

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF DECISION RULES AND VOTING*

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ABSTRACT

The interest in managing coastal resources has required the development of new administrative programs. A frequent goal of many of these management agencies is the representation of viewpoints from governments located adjacent to the water *and* those located further from the land-water interface. This balancing of local and regional needs is a critical feature for most agencies and an important area of concern for individuals developing coastal agencies.

The notion that representation based on a wider geographical scale will result in a better reflection of the public interest is based on frequently accepted perspectives. To examine whether or not these assumptions are valid for coastal zone management, 1100 different votes by one regional commission in California were analyzed. The examination, although limited, offers some support for the position that the procedures developed for selecting coastal commissioners in California did produce some voting differences between local and regional representatives.

Introduction

The management and regulation of land in the coastal zone is a subject addressed with increasing regularity by social scientists, public officials, and citizens' groups [1-4]. Within the last five years, this activity has led to the creation of land management programs for the coastlines of some states

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[2, 5, 6]. In other areas, programs for state and regional participation in the management of coastal lands are being discussed by legislative bodies and local governments [6, 7].

Developing new coastal zone management programs, as has been done in some areas, involves several decisions about the administrative structure of the new agencies. First, the area over which the new unit will exercise control must be specified. In some instances the geographic scale of coastal management systems has meant control over the immediate shoreline [8]. In other instances, wider zones have been selected [9]. The bureaucratic scale of the coastal zone management program must also be specified. In some areas a regional framework has been selected or discussed; in others a state-wide system has been discussed [7, 10]. In addition to choosing an appropriate geographic and bureaucratic scale for coastal agencies and selecting its powers, agency planners must also decide which communities or organizations will be represented on the commissions and the process by which these commissioners will be selected. In making decisions about these latter two structural components of a coastal management agency—labeled for the purposes of this essay as the decision-making rules of a coastal commission—some agency planners have been guided by frequently accepted viewpoints concerning representation. For instance, most coastal zone management programs contain opportunities for representation of viewpoints from the local governments immediately adjacent to the ocean. However, conscious of a growing concern over the impact of decisions made by officials from communities surrounding the water on the ability of non-coastal residents to utilize marine resources, many new coastal zone plans also contain provisions for inputs in decision-making processes by individuals representing a region or the “public” that uses the coastline.

The notion that representatives of a larger geographical area will differ in perspectives from delegates representing small communities may be based on ideas accepted by many students of political organization. The deleterious impacts of fragmentation in government organization resulting from parochial interests especially in planning programs has been repeatedly argued by proponents of local government consolidation [11–13]. A general feeling that small governments are myopic and cannot effectively manage many critical policy areas is an assumption frequently accepted [12, 14]. This legacy of suspicion over the abilities of local governments has appeared in many works dealing with questions of natural resource management [15–17].

Given continuing pressure for coastal zone management programs and the escalating demands for use of coastal land and water there will probably be a continuing interest in the development of coastal management agencies. In light of the importance of decision rules, and the time spent discussing the proper procedure for representation of the interests of both the region and local governments adjacent to water resources, there would appear to be great

value in examining if regional representatives to coastal commissions behave differently from those representatives of coastal communities. This article will attempt to provide some data on this point for students of coastal zone management through an examination of the voting patterns of all commissioners serving a regional coastal commission in California. The most active of six regional commissions was selected for the analysis, and more than 1100 decisions on land use affecting the coastline of Southern California were examined. Before reviewing the data on voting behavior, the research methods, and study limitations, a brief review of the California program is presented to familiarize individuals with the interim management program used between 1973 and 1977.

**Coastal Zone Management in California:
A Brief Description**

The structural aspects of the interim management system developed for the coastline of California have been repeatedly described [2, 5, 7, 17]. As pertains to this article, it may be sufficient to review only those attributes of the study area pertinent to the questions raised.

STUDY AREA: THE SOUTH COAST REGIONAL COMMISSION

The South Coast Regional Commission had authority to regulate all development, landward for 1000 yards, along more than 100 miles of shoreline within Los Angeles and Orange counties. Sixteen independent municipalities within the counties have the Pacific Ocean as one of their boundaries. These cities and two counties have "packaged" their coastal zones in quite different ways. There are exclusive single-family residential sections, high density apartment complexes, major port facilities and mixed commercial and residential portions. In addition, there are a number of small craft marinas, state and county beaches and substantial areas with little or no development [18].

Governing this region between 1973 and 1976 was a twelve member commission. Article One of the Coastal Zone Conservation Initiative established the following qualifications and procedures for the selection of commission members (California Coastal Zone Conservation Act, 1972. California Public Resources Code, Division 18 California Coastal Zone Conservation Commission):

1. One supervisor from each county (2)
2. One city councilman from the City of Los Angeles
selected by the president of said city council (1)
3. One city councilman from Los Angeles County (1)
4. One city councilman from Orange County (1)

- 5. One delegate from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) (1)
- 6. Six Representatives of the public (6)
- Commission Members 12

All county supervisors are selected by their respective board of supervisors. City council representatives are chosen by a city selection committee in each county except for the representative of the Los Angeles City Council. The delegate from the regional government association, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), is chosen by that agency. The Senate Rules Committee, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Governor each appoint two public members. Each of the coastal commissioners can be removed from office by the individuals or body that initially selected the coastal commissioner.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL INPUTS IN COASTAL ZONE DECISIONS

The basic purpose of the new decision-making process was a delegation of authority to a new governmental unit which would allow values publicly determined by the electorate to be reflected in future development decisions for the coastal zone. To accomplish this objective, an organizational and decision-making structure was developed that would, it was hoped, bring other inputs into the decision-making system. A system of representation on the state and regional decision-making bodies was designed to incorporate inputs from local governments which bordered the ocean and representatives of the citizens of the region. This was done at the regional level in the appointment of six commissioners by state officials and including a member of SCAG in the decision-making system.

The California coastal zone management program, similar to other regulatory coastal regulation systems, assumed the individuals appointed by state officials or regional government associations would behave differently than the representatives of local governments. The data and analysis which follow are designed to provide some data on this point by examining the differences in voting behavior between regional and local representatives.

Commissioner Voting and Coastal Zone Management: Local Representatives and Regional Representatives

RESEARCH METHODS

To examine the voting patterns of the different coastal commissioners, the decisions made on 1121 applications presented to the South Coast

Commission between May, 1973 and August, 1974 were reviewed.¹ The vote of every coastal commissioner on each issue addressed by the commission was recorded. So were certain characteristics of the proposed development: type of project; cost; proximity to the water; and the use of land at the time a new development was proposed. No attempt was made to further segregate development proposals. There was no selection of environmentally "dangerous" projects. Part of the decision to avoid this selection process was the difficulty in choosing "dangerous" projects that could satisfy agreed upon criteria. This problem has also plagued other efforts examining the behavior of coastal commissioners [19, 20].

The research project did not record the compromises made by different commissioners and the conditions attached to any development proposals. Such actions are clearly important dimensions of commissioners' behavior and the performance of any elected legislator. Despite these limitations, the data reported here will allow for some important observations with regard to voting patterns.

The analysis that was done on commissioners' voting is broken into three parts. First the number of approvals and denials cast by representatives of local governments and the commissioners appointed by a state official were examined. Second, voting differences by selected project characteristics were also analyzed. The characteristics selected were related to important questions central to the emerging policy area of coastal zone management. The analysis presented in these series of voting breakdowns is based on simple percentage differences and chi squares. The selection of this approach for sections 3.2 to 3.5 is based on the discussion in Sprague's earlier work on voting blocs and the Supreme Court [21]. The third part of the analysis seeks to identify voting blocs related to the geographical size of a commissioner's constituency.

APPROVAL AND DENIAL VOTES: A SECONDARY VIEW OF ACTIVITY

The South Coast Commission, between February 1, 1973 and December 31, 1974, reviewed 3,514 applicants and denied only 195 requests (5.5%). Consequently, one would expect all commissioners were casting affirmative votes frequently. However, Table 1 indicates the representatives selected by

¹ There were actually three categories of permit applications brought before the coastal commissioners. The applications classified as administrative or consent calendar were thought to have less potential for affecting the coast. However, previous research suggests this assumption was not valid. The similarity between consent calendar and public hearing items actually suggests both kinds of applications represent crucial items [5]. As such, all decisions made by the commission were reviewed for this project.

Table 1. Voting Records of Coastal Commissioners: Summary

<i>Appointment Criteria</i>	<i>Vote Cast</i>			
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Abstain</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
Local Government	3695	25	418	4138
% Row	89.3	6	10.1	100.0
% Column	42.1	17.1	22.8	38.5
South Coast Region	5079	121	1416	6616
% Row	76.8	1.8	21.4	100.0
% Column	57.9	82.9	77.2	61.5
Total	8774	146	1834	10,754
% Row	81.6	1.4	17.1	100.0

$\chi^2 = 19.9$ with 2 df, significant at .001 level.

state government officials and the regional association of governments (hereafter labeled "regional representatives") did vote negatively more often than did the representatives of local governments. The regional representatives cast 21.4 per cent of their votes against development. Of the 3,695 votes cast by local representatives, 10.7 per cent were negative.

A look at the total number of votes cast also indicates the commissioners appointed by local government units are absent more often than the regional commissioners. The regional representatives could have cast 7,847 votes; their local counterparts, 5,605 (1,121 issues multiplied by one vote for each commissioner). The commissioners appointed by state officials cast 84.3 per cent of the total number of votes possible; the commissioners selected by local government units cast only 73.8 per cent of their allowed votes. The fact that the officials representing local governments held other elected positions may have affected their ability to attend all meetings.

COMMISSIONER VOTING AND PROJECT TYPE

More important than the simple differences in voting are the patterns that emerge for specific kinds of development proposals. The type of project approved by a coastal commission can have important implications for access and use of the coast. Single-family homes can reduce access, while recreational developments can enhance use opportunities.

To examine the possibility of different voting patterns emerging for various kinds of development proposals, the projects submitted were divided into nine categories: commercial, industrial, recreation, public utility, single-family homes, multi-family homes, dredging, demolition, and other. While no effort was made to analyze the implications of any single permit or pattern of development, a separation by type of development allows a closer look at voting patterns.

Examining the 1,121 decisions made by the South Coast Commission illustrates some interesting differences in commissioner voting. For instance, the regional representatives cast 79.9 per cent of their votes in support of all commercial projects; but local representatives cast 93.4 per cent of their votes for commercial projects. As Table 2 indicates, the commissioners appointed by local government agencies not only cast a higher percentage of their votes for development, but the voting differences for residential and commercial development exceeded the overall difference reported in the distribution of the total number of affirmative votes. This would mean the local representatives were more inclined to favor residential and commercial development than their regional counterparts even accounting for the overall differences in voting patterns.

DEVELOPMENT OF VACANT LAND

A concern for the South Coast Commission, and for any coastal commission, is the preservation of open space near the land-water interface. Reduction of open space can limit opportunities for access to the coast and affect the available view of the seascape.

Although both types of commissioners supported development of open space in almost three-quarters of all cases involving vacant land, the level of support from local representatives still exceeded that of their regional counterparts, 88.0 per cent to 74.0 per cent. Again, this differential exceeded the voting difference observed for all development requests.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION TO THE WATER

Projects placed nearer to the water are normally presumed to have a more pronounced impact on the physical and social environment of the coastline than developments located further from the land-water interface. And while this may not hold for certain kinds of recreational programs,² development of land near the water can also affect opportunities for access to the water. Extensive development on or near the water's edge can also affect the

² The possibility that there was a concentration of recreational and other types of development that would increase the public's access in the area nearest the water is discussed, at length, in Rosentraub, Warren, and Gould [18].

Table 2. Voting Patterns and Type of Projects

<i>Appointment Criteria</i>	<i>Type of Project</i>						
	<i>Commercial</i>	<i>Industrial</i>	<i>Single-Family</i>	<i>Multi-Family</i>	<i>Recreation</i>	<i>Public Utility</i>	<i>Other^a</i>
Local Government	301	108	199	1223	91	165	42
% Yes Votes	93.4	100.0	85.9	84.2	94.5	94.5	92.8
% No Votes	5.9	0.0	12.6	15.2	5.5	3.6	5.2
South Coast Region	488	73	314	1974	178	251	50
% Yes Votes	79.9	95.3	73.6	66.8	92.7	94.4	64.6
% No Votes	17.6	2.0	25.8	31.0	6.7	4.8	33.3

^aIncludes dredging and demolition projects.

$\chi^2 = 16.9$, with 18 df, significant at .05 level.

Table 3. Development of Vacant Land

<i>Appointment Criteria</i>	<i>Vote Cast</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Approve</i>	<i>Abstain</i>	<i>Deny</i>	
Local Government	950	7	123	1080
% Row	88.0	0.6	1.4	100.0
% Column	42.0	18.4	22.2	37.9
South Coast Region	1311	31	429	1771
% Row	74.0	1.8	24.2	100.0
% Column	58.0	81.6	77.7	62.1
Total	2261	38	552	2851
% Row	79.3	1.3	19.4	100.0

$\chi^2 = 11.4$ with 2 df, significant at .01 level.

ecosystem sustaining marine life. Further, substantial development near the water's edge can reduce the visual beauty of the coast. Given these concerns, one would expect more stringent evaluation standards are used to review proposals planning development of land nearer the water.

Looking first at the area nearest the water, 100 yards or less from the mean high tide line, the regional representatives cast a total of 1,277 votes; 79.7 per cent of these were affirmative. The commissioners appointed by local governments cast 781 votes concerning projects within 100 yards of the water with 93.3 per cent in support of development. It appears, at an initial glance, that the regional commissioners were more sensitive to the problems associated with development near the ocean.

However, an examination of voting in all areas between the mean high tide line and the 1000 yard boundary of the Commission's permit authority, reveals an interesting pattern that may affect this observation. For instance, the 79.7 per cent affirmative votes for projects less than 100 yards from the mean high tide line cast by regional representatives was greater than the percentage of affirmative votes cast by this group in any other zone within the 1000 yard boundary. For instance, for those projects between 750 and 1000 yards from the water, the regional representatives cast 78.0 per cent of

Table 4. Voting Records and Location of Projects from the Mean High Tide Line (MHT)

<i>Appointment Criteria</i>	<i>MHT-Seaward</i>	<i>Distance from MHT</i>				
		<i>100 Yds. or Less</i>	<i>100-250 Yds.</i>	<i>250-500 Yds.</i>	<i>500-750 Yds.</i>	<i>750-1000 Yds.</i>
Local Government	56	725	323	302	238	280
% Yes	100	92.8	87.9	90.1	90.1	91.4
% No	0.0	6.3	11.8	9.6	10.1	7.9
South Coast Region	87	1190	528	502	405	468
% Yes	88.5	79.1	72.2	71.1	71.9	78.0
% No	9.1	19.2	27.4	25.3	26.9	19.4

their votes for development. The highest concentration of votes against development was in the area of 250 to 500 yards from the mean high tide line.

This pattern of approving development nearest the water is also evident when examining the voting patterns of the local government representatives. These commissioners cast 93.3 per cent of their votes for development for projects less than 100 yards from the water. In no other zone except 750-1000 yards from the mean high tide line (Table 4) was the percentage of affirmative votes almost as high, 91.4 per cent. Thus, while there were differences in voting by regional and local representatives, the pattern of support for projects planned for the land nearest the water was similar for both groups. While this observation is clearly interesting it is limited by the possibility that the approval votes by some commissioners may have represented compromises and conditions attached to the approval votes.

VOTING BEHAVIOR AND APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES

The aggregate analysis of the voting behavior by the regional and local government representatives indicated the existence of some slight differences in the patterns observed. However, it is still possible that some regional commissioners and some local commissioners may actually vote similarly on particular issues. If this is the case, the differences between the groups might actually be the result of two or three individuals who vote differently from *all* commissioners.

To examine the extent to which there is a similarity of voting within each group and a dissimilarity between local and regional representatives, two tests of voting consistency were used [22-24]. Against each set of coefficients generated, a test for the number of runs was made.³ In almost every situation, the number of runs exceeded the amount necessary to argue the existence of voting blocs. The failure of consistent voting blocs to exist for all issues suggests there was no statistical division evident in voting behavior that could be related to the method of appointment of coastal commissioners.

Examining Table 5, for instance, indicates differences between regional and local commissioners was probably a result of the votes cast by two or three individuals. Further, three local government representatives vote more similar to some regional appointees than to the other local representatives. Table 6 again shows a confusing pattern with some regional representatives voting with local representatives more often than with other regional commissioners. The pattern is again repeated in Table 8.

³ The two tests used are described in Truman, Anderson, and Green [22-24]. Further only twelve commissioners served the South Coast Commission at any one time. However, during the period studied, one commissioner died and one lost his position as a result of losing a local election. The voting records of their replacements were included in the analysis.

Table 5. Lambda Coefficients and Wald-Wolfowitz Runs Test

With Voting Pattern of Commission Chairperson Dependent Variable:

Regional Representative D . . . . .	.64417
Regional Representative A . . . . .	.56113
Regional Representative C . . . . .	.44687
Regional Representative G . . . . .	.41600
Local Government Representative A . . . . .	.34731
Local Government Representative B . . . . .	.31319
Local Government Representative H . . . . .	.25926
Local Government Representative C . . . . .	.17097
Regional Representative E . . . . .	.15225
Local Government Representative F . . . . .	.06069
Local Government Representative D . . . . .	.05743
Regional Representative B . . . . .	.04942

NOTE: Number of runs, 5, exceeds maximum number for a significant pattern at .05 level. A full explanation of the runs test as well as the table used for the test of significance is contained in Blalock [25].

Table 6. Lambda Coefficients and Wald-Wolfowitz Runs Test

With Voting Pattern of Regional Representative D Dependent Variable:

Regional Representative F . . . . .	.57647
Regional Representative A . . . . .	.48684
Local Government Representative B . . . . .	.42636
Regional Government Representative G . . . . .	.42636
Regional Representative C . . . . .	.32895
Local Government Representative H . . . . .	.27632
Local Government Representative C . . . . .	.19328
Regional Representative E . . . . .	.15395
Local Government Representative A . . . . .	.09821
Local Government Representative F . . . . .	.06641
Regional Representative B . . . . .	.05882
Local Government Representative D . . . . .	.02347

NOTE: Number of runs, 8, exceeds the maximum number for a significant pattern at .05 level.

Table 7. Index of Agreement and Wald-Wolfowitz Runs Test

With Voting Pattern of Chairperson as the Dependent Variable: *

Regional Representative D . . . . .	.8483
Regional Representative A . . . . .	.8054
Regional Representative C . . . . .	.7651
Regional Representative G . . . . .	.7622
Local Government Representative A . . . . .	.7291
Local Government Representative H . . . . .	.6963
Local Government Representative C . . . . .	.6912
Local Government Representative B . . . . .	.6894
Local Government Representative E . . . . .	.6800
Local Government Representative D . . . . .	.6661
Regional Representative B . . . . .	.6488
Regional Representative E . . . . .	.6438
Local Government Representative F . . . . .	.6431

NOTE: The number of runs, 4, with the chairperson as the dependent variable was the *only* time there was a significant finding indicating a lack of dispersion and thus a relationship with constituency. However, for the 13 other runs, there was no statistical relationship. This singular outcome with the IA test may mean the leadership position had an influence on the voting of some commissioners. For a more typical set of coefficients, see Table 8.

* IA = $\frac{A - \frac{1}{2} B}{t}$, where A = number of agreements, B = number of abstain votes,

and t = total number of votes both commissioners participated in. Formula adopted from Anderson, et.al. [23].

Table 8. Index of Agreement and Wald-Wolfowitz Runs Test

With Voting Pattern of Regional Representative D the Dependent Variable:

Local Government Representative E . . . . .	.9230
Regional Representative F . . . . .	.8480
Regional Representative A . . . . .	.8330
Regional Representative G . . . . .	.8156
Local Government Representative B . . . . .	.7971
Regional Representative C . . . . .	.7902
Local Government Representative C . . . . .	.7766
Local Government Representative D . . . . .	.7462
Local Government Representative A . . . . .	.7453
Regional Representative B . . . . .	.7420
Local Government Representative F . . . . .	.7333
Local Government Representative H . . . . .	.7215
Regional Representative E . . . . .	.7069

NOTE: Number of runs, 8, exceeds the maximum for a significant relationship at the .05 level.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDED RESEARCH

The interest in developing coastal zone management programs in many states that incorporates the desires of local governments that surround the water and relates to the marine-related needs of citizens in a region is increasing. In terms of designing management systems that can provide inputs in decision-making processes by local and regional interests, analysis and examination of the operation of initial programs within some states is an important information source. The first, and largest, coastal zone management program attempting to incorporate both state and regional viewpoints in decision-making processes was the California program. The creation of six regional boards with commissioners selected by local governments bordering the ocean *and* by state officials was an attempt to transcend the typical values used in making decisions about the coast.

The data produced through an examination of the voting behavior of commissioners serving the most active regional coastal commission suggests there were some differences in voting patterns between the two types of commissioners. Regional representatives voted against development more often and opposed commercial and residential development more frequently than did the local government representatives. However, the voting-bloc examination failed to identify any consistent blocs over the entire number of permits reviewed. This outcome raises the possibility that the differences noted could be the result of the voting behavior of two or three commissioners. There were numerous instances when *some* local representatives voted with *some* regional appointees.

This examination, while limited in the sense that it examined one commission, a total of only fourteen individuals voting on 1,121 issues, and looked only at voting behavior, still raises some important questions in terms of developing coastal management systems. The process for selecting commissioners in California was complex; its goal was to bring different sets of commissioners into the program that would govern the coastline. Tentatively, it can be noted this objective may have been achieved. Yet the failure to show the existence of a voting bloc suggests that the initial differences must be reviewed with caution.

The inability to identify whether or not the California program achieved its end in terms of establishing two distinct sets of commissioners suggest a need for additional research. Regulation of coastal and other natural resources is becoming a critical policy area. Yet, the execution of coastal policy requires an understanding of the effects different decision rules have on the decisions regulatory agencies make. Some students of administration, as noted, feel geography and the size of a representative's constituency affects behavior. Others note voting is a complex phenomenon subject to forces perhaps unrelated or only partially affected by the size of a constituency [26-29].

Given the contradictions in this limited effort it would seem additional work is needed before firm guidelines on agency design are established. A careful selection of critical issues facing a commission and a study of the votes taken and compromises made may be the next needed step. Only then will an adequate information base be available to allow agency planners to understand whether regional representatives vote differently from local government officials on coastal issues.

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