

The Breakwater Campaign Milestones

1996: Breakwater Task Force formed in the Surfrider Foundation Huntington Beach/Long Beach Chapter after the release of the Breakwater 50th anniversary newspaper article. Public outreach starts.

1998: Breakwater Task Force becomes Surfrider Foundation Long Beach Chapter

2001: A Long Beach City Councilman makes a motion to have a breakwater reconfiguration study, but doesn't get seconded.

2005: Long Beach City Council votes to ask the Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) to have a reconnaissance study on reconfiguring the breakwater.

2007: Long Beach City Council votes to allocate \$100,000 from Tideland funds to pay for the reconnaissance study.

2008: The City of Long Beach starts the reconnaissance study.

2009: The reconnaissance study completed; Congress funds \$90,000 for ACE review.

2010: In February the reconnaissance study is presented to ACE for their review.

2010: On June 22nd the Long Beach City Council voted to partner with the Army Corp of Engineers to proceed with a feasibility study to determine the best way to reconfigure the Long Beach Breakwater and improve our marine ecosystem.

How Much and How Long?

The removal of the breakwater and associated structural enhancement would cost from \$350 million to \$500 million depending on which reconfiguration alternative is chosen. We expect the entire process to require from 10 to 20 years to complete.

Approach

* **Federal Project:** Because the breakwater is owned and maintained by the federal government, the normal evaluation process would involve the ACE. The first (reconnaissance) study takes \$100,000 and 1 year. The second (feasibility) study would require \$8 million and 3-4 years. At every step, we need ACE's approvals.

* **Local Acquisition:** The City of Long Beach can purchase the breakwater through the base realignment and closure process, the formerly used defense sites process, or an act of Congress. That done, the breakwater becomes local property and the process becomes much more flexible and streamlined since the project would not require ACE cost/benefit justification.

What You Can Do

1. Become a Surfrider member (www.surfrider.org)
2. Write a letter to your city council and congressional representative to let them know that you want waves back on the shores of Long Beach. Sample letter available at: www.lbsurfrider.org
3. Get your "Sink the Breakwater" T-shirts and bumper stickers at our table events or email: longbeach@lbsurfrider.org.
4. Come to our meetings. For a schedule, go to www.lbsurfrider.org
5. Donate money. The Long Beach Chapter runs on all-volunteer efforts. All donations are tax deductible. You will receive a receipt in mail if you send a check payable to:

Surfrider Foundation Long Beach Chapter
P.O. Box 14627, Long Beach, CA 90853

Sink the Breakwater!



The "Sink the Breakwater" project is being led by the nationally recognized and respected environmental group, the Surfrider Foundation. With the Surfrider Foundation's guidance, a grassroots effort involving thousands of Long Beach residents has evolved. The slogan "Sink the Breakwater" was selected for its representation of the project's goal; to reconfigure the Long Beach Breakwater so that waves will greet the shores of Long Beach again.

It is important to note that the "Sink the Breakwater" project involves only the Long Beach Breakwater, which sits between the Queen's Way Gate to the west and the Alamitos Channel to the east. This project does not affect the San Pedro and Middle breakwaters which protect the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. With the closure of the U.S. Navy base in 1997, the Long Beach Breakwater has lost its original purpose. It's time to get rid of the breakwater and bring back our beach community!



LB Breakwater History

The Long Beach Breakwater was built as a part of the deepwater port project. The construction of the San Pedro and Middle Breakwaters started in 1899 and 1932, and were completed in 1912 and 1942 respectively. Construction of the Long Beach Breakwater started in 1941, but was halted in 1943 due to WWII. Construction was resumed in 1946, and completed in 1949. The U.S. Navy moved in to the port of Long Beach in 1940 and used the breakwaters for military purposes.

Since the breakwater was created, Long Beach's waterfront has deteriorated. The natural flow of the ocean current and waves had previously assisted in keeping the beaches and waters in Long Beach free from stagnating pollutants. With the breakwater, urban runoff or stormwater from the Los Angeles (LA) River gets trapped between the breakwater and our shoreline.

Map of Long Beach and vicinity



Benefit of Reconfiguring the Breakwater

- **Waves in Long Beach:** Because of the south facing beaches, Long Beach could naturally benefit from the south swells which come in the summer. The winter west swells would also penetrate into Long Beach to provide surf related recreation. This would dramatically change the image of our city.

- **Improved ecosystem:** Bringing waves back to the deteriorated Long Beach marine environment would help improve the water quality by introducing circulation. Rocks from the breakwater would be used to create rocky bottom habitat attracting desirable fish and other marine animals.

- **Economic benefit to the City:** The increase in wave action would attract tourists, which would become a key city revenue source. A recent study estimated that up to \$52 million per year can be generated in city revenue by having a beach with waves.

- **Increased property values:** Residents citywide will benefit from increased property value. Currently Long Beach coastal real estate values are lower than those of similar nearby beach cities. A beach with waves would lead to increased property values.

- **Minimize Erosion on the Peninsula:** The south-eastern end of Ocean Blvd. runs through the middle of Long Beach's Peninsula neighborhood. This narrow stretch of land separates the Alamitos Bay from the Pacific Ocean. For many years, the Peninsula's ocean facing beach has suffered from chronic beach erosion. The City of Long Beach spends \$300,000-500,000 every year to move sand from around the Belmont Plaza to the Peninsula. The Peninsula Beach reconnaissance study of 2000 concluded that south swells coming through the

opening between the Alamitos jetty and the east end of the Long Beach Breakwater move sand from the Peninsula north westward toward the Belmont Plaza. This flow is opposite nature; the breakwater prevents the normal "Long Shore Current", that flows from north to south, from hitting our beaches. If the breakwater were removed, bringing back this natural current could help stabilize the erosion. Keep in mind that any breakwater reconfiguration would require protection for the ocean front property. This could be achieved with a wide beach, stabilized through use of structures, such as reefs or groins.

- **Strengthen Structures in Long Beach Harbor:** The Belmont Pier, oil islands, Shoreline Marina, and other areas around the mouth of the LA River were developed with the existing reduced wave action with the breakwater in place. Therefore, these structures would need to be reinforced or modified to withstand an increased swell if the breakwater were reconfigured.

1938 Surfing and Paddleboard Championship Long Beach, California

