

Staff Report 30

APPLICANT:

Bolinas Community Public Utilities District

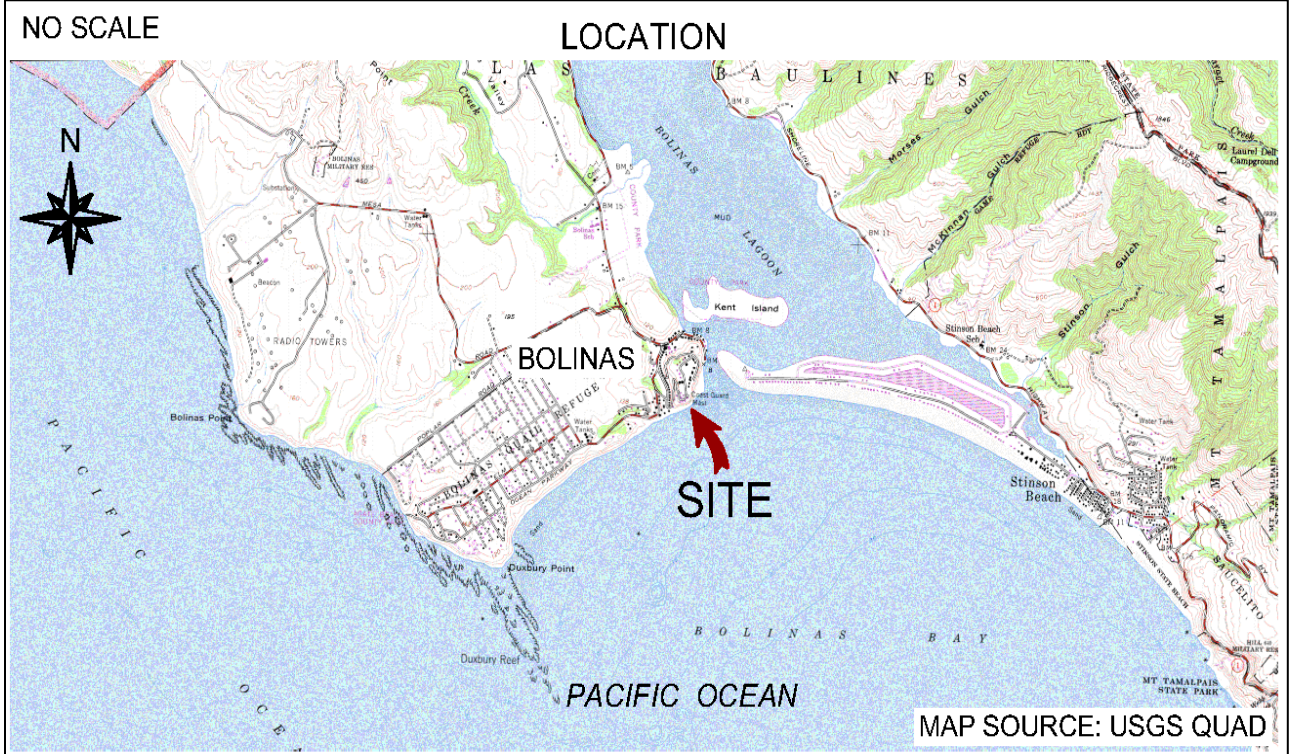
PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Public Agency Use.

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

0.580 acre, more or less, of tide and submerged land in Bolinas Bay, adjacent to Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Marin County (as shown in Figure 1).

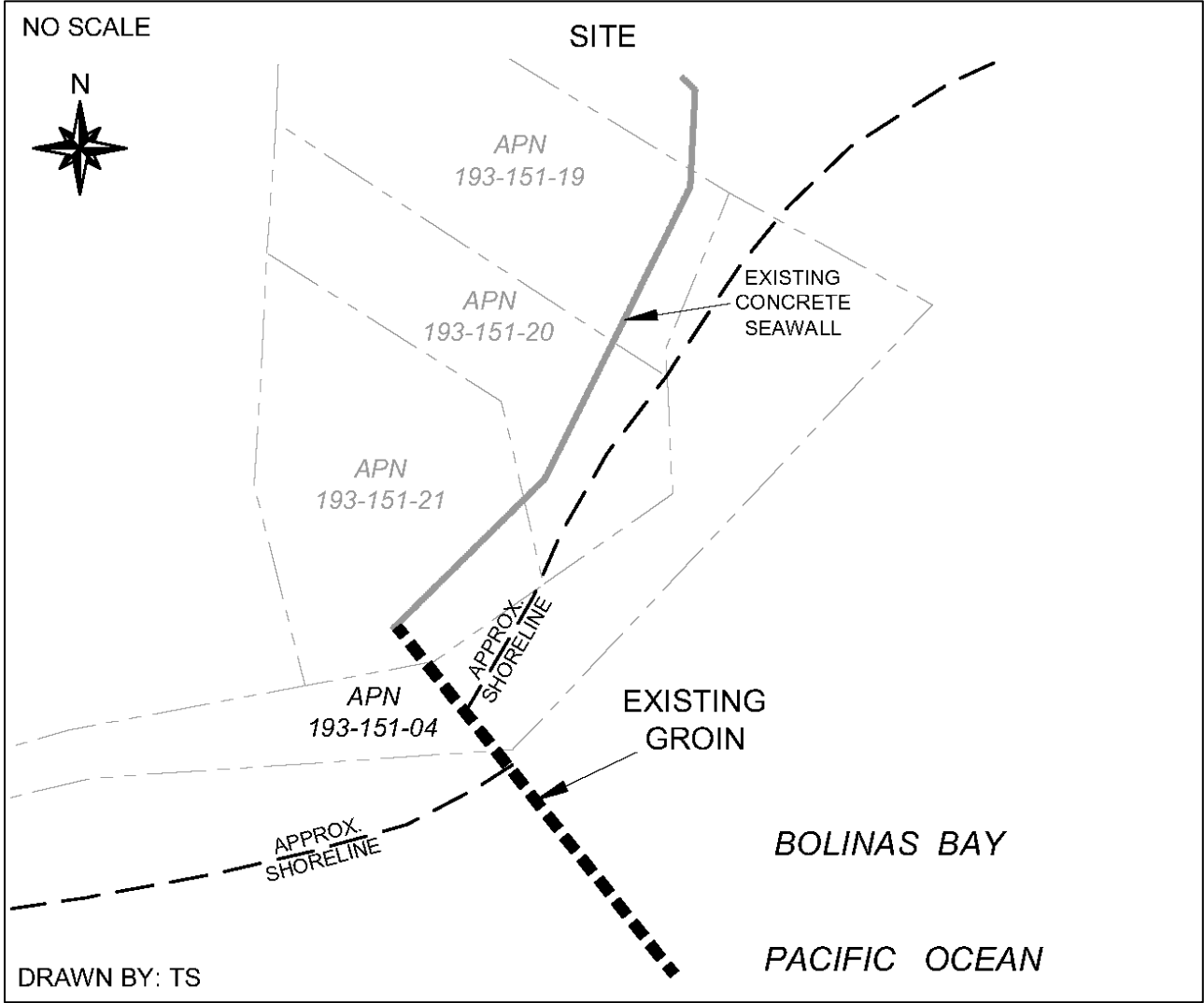
Figure 1. Location



AUTHORIZED USE:

Use and maintenance of an existing groin (as shown in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Site Map



NOTE: This depiction of the lease premises is based on unverified information provided by the Applicant or other parties and is not a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property.

TERM:

20 years, beginning January 6, 2026.

CONSIDERATION:

The public use and benefit, with the State reserving the right at any time to set a monetary rent if the Commission finds such action to be in the State's best interests.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

- Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- All structural modifications, abandonment, or removal of the authorized improvements on the Lease Premises shall require prior review and approval by Lessor.
- When requesting approval for Major Repairs or Alterations, Lessee must assess the feasibility of implementing alternative adaptation strategies such as nature-based solutions or hybrid protective structure designs and provide written documentation of that analysis to staff.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

AUTHORITY:

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6321, 6501.1, and 6503; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 2000 and 2003.

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE’S BEST INTERESTS:

On December 8, 2005, the Commission authorized the issuance of a General Lease – Public Agency Use to the Bolinas Community Public Utility District (District), for the use and maintenance of an existing groin in Bolinas Bay, adjacent to Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Marin County ([Item 55](#)). This lease expired on January 5, 2026.

Now, the Applicant is applying for a General Lease – Public Agency Use for the use and maintenance of an existing groin. Staff recommends issuance of a General Lease – Public Agency Use to the Applicant, effective January 6, 2026.

The groin has existed for many years at this location and is used for shoreline protection and public benefit. The District continues to conduct periodic inspections of the groin, as well as perform maintenance and repair activities on an as-needed basis. The District maintains the improvements at no cost to the State, with a dedicated maintenance and repair fund for the groin established in its annual budget. The District is working towards getting a current inspection of the groin which may result in repairs. Thus, the proposed lease includes a provision that all structural modifications, abandonment, or removal of the authorized improvements shall require prior review and approval by Lessor. The improvements provide a public benefit by helping to create and maintain a wide beach area accessible through public access points at both Wharf Road to the north and

Brighton Avenue to the west, thereby facilitating shoreline access and safe public recreation.

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 20-year term, does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises, and will have no significant impact on Public Trust-consistent uses or resources in the area. Upon termination of the lease, the lessee may be required to remove any improvements from State land and restore the lease premises to their original condition. The proposed lease requires the lessee to indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities thereon.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

INTRODUCTION:

The climate crisis and rising sea levels are impacting coastal California now. As underscored in the [State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance](#) (Ocean Protection Council, 2024), the combination of extreme weather events and the persistent and accelerating rise in sea levels will lead to increased coastal hazards, such as wave runup, storm surges, flooding, and erosion. Shorelines will move inland due to rising seas, exposing more of the natural and human-built environment to coastal hazards. The resulting damage will occur repeatedly and incrementally over years and, in extreme cases, over the span of a few large winter storms. These impacts may affect the existing 240-foot groin subject to the proposed lease, located in Bolinas Bay, adjacent to Stinson Beach, Marin County.

DATA & PROJECTIONS:

Sea levels along most of the California coast rose four to eight inches during the last century, and this trend will accelerate throughout this century. The current rate of sea level rise is triple the rate during the last century. There is growing confidence that by 2050 sea levels will be approximately ten inches higher than they were in 2000. The severity of sea level rise beyond 2050 is contingent on future levels of greenhouse gas emissions. The California Ocean Protection Council updated the State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance in 2024 to provide a synthesis of the best available science on sea level rise projections and rates for multiple emissions scenarios. To apply a precautionary approach, Commission staff evaluated the "intermediate-high" and "high" scenarios due to the vulnerability and exposure of the lease location and the continued global reliance on fossil fuels. The Point Reyes

tide gauge was used for the projected sea level rise scenario for the lease area, as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Projected Sea Level Rise for Point Reyes

Year	Intermediate-High (feet)	High (feet)
2040	0.7	0.8
2060	1.6	2.0
2080	3.0	4.1
2100	4.8	6.6

Source: Table 5, State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Update

Note: Projections are with respect to a 2000 baseline.

ANALYSIS:

Commission staff used the online sea level rise mapping tool, [Our Coast Our Future](#), to evaluate risks to the lease premises and structures from sea level rise. At present sea levels, the lease premises are already regularly flooded and subjected to wave impacts and erosion, which could potentially damage the improvements on the lease premises. Episodic or short-term events, such as extreme storms, very high or King tides, and El Niño events, alone or in combination, will increase the vulnerability of the lease premises and expose it to higher water levels and stronger wave runup, overtopping, and erosion.

As a result, the groin may sustain substantial damage and degradation over the lease term, requiring more frequent repairs and maintenance to retain its function. The existing groin serves as a protective structure to retain sand and limit potential impacts of sea level rise. The groin reduces sediment transport along the water’s edge and reduces beach narrowing by acting as buffer between inland structures and wave action, erosion, and flooding. However, given limits in the groin’s ability to retain sand, sea level rise and coastal erosion are still anticipated over time and beach nourishment may be required to maintain current conditions and stabilize the beach

However, it is important to be aware that sand protective structures, such as groins, can have unintended consequences on adjacent and downcoast locations. The sediment accretion on the updrift side of the structures can cause sediment starvation and erosion downcoast of the structures until the sediment is fully built up on the upcoast side of the groin. Once that occurs, sediment will resume drifting downcoast. The use of sand nourishment to pre-fill the upcoast side of the structures

can minimize these adverse effects¹. Beach erosion at downcoast beaches can harm coastal access, recreation, fishing, ecological communities, and infrastructure in those locations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended to monitor for potential impacts that may result at locations that are downcoast to the groins to ensure that downcoast beach erosion is avoided. If necessary, filling the upcoast side of the structures with sediment and periodic sediment replenishment should be considered to reduce the potential risk of beach erosion downcoast and promote sand retention at the site. Additionally, where feasible and when possible, nature-based strategies could be considered at the beach site, such as establishment of dune habitats, which would further help in stabilizing the shoreline. The combined use of groins and beach nourishment can play an important role in short- to mid-term strategies for stabilizing the shoreline while more long-term strategies are evaluated and implemented.

Please refer to Section Four of the Commission's [2023 Shoreline Adaptation and the Public Trust](#) report for more information about various shoreline adaptation strategies and their advantages and disadvantages for mitigating coastal hazards and protecting Public Trust resources. Any future construction or activities on State land would require a separate authorization from the Commission.

Regular maintenance, as referenced in the terms of the lease, may reduce the likelihood of severe structural degradation or dislodgement. Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Lessee acknowledges that the lease premises and adjacent upland (not within the lease area) are located in an area that may be subject to the effects of climate change, including sea level rise and rising groundwater levels.

CONCLUSION:

For all the reasons above, staff believes approval of this lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs at this location, at this time, and for the term of the lease; and is in the best interests of the State.

¹ American Shore & Beach Preservation Association. (2011). Reintroducing Structures for Erosion Control on the Open Coasts of America. Retrieved from asbpa.org: https://asbpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Reintroducing-Structures-for-Erosion-Control_FINAL.pdf

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Approval or denial of the application is a discretionary action by the Commission. Each time the Commission approves or rejects a use of sovereign land, it exercises legislatively delegated authority and responsibility as trustee of the State's Public Trust lands as authorized by law. If the Commission denies the application, the Applicant must remove the improvements and restore the property to its original condition. The lessee has no right to a new lease or to renewal of any previous lease.
2. This action is consistent with the "Leading Climate Activism" and "Meeting Evolving Public Trust Needs" Strategic Focus Areas of the Commission's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.
3. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301.

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that the activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301.

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

Find that the proposed lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the term of the lease; and is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Public Agency Use to the Applicant beginning January 6, 2026, for a term of 20 years, for the use and maintenance of an existing groin; consideration being the public use and benefit, with the State reserving the right to set a monetary rent if the Commission finds such an action to be in the State's best interest; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.