



City of Carpinteria Winter Berm District

Fact Sheet

Helps to protect public & private property from high tides & winter storms.

Every year through the City of Carpinteria Winter Berm Assessment District No. 5, the City constructs a berm to help protect public and private property from high tides and winter storms. The berm helps preserve the integrity of the homes and businesses that are near the shore.

Our Challenge:

With the support of our community, the Winter Berm District was established in 1992 (33 years ago). However, since that time, assessment rates have not been increased, while construction, maintenance, management, contingency, and emergency response costs have increased by 275% (from \$25,300 in 1992 to \$94,771 in 2025).

As a result, the City has used its General Fund to subsidize the Winter Berm District fill the gap in funding. The City projects that in the next several years it may have to reduce the available City budget to continue supporting the underfunded Winter Berm District. This could result in reductions to other City services, including public safety, street maintenance, parks, and recreational programs.



To help ensure continued financial support for the berm's annual construction, expand the existing Winter Berm District to include all at-risk properties, and avoid reductions to other services, the City of Carpinteria needs additional funding.

- **FACT:** Prior to 1992, frequent winter storm surges (or floods) caused significant property damage to parcels along the ocean front of the city. The damage spurred the City of Carpinteria and property owners to invest in the berm in order to provide protection from high tides and storm surges during the winter months.
- **FACT:** Since 1992, the Berm has protected homes and businesses near the ocean front from countless storms, saving property owners costs for repairs and renovations.
- **FACT:** In 2023, a strong storm caused a minor breach in the berm. Additional investment in our winter berm is needed to help prevent future breaches like the one we saw in 2023.
- **FACT:** Winter storms are becoming more severe and unpredictable. With increasing variability in winter storms, additional funding is needed to better protect properties nearest Carpinteria City Beach.
- **FACT:** The berm helps protect property values and provides potential reductions in flood insurance premiums.
- **FACT:** A new flood risk analysis shows that a larger number of properties at or near the shoreline are at risk of flooding than were previously determined in 1992 when the Winter Berm District boundaries were drawn. Currently, the Winter Berm District only contains 80 parcels as part of the special district. Meanwhile, the new flood risk analysis indicates that 394 parcels are at risk of significant flooding during winter storms and high tides.



Identified Solution:

The berm program consists of seasonal construction and removal of an earthen berm approximately 1,375 feet in length along the Carpinteria City Beach. Once constructed, the berm must be monitored, maintained, and repaired during the winter storm season to ensure that it provides reliable protection.

Emergency response activities are often required during significant weather events to reinforce the structure of the berm and prevent overtopping or erosion. In addition to physical construction and maintenance, the berm program requires administrative oversight, compliance with legal noticing and reporting obligations, and the management of contractual and budgetary responsibilities. A contingency allocation is also necessary to address unforeseen events such as unusually severe storms.



To appropriately fund the continued yearly **construction, maintenance, management, contingency, and emergency response** of the berm, the City of Carpinteria is considering the formation of a **replacement assessment district — the Carpinteria Coastal Berm Assessment District** — which requires a **Proposition 218 ballot proceeding**. The replacement District would establish updated assessments that more accurately reflect current costs and ensure long-term program sustainability. Formation of the new Coastal Berm Assessment District would replace the existing Winter Berm District beginning in Fiscal Year 2026/27. This proposal would not expand the berm or change its footprint. All costs associated with berm construction, maintenance, and emergency response would be consolidated into a single, updated assessment



California Proposition 218 (the Taxpayers Right to Vote on Taxes Act), which was approved by voters across the state in 1996 as an amendment to the California Constitution, requires a mail ballot proceeding **among local property owners** (not registered voters) for any proposed new or increased assessment. Formation of an updated Winter Berm District will be conducted according to the requirements established by Proposition 218, including providing all property owners located within the district the opportunity to vote on the proposed assessment. **If the proposed assessment is approved, it would replace the existing assessment that was established in 1992.** If the proposed ballot proceeding to replace the existing

Winter Berm District passed, the proposed maximum assessment (Rate per Equivalent Benefit Unit) would change from the current \$193.80 per year (approximately \$16.15 per month) to a proposed maximum of \$231.37 per year (or \$19.28 per month), with an annual adjustment provision equal to the greater of 3% or the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, not to exceed 6%. By law, funds from this assessment can only be used to provide services within the Coastal Berm Assessment District boundaries. No funds from this assessment would go to the City's General Fund.

Without continued maintenance and annual berm construction, the adjacent neighborhoods and properties within the district face a substantially higher risk of flooding, structural damage, erosion, and associated financial losses. By contrast, the presence of the berm directly mitigates that exposure, resulting in tangible, parcel-specific advantages, including:

- **Reduced** risk of property damage and associated repair or replacement costs due to storm-driven wave action and coastal flooding;
- **Lower likelihood** of personal financial losses, business interruption, or displacement resulting from flood events;
- **Potential reductions** in flood insurance premiums, where applicable, due to demonstrated flood protection measures in place; and
- **Preservation or enhancement** of long-term property value as a result of improved site stability and reduced hazard designation.

For more information, visit our website at: <http://cityofcarp.co/assessmentdistricts>
OR contact: Ryan Kintz, Assistant City Manager, at: assessmentdistricts@carpinteriaca.gov.



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A YES VOTE means:

- The existing Winter Berm District would be replaced beginning in Fiscal Year 2026/27.
- Updated assessments would fund annual berm construction, maintenance, management, and emergency response based on current costs.
- There would be a dedicated funding source for berm operations without relying on General Fund resources.
- The berm program could continue operating at current levels to help protect homes, businesses, and infrastructure during winter storms.

A NO VOTE means:

- The existing Winter Berm District would remain in place with its 1992 assessment levels.
- Assessment revenues would remain insufficient to cover annual berm construction and emergency response costs.
- The berm program would continue to be subsidized by the General Fund, reducing funds available for other City services such as public safety, street maintenance, parks, and recreation.