



May 5, 2025

Senator Catherine Blakespear
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 741 (Blakespear) – Support *(as amended on April 21, 2025)*

Dear Senator Blakespear,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and other activists, we appreciate your recent amendments to SB 741, which meaningfully narrows the scope of the bill while allowing the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) to respond to true emergencies. These changes represent an important step forward, and we are now able to shift our position from opposition to uneasy support, contingent on the amended language remaining in place.

SB 741 now appropriately limits emergency exemptions to repairs within the existing footprint of highways and railroads and explicitly prohibits new shoreline armoring. Protection of public beaches is essential. Hard shoreline armoring accelerates erosion, degrades ecosystems, and restricts public access. We cannot afford to keep losing these critical public resources. In San Clemente and Del Mar, railway authorities have already armored coastal areas at significant cost to both the environment and the public. Beaches and waves in this region are not only iconic but economically vital. Trestles Surf Break, the future site of the 2028 Olympic surfing competition, is valued at \$12-20 million in direct local economy expenditures, plus \$40 million in non-market value¹. San Clemente's beaches contribute more than \$25 million each year to the local economy through tourism and recreation².

While we appreciate the bill's improvements, we must emphasize that any use of shoreline armoring must continue to undergo Coastal Act review to ensure mitigation of impacts. SB 741 still grants a permitting exemption that could delay necessary long-term planning for climate-resilient transportation solutions in the LOSSAN corridor. Emergency measures cannot substitute for proactive planning that protects both public infrastructure and our irreplaceable coastal ecosystems.

¹ Chad Edward Nelsen, *The Surfonomics of Trestles*, Shore & Beach. Vol.75, No. 4. (Fall 2007), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253878562_A_Socioeconomic_Study_of_Surfers_at_Trestles_Beach.

We support SB 741 as amended and currently outlined. However, our support remains contingent on maintaining the critical provisions prohibiting new armoring and limiting actions to true emergencies within existing transportation footprints. The future of California's coast, and the viability of our public beaches, access rights, and recreation economy, depends on it.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Mandy Sackett
California Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Susan Jordan
Founder & Executive Director
California Coastal Protection Network

Suzie Whitelaw
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Save Our Beaches San Clemente

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