <http://environmentalhealth.org/index.php/en/where-we-work/san-diego-region/san-diego-bay/chula-vista-bayfront-master-plan>

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