



Caring for Our Coast

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July 8, 2026

TO: Each Supervisor

From: Gary Jones, Director

SUBJECT: **THIRD MARINE MAMMAL REGIONAL CONVENING - 15-DAY REPORT
(ITEM 22, AGENDA OF MAY 6, 2025)**

On May 6, 2025, your Board took several actions to address a rise in stranded marine mammals along Los Angeles County (County) beaches, approving the motion, “Urgent Response to a Rise in Stranded Marine Mammals Affected by Domoic Acid Along Los Angeles County Beaches.” Amongst the various directives in the motion, your Board directed the Department of Beaches and Harbors (DBH) to: a.) Lead and coordinate a regional convening within 60 days, bringing together all relevant jurisdictions and agencies along the Los Angeles County coastline – including, but not limited to, individual coastal cities, pertinent County offices, state and federal representatives and agencies, and other key stakeholders, to create a shared understanding, promote cross-agency collaboration, and identify actionable strategies and resources including but not limited to sustainable equitable funding mechanisms to mitigate the impacts of the Domoic Acid Crises; b.) Establish a schedule for a regular convening, meeting as needed, but at minimum quarterly, to monitor progress, share updates, and further coordinate ongoing response and mitigation efforts; and c.) Report back to the Board in writing with a summary report, including identified strategies, recommendations, progress, and next steps within 15 days following each convening.

In coordination with your staff, DBH has organized three Marine Mammal Regional Convenings (Convening). Two Convenings were held virtually, with the inaugural meeting on June 26, 2025, and the second on December 11, 2025. DBH facilitated the third Convening in person on June 8, 2026, which included Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell and her staff; representatives from the offices of Supervisors Lindsey P. Horvath and Janice Hahn; the offices of Assemblymember Tina McKinnor; coastal cities including Malibu, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, and Mayor Jim Light of Redondo Beach; Los Angeles County Fire Department’s Lifeguard Division, Los Angeles County Public Health (DPH); California Wildlife Center (CWC), South Bay Parkland Conservatory, Heal the Bay (HTB), and Marine Mammal Care Center (MMCC).

Supervisor Mitchell opened the meeting and highlighted the significance of the Convening to bring together multiple agencies throughout the southern region to work together to



address preparedness for marine mammal strandings along the County's coastline. In addition to finding collaborative solutions, she also emphasized the need for local jurisdictions to contribute financially to support these efforts to keep our beaches safe for both humans and marine mammals.

Thereafter, a panel of subject matter experts from MMCC, DPH, CWC, and HTB led a discussion on "Emerging Risks to Marine Wildlife and their Coastal and Ecosystem Implications." Panelists discussed trends and risks that may lead to significant strandings, such as climate-driven prey shifts, harmful algal blooms, domoic acid events, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), ongoing runoff, and pollution. Panelists also emphasized the importance of cross-agency collaboration, continued communication, and proactive planning to address evolving needs.

Audience members posed questions to the panelists regarding HPAI and how it spreads, is tested, and the feasibility of mass vaccination of wildlife. Panelists explained that HPAI is a respiratory disease that can be spread by fecal contamination, which wild birds can easily transmit due to their widespread reach over long distances. However, researchers monitor animals that could be affected and test those that are symptomatic by collecting samples. For matters related to birds, audience members were informed to contact their local animal control office.

DBH closed the meeting by providing an update on actions taken since the last Convening, which includes:

- Executed a two-year funding agreement for marine mammal services on County-owned and operated beaches.
- Expanded the public education and outreach campaign in partnership with MMCC focused on reporting marine mammal incidents and promoting best practices for responsible shoreline use.
- The Board proclaimed April 27, 2026, as Marine Mammal Rescue Day in the County as authored by Supervisors Horvath and Mitchell.
- Created and implemented DBH's Coastal Partners Pledge Program, whereby participants commit to support a more coordinated, informed, and effective response to marine mammal rescue incidents in the County.

We anticipate partners will reconvene in September 2026 for the next meeting, during which participants will continue to discuss opportunities for sustainable solutions including streamlining communication and breaking down silos within the region. Meanwhile, DBH will continue to work with partners to develop a coordinated response toolkit for partner agencies to utilize during stranding events.

GJ:cml

c: Beach Board Deputies
Marina Board Deputies
Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Officer
Office of Emergency Management