

Harbormaster's Sacramento Meetings Raise Questions

By Linda Sutter September 24, 2026

Crescent City Harbor District CEO/Harbormaster Michael Rademaker recently reported that meetings he attended in Sacramento produced significant progress toward obtaining federal funding for dredging at Crescent City Harbor.

The California Marine Affairs and Navigation Conference (CMANC) confirms that its 2026 Fall Meeting was held September 9–11 at the Hyatt Regency in Sacramento, directly across from the State Capitol. The published schedule included a Board meeting, reception, full-day conference program and a Friday morning program.

Rademaker reported that representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), several California regulatory agencies, harbor and port agencies, consultants, legislators, aides and lobbyists participated.

According to Rademaker, one result was a coordinated federal funding proposal that included a \$6 million request for Crescent City Harbor. He further reported that CCHD's share of the proposal increased from 0.04 percent to 3.28 percent, largely after discussion of sediment deposited by the 2025 tsunami.

Those are significant claims—but important questions remain.

A review of the Harbor District's August 26 public meeting agenda does not identify the CMANC conference, authorize travel to Sacramento to discuss a \$6 million federal funding request, or specifically authorize Rademaker to conduct lobbying or funding negotiations on behalf of the District.

That does not necessarily mean separate Board authorization was legally required. However, the absence of the subject from the agenda raises a legitimate question about what authority Rademaker was operating under and what commitments, if any, were made on behalf of the District.

There is another distinction the public should understand: a funding request is not a funding award.

Rademaker himself acknowledges that the \$6 million figure represents an advocacy objective and that the money has not been secured.

Questions also remain concerning his statement that Humboldt Bay Harbor District contributed toward his hotel expenses and helped provide lobbying representation on behalf of CCHD.

For that reason, records have been requested from CMANC concerning the conference agenda, attendance, funding spreadsheets and communications involving CCHD and Rademaker. Federal Freedom of Information Act requests are also being submitted to USACE seeking records identifying who attended and what was actually discussed concerning Crescent City Harbor.

If the Sacramento meetings produced the progress Rademaker describes, those records should help document it.

Until then, there is a difference between what occurred at the conference, what was discussed, what was requested—and what has actually been secured.