



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Board of Supervisors

Subject: Approve the Nomination of Supervisor Cummings to the California Coastal Commission

Meeting Date: March 25, 2025

Formal Title: Approve the nomination of Supervisor Cummings to the California Coastal Commission, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Approve the nomination of Supervisor Cummings to the California Coastal Commission; and
2. Direct the Chair to submit the nomination to the Speaker of the Assembly within the 45-day application period.

Executive Summary

Approve nomination to re-appoint Supervisor Cummings as the representative of the Central Coast counties of San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey County on the California Coastal Commission.

Discussion

The California Coastal Commission is responsible for implementing the California Coastal Act within the state's coastal zone. The Commission consists of 15 members, 12 of whom are appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the President of the Senate. One seat is designated to represent elected officials from the Central Coast counties of San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. This appointment, made by the Speaker of the Assembly, may be filled with a City Council member or a County Supervisor. Currently, Supervisor Cummings serves as the Central Coast representative and is the Commission's Chair.

Many land use decisions made by the Board of Supervisors and local cities involve policies and projects within the coastal zone that require Coastal Commission approval. Santa Cruz County has greatly benefited—and will continue to benefit—from having a Commission member with deep knowledge of a broad range of local issues.

On December 11, 2024, Supervisor Cummings was unanimously elected Chair of the Coastal Commission by his fellow commissioners at a public hearing in Newport Beach. He was appointed to the Commission in 2023 as the locally elected representative for the Central Coast.

Supervisor Cummings began his political career as a tenants' rights organizer in Santa Cruz, motivated by the city's housing affordability crisis. In 2018, he was elected to the City Council, becoming one of the first two African American men to serve in that role. In 2020, he made history again as the first African American man to serve as Mayor of Santa Cruz. In 2022, he became the first African American elected to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. Throughout his career, he has prioritized affordable housing, environmental protection, and community service.

With a strong background in environmental sciences, Cummings holds a bachelor's degree in Biology, a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology with a designated emphasis in Environmental Studies, and a bachelor's degree in Spanish. Fluent in Spanish, he is committed to engaging with Spanish-speaking constituents. He brings over 20 years of experience in environmental scientific research and education, as well as a deep understanding of coastal issues and the Coastal Act. Given that much of the district he represents falls within the coastal zone, his expertise and leadership will continue to be invaluable in advancing public access, environmental protection, affordable housing, and local governance on the Commission.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the County budget for this item.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety, Attainable Housing, Sustainable Environment

Submitted By:

Felipe Hernandez, Chair and Fourth District Supervisor

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.