

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATE LANDS COMMISSION INCREASES COASTAL ACCESS

SACRAMENTO — The California State Lands Commission today secured public ownership of eight new coastal accessways in the Malibu area of Los Angeles County. The Commission's unanimous vote means Californians will retain public access to the beach and ocean through easements that would otherwise have converted to private ownership.

The Commission accepted Offers to Dedicate (OTDs) that are recorded legal documents required by the California Coastal Commission as conditions of approval of beachfront projects. Once an OTD is accepted, the beach covered by the easement is available for public use. OTDs expire after 21 years unless a public or non-profit agency secures them for public use.

Lieutenant Governor and Commission Chair, Cruz M. Bustamante stated, "As Chair of the State Lands Commission, one of my top priorities has been increasing public access to our beaches. I asked the Commission staff to be aggressive in accepting these OTDs, and I am proud that we have saved so many of these accessways."

The State Coastal Conservancy has accepted 114 of these OTDs – various state and local governments and nonprofit organizations have taken the remainder of the 891 OTDs that are now available for public use.

Beginning in 1879, California's Constitution has had provisions intended to protect access to California's waterways. Proposition 20 in 1972 and the Coastal Act in 1976 established statutory requirements for public access to the coast. The OTDs required by the Coastal Commission have implemented those statutes. Most OTDs allow public

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use of sections of sandy beach areas lying between private structures built on the upper beach and the tidelands that are already state owned and under the Lands Commission's jurisdiction.

"We voted today to give people access to the beach and the ocean along California's incredible coastline," commented Commissioner and State Controller Steve Westly. "The Commission is committed to guaranteeing Californians' Constitutional right of access to their coast."

Success in the OTD program has been achieved in a variety of ways in addition to the Lands Commission's participation. For example the counties of San Mateo, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara, have accepted virtually all of the OTDs in their counties and nonprofit groups have been encouraged to participate in the OTD program as well.

"Today's Commission action is consistent with Governor Davis's policies to protect and enhance recreational opportunities for Californians while continuing environmental protections. We're also pleased that acceptance of these easements involves little or no cost to the state," noted State Director of Finance Steve Peace, the Governor's representative on the Lands Commission.

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