

ORDINANCE NO. 5448

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY OF MONTEREY, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AMENDING SECTION 12.28.010 OF THE MONTEREY COUNTY CODE TO PROHIBIT PARKING AT ALL TIMES ON STATE HIGHWAY 1, NEAR BIXBY BRIDGE

County Counsel Summary

This ordinance is for the protection of the public peace, health, and safety of Monterey County residents and visitors to prohibit parking along State Highway 1, near Bixby Bridge. With limited space for stopping and parking and an increasing visitor demand that often exceeds the limited space, first responders, residents and visitors have recently observed an increase in the frequency of motorists making sudden stops and turns in the on Highway 1, parking vehicles on the Highway 1 in a manner that impedes traffic, and significant numbers of pedestrians crossing the highway in an unsafe manner to enjoy the views. These conditions place visitors, residents, motorists, and pedestrians in danger through an increase in the potential for collisions and by delaying emergency response times due to congestion. This ordinance amends Section 12.28.010 of the Monterey County Code to prohibit parking along State Highway 1, from approximately 900 feet north of the north abutment of Bixby Bridge (Caltrans Post Mile 59.64) to approximately 700 feet south of the south abutment of Bixby Bridge (Caltrans Post Mile 59.25), for a period of 12-months after the signage is installed.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE AND FINDINGS.

A. Pursuant to Article XI, section 7 of the California Constitution, the County of Monterey ("County") may adopt and enforce ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws to protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare of its citizens.

B. California Vehicle Code section 22506 authorizes the County to enact regulations by ordinance to prohibit or restrict parking of vehicles on a state highway within the County's jurisdiction, if the ordinance is first submitted to and approved by the State Department of Transportation ("Caltrans").

C. In response to community concerns, Supervisorial District 5 prepared Board Referral No. 2026.08 seeking to implement a 12-month moratorium on parking in the immediate vicinity of Bixby Bridge on State Highway 1, in advance of the Memorial Day weekend start of the summer season. This action responded to longstanding and well-documented public safety hazards at this location.

D. During the Labor Day weekend of 2022, concerned constituents collected data and recorded up to 325 pedestrian highway crossings per hour on the north side of Bixby Bridge. On September 4 of that weekend, vehicle activity peaked at 70 complete stops in the roadway per hour. Additional counts from September and October of that year showed Sunday afternoon averages of 108 pedestrian crossings per hour, 38 complete stops in the travel lane per hour, and 12 vehicles per hour parked over the fog line.

E. On January 15, 2026, the final 6.8-mile stretch at Regent's Slide in Monterey County reopened, which fully reopened Highway 1 from San Luis Obispo County to Monterey County. According to Visit California, visitation has surged significantly since the roadway reopened. Northbound traffic at Ragged Point has grown more than 900% year-over-year, clear evidence of restored access and pent-up demand for travel to this iconic coastal corridor.

F. During the spring 2026, traffic congestion at key Big Sur chokepoints – including Bixby Bridge, Point Lobos, and Soberanes – reached unprecedented levels according to concerned constituents and law enforcement. These conditions continue to heighten risks to visitor and resident safety, emergency access, and sensitive natural resources.

G. With limited space for stopping and parking and an increasing visitor demand that often exceeds the limited space, first responders, residents and visitors have recently observed an increase in the frequency of motorists making sudden stops and turns in the on Highway 1, parking vehicles on the Highway 1 in a manner that impedes traffic, and significant numbers of pedestrians crossing the highway in an unsafe manner to enjoy the views. These conditions place visitors, residents, motorists, and pedestrians in danger through an increase in the potential for collisions and by delaying emergency response times due to congestion.

H. In March 2026, Supervisor Daniels met with California Coastal Commission (“CCC”) staff to explore potential management strategies for Bixby Bridge. While staff provided a follow-up letter on March 20, staff did not identify actionable near-term solutions or funding strategies to address the immediate hazards expected this summer.

I. Considering ongoing safety concerns and the need for an immediate, practical response, Referral No. 2026.08 proposed adoption of a temporary No Parking ordinance on Highway 1 near Bixby Bridge, complementing the existing Old Coast Road No Parking restrictions. The measure would provide short-term protection for public safety while allowing for continued coordination with CCC staff on longer-term management approaches.

J. On May 19, 2026, Public Works, Facilities and Parks (“PWFP”) staff provided the Board of Supervisors a preliminary analysis report in response to said Board referral. At the meeting, the Board provided direction to staff to pursue the path of acquiring an Emergency Coastal Development Permit (“ECDP”), while concurrently preparing an ordinance for no parking for consideration by the Board, followed by applying for a Caltrans Encroachment Permit for placing the signage on Highway 1. Thereafter, the moratorium would be implemented for a 12-month period, and the ECDP would be supplanted by consideration of a regular Coastal

Development Permit (“CDP”). The follow-up permit would involve exploration of options for parking and access long-term.

K. Given all of above, it is necessary and appropriate for the protection of the public peace, health, and safety of Monterey County residents and visitors to prohibit parking along State Highway 1 on both sides near Bixby Bridge, from approximately 900 feet north of the north abutment of Bixby Bridge (Caltrans Post Mile 59.64) to approximately 700 feet south of the south abutment of Bixby Bridge (Caltrans Post Mile 59.25).

L. After the 12-month prohibition period, County staff will return with a regular CDP application. Moreover, the County will explore other options for parking and access long-term.

M. The adoption of the ordinance is statutorily exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 15269(c) of the CEQA Guidelines because the action will involve specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency. Specifically, temporarily prohibiting parking in a limited area near Bixby Bridge given increasing concerns for impacts to visitor and resident safety, emergency access, and sensitive natural resources.

SECTION 2. Section 12.28.010 of the Monterey County Code is amended by adding to that section the following street location:

State Highway 1, on both sides, from approximately 900 feet north of the north abutment of Bixby Bridge (Caltrans Post Mile 59.64) to approximately 700 feet south of the south abutment of Bixby Bridge (Caltrans Post Mile 59.25). This prohibition shall be in effect for a twelve (12) month period after installation of the signage.

SECTION 3. OTHER ACTIONS.

County staff are authorized and directed to take such other and further actions as may be necessary or appropriate to implement the intent and purposes of this ordinance including the posting of appropriate signage in and around the described locations.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause and phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared invalid.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This ordinance shall become effective on the thirty-first day following its adoption. The parking restriction enacted by this ordinance will not become operative unless and until approved by the State Department of Transportation.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on this 23rd day of June 2026 by the following vote:

AYES Supervisors Alejo, Church, Root Askew, and Daniels

NOES None

ABSENT None

ABSTAIN Supervisor Lopez

Motion Passed 4 to 0

Wendy Root Askew, Chair
Monterey County Board of Supervisors

A T T E S T

VALERIE RALPH

Clerk of the Board

By:

Deputy Emanuel H. Santos

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Signed by:

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KELLY L. DONLON
Chief Assistant County Counsel