

Assembly urged to freeze all shoreline development

By LEE QUARNSTROM

A moratorium on development "within a reasonable corridor" along the California coastline was urged last week to the Assembly Natural Resources Committee.

Santa Cruz County Supervisor Henry Mello made the plea for the moratorium in his role as chairman of the environmental action group of the County Supervisors Association of California (CSAC). Mello also submitted to the committee a policy statement by the local board of supervisors urging immediate steps to preserve public access to the beaches.

Mello and the supervisors' association asked the state to enact a moratorium "to provide local governments the necessary time to develop detailed, meaningful and workable coastal management plans and to develop the necessary processes to implement these plans.

Mello and CSAC also backed "creation of a state coastal commission to establish general guidelines and criteria to be used in preparation of coastline preservation plans at the local level."

Under this proposal the state commission would establish guidelines which would be followed by local and regional agencies as they planned for coastline development and/or preservation at the local level. This position was similar to a policy presented to the Assembly committee by a representative of the League of California Cities.

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Mello recommended that local governments prepare a coastal element to be added to their general plans.

Monterey County Supervisor Loren Smith also testified briefly before the committee, backing Mello's statement, and supporting a two-year moratorium on coastline development to allow time for thorough planning and policy-making.

"I firmly believe that a coastal commission should be established," Smith said, "and I believe that regional bodies should have more than just advisory power. I think that regional agencies should have veto power over decisions made by the state coastal commission. This would put some teeth into this thing so we could preserve our own coastlines."

George Miliias, R-Gilroy, committee chairman, noted at one point that the State of Oregon had purchased land along the coast "at low costs by our California standards."

Assemblyman Alan Sieroty responded by saying that "the prices of coastal properties in Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Mateo and some other counties are also low considering the long-term implications of preserving open space."

Sieroty lent his support to a proposal from the League of California Cities and others that the state purchase land along the coast to help solve the open space and beach access problems.

Assemblyman John Dunlap, responding to comments that financing open space preservation is a thorny problem, suggested that federal funds might be used to help finance costs of local governments, offsetting any loss of tax revenue that might accrue if coastal property were purchased by the

Also testifying from the Monterey Bay area were Monterey City Manager John Nail, Celia VonderMuhll, from Santa Cruz, representing the Sierra Club and Lance King, former county youth commissioner, representing the California Coastal Alliance and the federal Student Council on Pollution and Environment.

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