

Coastal Agency Donates \$2 Million for Huntington Beach Pier Project

■ **Public works:** The biggest single contribution for the \$12.8-million structure still leaves the city \$5.3 million short of full funding.

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HUNTINGTON BEACH—The California State Coastal Conservancy donated \$2 million Friday to this city's planned municipal pier—the biggest single contribution so far for the \$12.8-million structure.

Mayor Thomas J. Mays said the state agency's contribution was critical to the project's success. Even so, the new pier is still \$5.3 million short of being fully funded, city officials said.

Mays, however, told the Coastal Conservancy meeting Friday that the city will begin building a new pier this year, whether or not it has the remaining \$5.3 million in hand.

"We are committed to building this," Mays said.

The mayor said demolition of the old pier, which has been closed since July, 1988, because of storm damage, is scheduled shortly after the Labor Day holiday this year. Construction of the new pier is scheduled to begin by November and be completed by spring, 1991.

Deputy City Administrator Rich Barnard told the conservancy board of directors that the city would tap its financial reserves, if necessary, to pay for the rest of the pier. Barnard and Mays stressed, though, that they hope that the remaining money can be produced from private fund-raising and more contributions from county, state and federal governments.

Barnard said the city has already committed \$1.6 million of its general-fund money for the pier. On Monday the City Council set aside another \$800,000 in its 1990-91 budget for major building projects, and Barnard said some or all of that could go for the pier.

"The new pier is the city's No. 1 capital-improvement project," Mays told the conservancy board.

The board held its regular monthly meeting Friday at the Huntington Beach Civic Center. The board holds its meetings at various places throughout the state, and Huntington Beach became the meeting site this month because the pier was a major item on the agenda.

The little-known conservancy, an arm of the state government, was created by the Legislature in 1976 to try to protect the state's coastal resources.

After the meeting, Mays said Huntington Beach had been counting on a contribution of at least \$1.5 million from the conservancy. The

extra \$500,000 was a nice surprise, he said.

Added Councilman Peter M. Green: "That extra \$500,000 certainly helps. I must say that the State Coastal Conservancy has been very generous to Huntington Beach. They earlier gave a half-million dollars for the Huntington wetlands project, and that made a big difference in completing that. The conservancy has also been very supportive of the Bolsa Chica wetlands."

The conservancy board on Friday voted, 5 to 0, for the pier donation. The only critical questioning came from conservancy board member Penny Allen, who asked city officials what would happen if the rest of the pier money is not raised by the time construction is scheduled this fall.

Mays, in response, made the unequivocal pledge to her and the rest of the conservancy board that the pier would be under construction this year—even if the city has to tap emergency funds.

The conservancy's staff had strongly recommended that the board approve the \$2 million. "The proposed 1,830-foot-long replacement pier will approximate the historical and visual appearance of the existing pier," the staff report said.