



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Water Board Approves Septics Ban in Malibu
Victory for Clean Water and Surfrider Beach

Santa Monica Baykeeper, a long-time advocate of Clean Water Act enforcement in the bacteria-laden Malibu Creek Watershed, testified alongside Heal the Bay, Surfrider Foundation, Malibu Surfing Association, and aggrieved surfers at the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) meeting yesterday in Sacramento. The State Board, after hearing concerns from both sides of the issue, voted 5-0 in support of a prohibition that finally rids the Malibu Civic Center area of septic tanks once and for all.

The prohibition was passed in November 2009 by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) after years of technical studies demonstrating that septic tanks in the Civic Center area contribute to the pervasive bacterial contamination that harms the environment and has made surfers and swimmers at Surfrider Beach sick for decades. State Board approval was the final hurdle on the road to clean water at Surfrider Beach.

The prohibition only applies to the Civic Center area of Malibu. The Civic Center area supports a population of approximately 2,000 residents and is the core of the City's business, cultural, and commercial activities. This area includes Malibu Valley, Winter Canyon, and the adjacent coastal strips of land and beaches. The septic prohibition allows no new septics in the area and requires the City to phase out commercial septics by 2015 and residential septics by 2019.

"This is one of the most important decisions made by the State Board for clean water along Los Angeles County's coastline. Malibu has fought long and hard against phasing out septics despite 20 years of studies demonstrating septic tanks' contribution to bacterial pollution at Surfrider Beach. Now is the time for Malibu to build a treatment plant, explore the use of recycled water, and truly demonstrate its commitment to clean water," states Liz Crosson, Executive Director of Santa Monica Baykeeper.

State Water Board Chair, Charles Hoppin, will monitor the progress of Malibu by discussing the issue with the City and the Regional Board twice a month through December. Baykeeper will also monitor Malibu's compliance with the septic prohibition to ensure that the City is meeting standards and is on track with the final 2019 compliance deadline.

About Santa Monica Baykeeper: Founded in 1993, Santa Monica Baykeeper's (SMBK) mission is to protect and restore the Santa Monica Bay, San Pedro Bay and adjacent waters through enforcement, fieldwork and community action. SMBK works to achieve this goal through litigation and regulatory programs that ensure water quality protections in waterways throughout Los Angeles County.

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