



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CALIFORNIA SHIPS TO REEFS ANNOUNCES DANA POINT PROJECT**

California Ships to Reefs (CSTR) told the Dana Point City Council Monday it is ready to move forward to create the nation's second largest ship-based reef at a location southwest of Dana Point's harbor.

An appropriate site for a ship sinking, about two miles from the harbor, has been identified by CSTR. The organization is also in the process of applying, through the State of California, to the federal government for approval to sink the *USS Kawishiki*, a decommissioned fleet oiler currently moored in Suisun Bay, California.

"We're very enthusiastic about partnering with Dana Point to create a new artificial reef and bring opportunities for diving and other recreational revenues to the area," said Joel Geldin, CSTR's Chairman and CEO.

"Two years ago CSTR asked the Dana Point City Council for its support of our mission to create a network of artificial reefs along the California Coast," Geldin said. "The council unanimously supported the concept of reefing. However, then Councilwoman Diane Harkey was concerned about liability to the city in the event of diving accidents on the reef. We acted to solve that problem by writing an assembly bill which would absolve government agencies of liability in the event of accidents. CSTR sponsored and Diane Harkey authored AB 634 when she was elected to the State Assembly, and it was passed unanimously this year, clearing the way for new reefing opportunities."

Former Dana Point Mayor Joel Bishop, who sponsored the resolution in support of the project, said, "We're very excited about bringing new industry to Dana Point. This is a win-win opportunity for our city. We help our harbor businesses and improve our marine environment."

The new reefing project would bring the 655-foot *Kawishiki* to the Dana Point site after it is cleaned, made environmentally safe and prepared for diving. The ship would be the second largest ship-based reef in the U.S., surpassing the *USNS Hoyt S. Vandenberg*, a naval vessel reefed in Florida waters. "CSTR identified the *Kawishiki* as ideal for our purposes after a great deal of research," said Geldin. "One factor that helped us was communicating with some of the veterans of this proud ship, who gave us a lot of details about the ship's structure and makeup."

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These Navy veterans are eager to see their ship have a new life of service under the sea, rather than the alternative of turning it into scrap.”

California Ships to Reefs is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation seeking to reef surplus ships as artificial reefs, bringing diving and fishing tourism to local ports in California and enhancing the ocean environment. For further information, please visit the organization’s website at [www.californiashipstoreefs.org](http://www.californiashipstoreefs.org), or contact Vice President of Reef Development Dean Rewerts at 530-906-6465.