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TIDAL SURGES DEEPENED PARTS OF VENTURA HARBOR | NEED TO REPAIR DAMAGE PROMPTS EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

Jan 26, 2022 | Kimberly Rivers, News, Ventura | 0  | ★★★★★



Pictured: Harbor Patrol boat was capsized by the strong tidal tsunami surges. Photo submitted.

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In what Ventura Harbor officials are calling a “silver lining,” the entrance channel and portions of the inner harbor were deepened by powerful tidal surges that rolled through the harbor on Jan. 14 as a result of an undersea volcanic eruption near the Polynesian island nation of Tonga. The surges also led to damage to public and private property, prompting an Emergency Resolution from the Ventura Port Commission.



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On Jan. 19, in the wake of lasting damage at Ventura Harbor from the Jan. 14 tsunami surges, the Ventura Port District Board of Commissioners passed a resolution declaring a state of emergency at the harbor.

“Our commission’s swift action in adopting an emergency resolution paves the way for the repair and replacement of Port District assets,” said Brian Pendleton, general manager of the Ventura Port District. “It will also help the port to expedite and restore redundancy for our on-water patrol and emergency response capabilities.”

The resolution passed by the commissioners gives Pendleton extra authority to act in order to repair or otherwise respond to the damage caused by the recent unpredictable tidal surges. The expanded authority granted includes the ability to submit permit applications for any development work needed to be done, to obtain equipment and supplies “for the purpose of making the District’s docks safe and functional.” The resolution also waives the notice requirements for contracts going to bid for work related to repairing the harbor.

At all future meetings while the resolution is in effect, Pendleton will provide a report on actions taken under the resolution. The resolution required a 2/3 vote and will be reviewed at every regularly scheduled meeting to determine whether the action needs to be continued.

Agencies involved with repair work that involves pile replacement or other issues involving the seafloor include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The harbor reported at least two dozen docks were damaged at various marina locations and private residences in the area. Two Harbor Patrol boats were “rendered out of commission.” No injuries were reported as a result of the tidal changes.

“Several gangways got dumped into the water off docks. Several docks were damaged. My personal dock got torn off the moorings,” said Raj Reddy, a Ventura Keys resident who shared what he witnessed with the Ventura County Reporter via email. “One very large yacht tore off its moorings with its dock and Duffy boat still attached and as it floated away it caught its neighbor’s boat. Fortunately we saw it happen real time and called Harbor Patrol and they caught it.”

After the tsunami activity subsided, Senior Harbor Patrol Officer Pat Hummer conducted “a depth sounding to evaluate the conditions of the entrance channel and inner harbor,” Ventura Harbor reported in a written statement. The soundings showed sand had been removed by the powerful water surges and increased the water depth in the entrance channel and portions of the inner harbor.

The harbor and the public launch ramp are open, and all recreational activities have resumed, but harbor officials are asking the public to be observant and cautious as navigation buoys were displaced by the strong tides and debris may still be in the water, just under the surface.

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