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Stone Bill to Promote Coastal Access Clears First Committee

Sacramento – The Assembly Natural Resources Committee approved AB 1129 by Assemblymember Mark Stone (D-Monterey Bay) to help protect California’s coast in the face of sea-level rise, intense weather events, and other impacts of a changing climate. The final vote was 7:3. Assembly Bill 1129 guards coastal access and coastal resources by promoting natural alternatives to seawalls and other defense structures. While coastal armoring is a short-term solution that leaves lasting negative impacts on the coastal ecosystem and public access, natural-based alternatives provide long term solutions that help protect California’s diverse coastal landscape.

“California’s coast is changing and our policies must change with it,” said Assemblymember Stone. “Natural alternatives to short-term fixes like seawalls will ensure that Californians continue to have access to the coastal resources that belong to everyone. By ensuring that the California Coastal Commission is given a clear mission and tools to promote these natural alternatives, the state can adequately protect public access to beaches and other coastal resources.”

"Access to the coast for all people continues to be a pressing issue for inland communities that have historically not enjoyed California's beaches. As we make progress in ensuring access for all, making sure that we do not lose beaches, as a result of coastal armoring that directly impacts adjacent public beaches, is very important, said Marce Gutiérrez-Graudiņš, Founder and Director of AZUL.

Specifically AB 1129 will provide the California Coastal Commission with administrative tools to enforce existing law regarding unpermitted structures, limit emergency seawalls to temporary structures, and require the removal of emergency armoring structures in the absence of longer-term authorization.

“Californians and visitors from around the world will benefit from Assemblymember Stone’s championing of our iconic coastline. The Nature Conservancy commends Assemblymember Stone for introducing this important legislation that will protect the natural beauty of our coast and make sure California’s beaches remain open to all. Sea level rise poses an increasing threat to California’s coastline. AB 1129 helps protect our beaches from the impacts of climate change, preserves their natural beauty and defends the right of every Californian to enjoy them,” stated Louis Blumberg and Sarah Newkirk of the Nature Conservancy, the sponsor of the bill.

“Impacts from both climate change and private development are degrading the condition of California’s beaches and the natural beauty of the coast. AB 1129 will help restore our coastline and protect against further damage.”

This bill will be heard next in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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