

## CA Coastal Commission in Town, Prompts Protests, Discussion

By Sara Hall

October 10th, 2014

The California Coastal Commission met in Newport Beach this week, prompting a discussion with a commissioner of important topics from one local group and several demonstrations outside the civic center, both in support and protest of specific issues, from others.

About two dozen protesters, many dressed in gas masks and hazmat suits, waved signs and chanted against hydraulic fracturing Wednesday morning on the corner of Avocado Avenue and Civic Center Drive. The group was directly in front of the Newport Beach Civic Center and City Hall, where just inside the CCC was meeting.

The Center for Biological Diversity organized the demonstration, which also involved several other environmental groups, and sent a letter to commission-



Andrea Weber, a paralegal for the Center for Biological Diversity, leads a group of protesters in a cheer Wednesday outside the Newport Beach City Hall and Civic Center while the California Coastal Commission was meeting inside council chambers. The organization, alongside various other environmental groups, was demonstrating in protest to offshore fracking. Many protesters wore gas masks and hazmat suits. The center delivered a letter urging commissioners to press the federal government for greater oversight of fracking in federal waters off California's coast. - Photo by Sara Hall ©

ers urging them to "press the federal government for greater oversight of fracking in federal waters off California's coast," according to a press release.

The protesters also wanted commissioners to demand "consistency review" of fracking in federal waters, the statement reads. "Offshore fracking pollution threatens California's ocean and the very air we breathe," said Miyoko Sakashita, the Center's

oceans program director. “The Coastal Commission must push the federal government to give Californians a say in the use of this toxic technique off our coast. To protect our marine wildlife and our coastal communities, we need to halt off-shore fracking.”

Among the protesters was 11-year-old Sienna, who said she has spent two years educating people about fracking.

She spoke passionately to the group, warning them of the dangers of fracking and urging others to take action.

“Tell the Coastal Commission, tell everyone you know, on-shore and off-shore fracking must be stopped,” the young girl declared. “It is unacceptable.”

Earlier that morning, more than 60 people showed their support of The Ranch in Laguna Beach.

The group attended the Coastal Commission meeting held Wednesday at Newport Beach council chambers.

Supporters wore The Ranch t-shirts and listened to owner Mark Christy after he spoke to commissioners during public comment.

The CCC discussed Newport Beach issues on Thursday afternoon.



A demonstrator wears a gas mask and hazmat suit to protest fracking during the CCC meeting Wednesday.

— Photo by Sara Hall ©



Supporters of The Ranch in Laguna Beach listen to owner Mark Christy after he spoke with CCC about his project during public comment at Wednesday’s meeting.

— Photo by Sara Hall ©

With the Coastal Commission in town, the monthly Wake Up Newport meeting hosted by the NB Chamber of Commerce featured CCC vice chair Jana Zimmer.

Zimmer spoke about the goals of the Coastal Act, the role of the commission as a state agency, how the





— Photo by Sara Hall ©

commission works, and answered questions from the crowd.

Public access and relationships with the local coastal communities are both priorities, Zimmer said.

The rising sea level is an issue that has to be looked at different perspectives and consider the different communities all along the state coastline.

“Sea level issues are different in other parts of the state,” Zimmer said.



Protesters outside Newport Beach Civic Center and City Hall.

— Photo by Sara Hall ©



Fracking protesters donned gas masks and hazmat suits.  
— Photo by Sara Hall ©



A group of about two dozen protested fracking during a CC meeting Wednesday on the street just outside council chambers. — Photo by Sara Hall ©

Commissioners heard a “very sobering” report last month in Crescent City, Zimmer said. The assessment report studying Humboldt Bay and the surrounding communities, both residential and agricultural, was “disheartening,” she said.

“(The report) showed that, even without sea level rise, those communities at risk,” Zimmer said.

The commission’s aim is to continue to implement the values and standards of the Coastal Act, she said.

“(The Coastal Act) remains very broadly supported in California,” Zimmer noted. “It’s because (CA residents) support those basic, fundamental goals of the Coastal Act, that I think we still have to keep in mind, which is as much access as possible for people to the ocean and ocean resources and to preserve as much of the environment as we can for the sake of future generations.”





Fracking protesters wore fish hats, as well as others donning gas masks and hazmat suits, during a demonstration outside of Newport Beach Civic Center and City Hall, where CA Coastal Commission was meeting, on Wednesday. — Photo by Sara Hall ©



Fracking protesters outside of NB city hall on Wednesday.  
— Photo by Sara Hall ©



Protesters wave signs and shout chants against fracking Wednesday outside the Newport Beach City Hall, where the CA Coastal Commission was meeting this week.

— Photo by Sara Hall ©