

Monterey Superior Court Affirms California Coastal Commission's Approval of California American Water's Monterey Desalination Project

Pacific Grove, Calif. - (May 21, 2025), Last week, the Monterey County Superior Court issued its final decision denying attempts by the City of Marina (City), Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD) and Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) to overturn the California Coastal Commission's approval of Coastal Development Permits for California American Water's Monterey desalination project. The court's decision affirms that the Coastal Commission acted appropriately and within its authority when it approved those permits in 2022.

"When this project obtained Coastal Development Permit approvals in 2022, it was the result of the California Coastal Commission's extensive, thorough evaluation, environmental review and public comment process, in addition to the more than six years of work on the project's Environmental Impact Report," said Kevin Tilden, President of California American Water. "The Coastal Commission judiciously conducted its review and correctly concluded that our project meets all requirements at this stage. This superior court decision confirms that this is the right project in the right location."

The recognition of the urgency of Monterey's need for new water supply resources was heightened this week when [the California Public Utilities Commission found in a proposed decision](#) that the Peninsula could face water shortages by 2050 without implementation of the [Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project](#).

"Courts have consistently found that the proposed project meets all conditions and that the Coastal Commission and other regulating authorities have acted appropriately in assessing the project and issuing the relevant permits," said Tilden. "But these failed lawsuits are still consequential. The Monterey Peninsula needs new sources of reliable, drought-resilient water supply and frivolous lawsuits cost residents money and precious time while doing nothing to further the Peninsula's water security."

On the Monterey Peninsula, the challenge of addressing drought is heightened by State Water Resource Control Board orders that require California American Water to significantly reduce pumping from the Carmel River and prohibit the company from providing new water connections until alternate water sources are identified.

To address Monterey's need for a robust, drought-proof water supply, California American Water is pursuing the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project. The desalination project is at the core of this solution, easing the region's severe water supply shortage, meeting the state's water supply goals and developing a new drought-proof water supply.

Desalination will also help diversify the water resources available to Monterey. Next steps in the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project include the expansion of water recycling by public agency partners and improvements to aquifer storage and recovery. By diversifying Monterey's water supply, California American Water is preparing for whatever the future holds.

Once operational, the desalination project will bring the reliable, drought-proof water source needed to lift the Water Board's cease-and-desist order, support community demand and allow for sustainable future growth – including the development of affordable housing to meet the region's needs.

Moreover, California American Water will bring additional benefits to the community including an expansion of customer affordability programs and a \$3 million community benefit for the City of Marina residents.

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