



City of Oceanside

300 North Coast Highway,
Oceanside, California 92054

Staff Report

File #: 25-1155

Agenda Date: 12/17/2025

Agenda #: 20.

DATE: December 17, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: City Manager's Office

TITLE: Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution continuing a Local Emergency Declaration due to sedimentation and shoaling in the navigation channel of the Oceanside Harbor.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution continuing the Local Emergency Declaration due to sedimentation and shoaling in the navigation channel of the Oceanside Harbor.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The Oceanside Harbor entrance is subject to annual maintenance dredging conducted by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and supported by the United States Navy. This federally funded maintenance, authorized under Section 301 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1965, maintains safe navigational depths, reduces storm-related impacts, and provides critical coastal protection through the placement of dredged sand on Oceanside beaches. The Harbor entrance, originally constructed by the federal government as an emergency wartime measure in 1942, continues to support vital regional and national interests, including operations at Camp Pendleton Harbor, recreational and commercial boating, and public safety access.

Under typical conditions, the annual dredging cycle occurs in the spring, with the 2025 operation completed on May 10, 2025. In most years, natural coastal processes gradually redistribute sand, with conditions remaining manageable until the following spring dredge. Since completion of the 2025 dredging, however, the Harbor entrance has experienced uncommon and excessive sedimentation and shoaling. Weather patterns, tidal conditions, and littoral transport have accelerated sand accumulation far beyond typical seasonal volumes. This rapid shoaling has significantly reduced channel depths, creating immediate hazards to vessels and increasing the potential for storm-related damage to both federal and City infrastructure within the harbor. These conditions also pose a direct risk to public safety, as the City's Marine Safety Unit relies on the harbor entrance for emergency response operations, including ocean rescues, medical calls, and coordination with federal partners. Marine Safety Unit staff have provided support by escorting vessels when waves are breaking in the Harbor entrance and are continuing to actively monitor the channel conditions. Lifeguard Tower 14, located in the middle of Harbor Beach, remains open and staffed with lifeguards to assist with active monitoring of the Harbor entrance.

Given the rate of sediment accumulation and its effect on navigability, the conditions in the channel now exceed the City's capacity to mitigate with available resources. The scale of required sediment removal is beyond City authority and capability. The only viable remedy is an emergency, off-cycle dredging effort conducted by USACE in collaboration with federal partners. These activities fall squarely within federal jurisdiction, funding authority, and operational expertise. The situation threatens public and private property, restricts access for commercial, recreational, and military navigation, and impairs emergency response capabilities. The condition will remain hazardous until federal dredging operations restore the channel to an appropriate and safe depth.

Government Code section 8630 and Oceanside Ordinance No. 73-22 authorize the City's Director of Emergency Services (i.e., the City Manager) to proclaim a local emergency when conditions of extreme peril threaten persons and property and when the City Council is not in session to act. Based on field observations, operational impacts, and coordination with partner agencies, the Director determined on November 18, 2025, that the degree of shoaling constituted such a condition of extreme peril, which was ratified by the City Council at a Special Meeting on November 19, 2025 (Proclamation No. 25-D0658-4; Resolution 25-R0662-1; Attachments 2 and 3).

Issuing a local emergency resolution enables the City to mobilize and coordinate with state and federal agencies, expedite necessary permits or waivers, and formally request emergency dredging support. It also ensures that the City can seek federal funding and assistance for off-cycle dredging as quickly as possible. City staff have been communicating and coordinating with USACE to arrange surveys of the Harbor entrance to monitor changing conditions, and to schedule off-cycle dredging. Additionally, City staff have discussed the perilous conditions of the Harbor entrance with the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), which has resulted in the issuance of a letter of concurrence on the emergency situation and need for off-cycle dredging (Attachment 4).

The requested action before the City Council is to adopt the continuing resolution (Attachment 5) so that the City may continue coordinated emergency response efforts, obtain federal assistance, and protect public safety, infrastructure, and navigational access in the Oceanside Harbor.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with the existing proclamation remaining in effect.

COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE REPORT

There are no commission or committee reports to report at this time.

CITY ATTORNEY'S ANALYSIS

The attached resolution has been reviewed and approved as to form. Government Code § 8630(c) requires the City Council to review the need for continuing a local emergency at least once every 60

days and that the City Council shall proclaim the termination of the local emergency at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant.

Prepared by: Jayme Timberlake, Coastal Zone Administrator
Submitted by: Jonathan Borrego, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Staff Report
2. Proclamation No. 25-D0658-4
3. Resolution 25-R0662-1
4. USMC Proclamation of an Emergency Situation in the Oceanside Harbor, issued December 9, 2025
5. Resolution Continuing Local Emergency