San Diego Unified Port District

Harbor and Port & Related Services

District Characteristics

Principal Act: San Diego Unified Port District Act Codified under California Harbor and Navigation Code, Appendix 1

Services: Harbor and Port; Recreation; Public Safety; Community (Waterfront) Development

District Area: 438 square miles

Population: 1,803,538 (2025 LAFCO)

Sphere of Influence: Larger than District

Sphere Adopted: February 3, 2025 (Interim)

Sphere Affirmed: N/A

Revenue Source: Fees, Charges, Lease Revenue

Governance: Appointed 7-member Board of Commissioners (1 Commissioner from each member city, 3 from City of San Diego)

Board Meeting: 1:00p.m. – generally held on the 1st Tuesday of each month.

Don L. Nay (Port) Administration Building

(3165 Pacific Highway, San Diego, Ca 92101)

Contact: www.portofsandiego.org

c/o Port of San Diego

3165 Pacific Highway

San Diego, CA 92101

(619) 686-6200

View Map: Agency Map Link

District Background

The San Diego Unified Port District (Port) was established on December 18, 1962 by the California State Legislature and codified under the Port Act to manage the San Diego Bay and its tidelands. The Port oversees two maritime cargo terminals, two cruise ship terminals, 23 public parks, the Harbor Police Department, and hundreds of waterfront businesses. Its core service functions include Harbor and Port, Recreation, Public Safety, and Community (Waterfront) Development. The Port's jurisdiction encompasses San Diego Bay, its tidelands, and the boundaries of its five member cities: Chula Vista, Coronado, Imperial Beach, National City, and San Diego.

LAFCO's oversight of the Port was confirmed in March 2024 after an administrative assessment prompted by a 2019 reorganization proposal involving annexation to National City. The Commission unanimously determined the Port is an independent district subject to LAFCO jurisdiction.

LAFCO approved an interim sphere-of-influence for the Port District in February 2025 that is larger than the district boundary to include three special study areas currently assigned to two of the five member cities. Two are assigned to the City of San Diego with one located in San Pasqual Valley (5,829 acres) and the other located in Paradise Hills (1,485 acres). The third special study area is assigned to the City of Chula Vista and covers the Otay Landfill (515 acres). The interim SOI will be replaced with a permanent SOI after and/or in conjunction with preparing an inaugural MSR covering the Port. These actions are consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding approved by the LAFCO Commission and the Port of San Diego Board in December 2024. The approved MOU is available on the LAFCO website at sdlafco.org.