

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 6, 2015

## **State Coastal Commission Decides Fate of Last Coastal Open Space at October 7 Hearing**

### **Hundreds of Residents Attending to Protest High Density Development**

Newport Beach, California— On Wednesday, October 7, the California Coastal Commission convenes at the Long Beach Convention Center for a permit hearing on proposed residential and commercial development of the 400 acre Banning Ranch in Newport Beach, CA; several hundred local residents will attend to protest approval of the high density development. Banning Ranch, whose coastal bluffs and adjacent wetlands are home to several indigenous and endangered species, is the last large, unprotected, coastal open space in Southern California.

Wednesday's hearing is the final major approval needed for the proposed high density development, which includes 1,375 homes, a 75-room resort hotel, 75,000 square feet of commercial space, arterial highways, a sports park with six tennis courts, soccer fields, baseball fields, a skateboard park, and two parking lots exceeding 125 parking spaces.

The property was originally acquired in 1874 by Southern California financier and transportation magnate, Phineas Banning, in a parcel of 4,077 acres of prime farm and ranch land located in the vicinity of the Santa Ana River; much of this land now is Costa Mesa.

In November 2006, Newport Beach voters approved a General Plan prioritizing the acquisition of the remaining 400 acres of Banning Ranch, situated north of PCH between the Santa Ana River and Superior Ave., as an open space amenity for the community and the region.

Developers of the 400 acres, Newport Banning Ranch, LLC, are a team of oil and gas producers affiliated with Shell Oil and Exxon Mobile, as well as a private equity investing firm, and a land planning and investment company.

Several prominent experts will testify at this week's hearing on behalf of the Banning Ranch Conservancy, which strongly opposes the development due to significant adverse impacts on the environment, a large increase in traffic in the Newport Beach/ Costa Mesa area and Huntington Beach, negative impacts to tens of thousands of residents living in its proximity, as well as the loss of a valuable coastal nature preserve and open space.

The Coastal Commission staff also recommends denial of the project after a comprehensive review of the proposed development.

The public is urged to attend the hearing, which begins at 9 am at the Long Beach Convention Center, 300 E. Ocean Avenue in Long Beach, 90802. Buses and carpools have been organized to transport the several hundred Orange County residents who will attend the hearing.

For more information, go to [www.banningranchconservancy.org](http://www.banningranchconservancy.org).

Banning Ranch Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve, acquire, conserve and manage the entire Banning Ranch as permanent public open space, park and coastal nature preserve.

###

*For more than 20 years, the **Banning Ranch Conservancy**'s mission has been to preserve, acquire, conserve and manage the entire Banning Ranch as permanent public open space, park and coastal nature preserve.*