STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Budget Change Proposal - Cover Sheet
DF-46 (REV 03/25)

Fiscal Year	Business Unit Number	Department
2026-27	3720	California Coastal Commission

Hyperion Budget Request Name	Relevant Program or Subprogram
3720-006-BCP-2026-GB	2730 Coastal Management Program

Budget Request Title
Public Education Program Support

Budget Request Summary
The California Coastal Commission requests $183,000 one-time in 2026-27 from the California Beach & Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA) to support a temporary position in the Public Education program. This temporary position is needed to support grant recipients, conduct outreach, broaden access to coastal educational opportunities, and help manage social media accounts.

Requires Legislation (submit required legislation with the BCP)	Code Section(s) to be Added/Amended/Repealed
☐ Trailer Bill Language ☐ Budget Bill Language ☒ N/A	N/A

Does this BCP contain information technology (IT) components? ☐ Yes ☒ No *If yes, departmental Chief Information Officer must sign.*	Department CIO	Date
	N/A	N/A

For IT requests, specify the project number, the most recent project approval document (FSR, SPR, S1BA, S2AA, S3SD, S4PRA), the approval date, and the total project cost.

Project No. N/A **Approval Date:** N/A

Project Approval Document: N/A **Total Project Cost:** N/A

If proposal affects another department, does other department concur with proposal? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Prepared By	Date	Reviewed By	Date
Madeline Cavalieri	1/9/2026	Jessica Chan	1/9/2026
Department Director	**Date**	**Agency Secretary**	**Date**
Kate Huckelbridge	1/9/2026	Bryan Cash	1/9/2026

Department of Finance Use Only

Additional Review: ☐ Capital Outlay ☐ ITCU ☐ FSCU ☐ OSAE ☐ Dept. of Technology

Principal Program Budget Analyst	Date submitted to the Legislature
Lizzie Urie	1/9/2026

A. Problem Statement

Program Background

The California Coastal Commission's (Commission) Public Education Program (Program) is mandated by the California Coastal Act. PRC Section 30012(b)(1) states:

> *The commission shall carry out a public education program that includes outreach efforts to schools, youth organizations, and the general public for the purpose of promoting understanding of, fostering a sense of individual responsibility for, and encouraging public initiatives and participation in programs for, the conservation and wise use of coastal and ocean resources.*

The Commission's Program works to increase public knowledge of coastal and marine resources, engage the public in coastal protection and restoration activities, and foster long-term stewardship of California's natural resources. The Program has been in operation since the mid-1980s. In the early years, the focus of the Program was on Coastal Cleanup Day and the Adopt-A-Beach®. However, over the past several decades, the breadth of the Program has grown substantially.

Program Growth

Whale Tail Grants

The Whale Tail Grant Program has grown significantly, especially in the last five years. Increased outreach to underserved communities and tribes to expand participation in the Commission's Whale Tail grant program consistent with state priorities has resulted in a 274 percent increase in grant applications between 2019-2024. However, effective outreach efforts and incorporating stakeholder feedback are time consuming, and evaluating the resulting increase in applications is labor intensive. Interest in micro-grants from first-time grantees is particularly high. The Commission offers a "no-minimum amount" micro-grant category which has proved critical for small organizations with limited capacity to utilize larger grants. This also allows the Commission to award a larger number of grants within the available pool of funding. However, each micro-grant requires the same amount of administrative time to process as a larger grant, and first-time grantees require additional time and attention to successfully navigate state and legal requirements. This has led to significant additional workload.

Volunteer Programs

Participation in Commission-led volunteer programs such as Coastal Cleanup Day (the largest volunteer event in the U.S.) have seen steady increases since 2020, averaging a 24 percent increase each year since 2020. Coastal Cleanup Day has expanded to include volunteers from 57 of the state's 58 counties who participate by learning about their local watersheds, and cleaning up inland creeks and streams, understanding that they all connect to the coast. Staff must research, conduct outreach, and provide ongoing support to community organizations throughout the state. The event creates environmental benefits and opportunities for positive engagement with State of California programs. The 2024 Coastal Cleanup included 773 sites and attracted over 47,000 volunteers who collected more than 400,000 pounds of trash. In addition to catalyzing participation, the event raises awareness by reaching millions of Californians through extensive media coverage.

The Adopt-A-Beach program engages volunteer groups in all 15 coastal counties year-round to steward local beaches through regular clean ups. Commission staff recruits, trains and supports partner organizations with instructional materials, educational curricula, coordination with solid waste managers and other logistical needs. Participation in this event is also growing. In 2024, 26,000 volunteers participated at over 2,200 cleanups during the year, up from 13,500 in 2020.

K-12 Curriculum and School Programs

The Public Education Program provides resources for K-12 students and educators to learn about coastal and marine environments and engage in conservation efforts. These resources include curriculum materials, project-based learning guides, and opportunities for hands-on experiences like beach cleanups and field trips. Some examples include: California Coastal Voices, a free, project-based learning guide and online toolkit for middle and high school teachers, focusing on coastal challenges and solutions; Environmental Justice Resources, a flexible five-lesson unit for grades 9-12, exploring environmental justice issues in California and beyond; and annual contests that engage youth creativity in art, writing, photography, and podcasting. The Commission's education resources continue to evolve and modernize to address emerging topics, including climate change and environmental justice, in current media formats.

Social Media

Finally, the Public Education Unit maintains the Commission's multiple social media accounts, as well as maintaining relevant sections of the Commission's website. Working closely with the Commission's Public Information Officer, Public Education staff have increased the number and diversity of social media platforms, however, this workload has delayed some other core work requirements. Increasing the Commission's social media presence will benefit the program and expand opportunities to increase revenue from Whale Tail license plate sales and increase participation in the Commission's volunteer-based programs.

CBCEA Fund Background

The Commission's Public Education Unit and the Whale Tail Grants Program are funded by revenue generated from sales of the Whale Tail License Plate, a "specialty" license plate that California drivers purchase to support coast and ocean protection. Specialty license plates generate revenue through two types of fees: specialty fees to purchase that style of license plate, and personalization fees for a personalized message if the customer chooses that. Half of the specialty fee revenues generated by Whale Tail License Plate sales and renewals are deposited into the CBCEA. The other half of the specialty and personalization fee revenues are deposited into the Environmental License Plate Fund. This results in approximately 25 percent of total Whale Tail License Plate revenue being directed to the CBCEA.

CBCEA has a sufficient reserve to support this one-time cost, and the proposal complies with California Vehicle Code § 5067 (C)(1)(a) which states that the fund should be allocated to the Commission for purposes including its public education programs, grant programs, the Adopt-A-Beach program, and the Beach Cleanup Day program. During 2026-27, Public Education staff will make a renewed effort to increase Whale Tail plate sales through new marketing methods and social media outreach. The Commission will continue to evaluate CBCEA revenues and their ability to support ongoing resources for the Public Education program in future years.

Resource History
(Dollars in thousands)

Program Budget	PY – 4	PY – 3	PY - 2	PY - 1	PY	CY
Authorized Expenditures	837	875	933	980	827	843
Actual Expenditures	799	777	773	764	787	NA
Revenues	1,275	1,119	1,097	1,042	1,031	1,031*
Authorized Positions	4	4	4	4	4	4
Filled Positions	4	4	4	4	4	4
Vacancies	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Estimates

Workload History

Workload Measure	PY - 4	PY – 3	PY – 2	PY-1	PY	CY
Grant applications received	No grant round in 2020	168	149	219	299	370*
Volunteers engaged in cleanup programs	33,230	54,289	61,318	64,762	73,493	83,400*
Coastal Cleanup Day sites	No group sites in 2020	470	542	696	773	800*
Public Education contest entries (youth and adult engagement)	1,341	2,514	3,165	3,328	3,413	3,600*

* Estimates

B. Justification

The resources requested in this proposal are needed to support the Commission's growing Public Education program, including to increase revenue from Whale Tail plate sales, help manage grants, assist grant recipients, conduct outreach, broaden access to coastal educational and volunteer opportunities, and manage social media accounts. This proposal complies with California Vehicle Code § 5067 (C)(1)(a) which states that the fund must be allocated to the California Coastal Commission for purposes including its public education programs, grant programs, the Adopt-A-Beach program, and the Beach Cleanup Day program.

The resources included in this proposal will support a temporary Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA) position to help increase equitable access through sustained outreach to community organizations and educational institutions for the Commission's various

education and outdoor access grants and programming efforts. The temporary AGPA will support capacity-building programming and increased recognition for Commission grant recipients. The temporary AGPA will also create new educational resources and manage statewide youth and adult programs including the Climate Storytelling Contest, an interdisciplinary, student program to process learning about climate change and the emotions that come from that learning. Participation in this program is expected to grow as K-12 science curriculum increases emphasis on the causes and effects of climate change and methods to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Finally, the temporary AGPA will support the increasing need for social media communication regarding Coastal Act implementation and equitable outdoor access and will increase the Commission's ability to coordinate with and amplify CNRA's social media efforts. Commission staff are developing a new social media strategy with increased posting frequency on more platforms, and these resources are critical to implementing this strategy.

C. Departmentwide and Statewide Considerations

This proposal will support and advance statewide and department wide priority goals related to equity and Tribal engagement, public coastal access, Outdoor Access for All (particularly priorities 2, 3, and 4) and Coastal Commission Strategic Plan Goals 2.3, 2.7, 3.5, 4.6, 5.3, 7.5, 8.3, and 8.4.

For the past three years, the Commission has conducted outreach efforts to solicit feedback on ways to reduce barriers to the Whale Tail grant application and reporting processes, and incorporated that feedback through responsive changes at every stage. At the end of each grant cycle, the Commission conducts an annual equity analysis (see 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24) to determine how well the program is meeting its goals. Nearly 100 percent of applicants agree that Whale Tail grants are accessible and that the process is supportive to them. In the latest grant round, of 44 nonprofits that were funded, 17 have annual organizational budgets under $500,000, with six of those under $20,000, demonstrating the program's accessibility to new and community-based organizations. Each year, grant projects take place throughout the State of California with almost all projects engaging vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

As interest in Whale Tail grants continues to grow, this level of support will not be able to continue without the additional resources requested in this proposal.

D. Outcomes and Accountability

With the support of a temporary position, the Commission's Public Education program will support its growing program. The Commission will be able to effectively manage and support Whale Tail grant recipients, continue critical outreach activities, and expand its social media presence. The Commission will continue to track and report on its grant program through State Library reporting systems and on the Commission's website. In addition, the Commission will continue to compile metrics on the Whale Tail plate sales, volunteer programs, educational programs and contests, and social media strategy. These metrics will be described in the Public Education program's annual public report to the Commission, which is webcast and published on the Commission's website.

Projected Outcomes

Workload Measure	CY	BY	BY+1	BY+2	BY+3	BY+4
Grant applications received	370	450	370	370	370	370
Volunteers engaged in cleanup programs	83,400	93,300	83,400	83,400	83,400	83,400
Coastal Cleanup Day sites	800	850	800	800	800	800
Public Education contest entries (youth and adult engagement)	3,600	3,800	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600

E. Implementation Plan

Upon appropriation, the Commission will use the requested resources to hire a temporary AGPA as soon as possible.

F. Supplemental Information

An Organizational Chart is available upon request.

BCP Fiscal Detail Sheet

(Dollars in Thousands)

BCP Title: Public Education Program Support

BR Name: 3720-006-BCP-2026-GB

Budget Request Summary

Personal Services

Personal Services	FY25-26 Current Year	FY26-27 Budget Year	FY27-28 BY+1	FY28-29 BY+2	FY29-30 BY+3	FY30-31 BY+4
Salaries and Wages Earnings - Temporary Help	0	88	0	0	0	0
Total Salaries and Wages	**$0**	**$88**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Total Staff Benefits	0	44	0	0	0	0
Total Personal Services	**$0**	**$132**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

Operating Expenses and Equipment

Operating Expenses and Equipment	FY25-26 Current Year	FY26-27 Budget Year	FY27-28 BY+1	FY28-29 BY+2	FY29-30 BY+3	FY30-31 BY+4
5301 - General Expense	0	1	0	0	0	0
5302 – Printing	0	1	0	0	0	0
5304 – Communications	0	1	0	0	0	0
5320 - Travel: In-State	0	2	0	0	0	0
5324 - Facilities Operation	0	32	0	0	0	0
5340 - Consulting and Professional Services - External	0	7	0	0	0	0
5344 - Consolidated Data Centers	0	2	0	0	0	0
5346 - Information Technology	0	2	0	0	0	0
5368 - Non-Capital Asset Purchases - Equipment	0	3	0	0	0	0
Total Operating Expenses and Equipment	**$0**	**$51**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

Total Budget Request

Total Budget Request	FY25-26 Current Year	FY26-27 Budget Year	FY27-28 BY+1	FY28-29 BY+2	FY29-30 BY+3	FY30-31 BY+4
Total Budget Request	**$0**	**$183**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

Fund Summary

Fund Source

Fund Source	FY25-26 Current Year	FY26-27 Budget Year	FY27-28 BY+1	FY28-29 BY+2	FY29-30 BY+3	FY30-31 BY+4
State Operations - 0371 - California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account, California Environmental License Plate Fund	0	183	0	0	0	0
Total State Operations Expenditures	**$0**	**$183**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Total All Funds	**$0**	**$183**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

Program Summary

Program Funding

Program Funding	FY25-26 Current Year	FY26-27 Budget Year	FY27-28 BY+1	FY28-29 BY+2	FY29-30 BY+3	FY30-31 BY+4
2730055 - Coastal Resources Information Center	0	183	0	0	0	0
Total All Programs	**$0**	**$183**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

Personal Services Details

Staff Benefits

Staff Benefits	FY25-26 Current Year	FY26-27 Budget Year	FY27-28 BY+1	FY28-29 BY+2	FY29-30 BY+3	FY30-31 BY+4
5150900 - Staff Benefits – Other	0	44	0	0	0	0
Total Staff Benefits	**$0**	**$44**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

Total Personal Services

Total Personal Services	FY25-26 Current Year	FY26-27 Budget Year	FY27-28 BY+1	FY28-29 BY+2	FY29-30 BY+3	FY30-31 BY+4
Total Personal Services	**$0**	**$44**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**