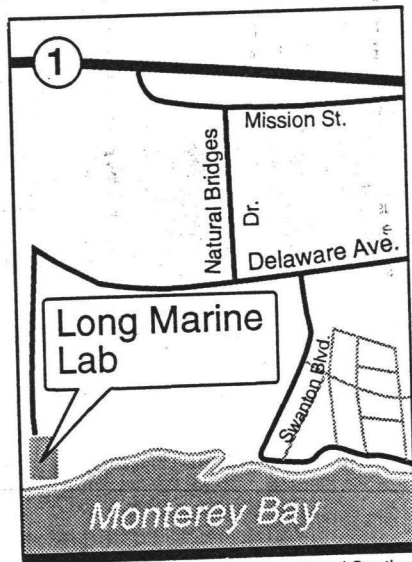


\$1.5 million for marine lab

By JIM O'CONNELL
Ottaway News Service



Chris Carothers/ Sentinel

WASHINGTON — The House has agreed to spend \$1.5 million to begin work expanding the UC Santa Cruz Long Marine Lab at Terrace Point.

The Terrace Point project, however, still faces a difficult road in gaining local land-use approval.

The money was included in a \$26.8 billion spending bill for government agencies that the House approved Thursday on a 322-98 vote.

The legislation included money for the first phase of a \$15 million lab to be built for the National Marine Fisheries Service at the university.

About 40 scientists now researching ground fish at a crumbling lab in Tiburon plan to move to the new lab when it is completed. More than 100 U.S. Geological Survey employees now based at Men-

lo Park also would move into the new facility, under the government plan.

The scientists at the Tiburon lab study fish ecology. But their building is "crumbling around them" and has to be abandoned, said a spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Sam Farr, D-Carmel.

The funds approved by the House will pay for architectural and engineering studies. Money to pay for construction will be sought next year.

The Senate was to ratify the House action late Thursday night or today. If the Senate acts, the bill would go to President Clinton for his signature.

Although the project has received approval on Capitol Hill, it has been the subject of strong debate in Santa Cruz.

Plans to expand the lab on a 60-acre coastal parcel at Terrace Point have received support locally, but a companion plan to build up to 300 homes nearby has

run into strong public opposition.

Many area residents have argued that traffic will get worse and sensitive wetlands will be damaged if the housing is built.

The land is owned by Wells Fargo Bank.

The spending bill approved by the House also included \$6.6 million to help clear the backlog of applications for naturalization at Immigration and Naturalization offices nationwide.

Farr sought the money as part of his proposal to reduce the backlog of services that can delay the swearing-in ceremony for up to 18 months for some applicants.

The INS office in San Jose, the fourth-busiest in the nation, will receive a portion of the funds to reduce its backlog of cases, Farr said.

"This vote was a big win for our area," Farr said.

It took a rumbling caravan of