

Housing boosted by ‘Holy Grail reform’

Environmental law’s overhaul expected to speed construction

By Sophia Bollag

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom and California lawmakers on Monday enacted some of the most significant changes to the state’s environmental review law since its inception, which supporters say will lessen a major barrier to building housing and which the governor called “Holy Grail reform.”

Reforming the state’s landmark environmental law, the California Environmental Quality Act, has been discussed for years, but has proved to be particularly challenging because the law has staunch supporters among powerful environmental and labor groups. Despite many attempts by the Legislature to speed up housing construction, California home production remains stubbornly slow, something that has dogged Newsom.

Facing the last two years of his governorship, Newsom threw his weight behind two major CEQA overhaul proposals in the Legislature and made his signature on the budget this year contingent on the passage of some of those provisions. That put immense pressure on Democrats in the Legislature to pass the bills to ensure the state would have a budget in effect on Tuesday when the 2025-26 fiscal year begins.

The bills Newsom signed Monday grant broad exemptions to CEQA for homes and other buildings in already developed areas. The lawmakers who crafted the original proposals argue that the law is regularly abused by people trying

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Report puts \$1.2B price on Stinson sea level rise

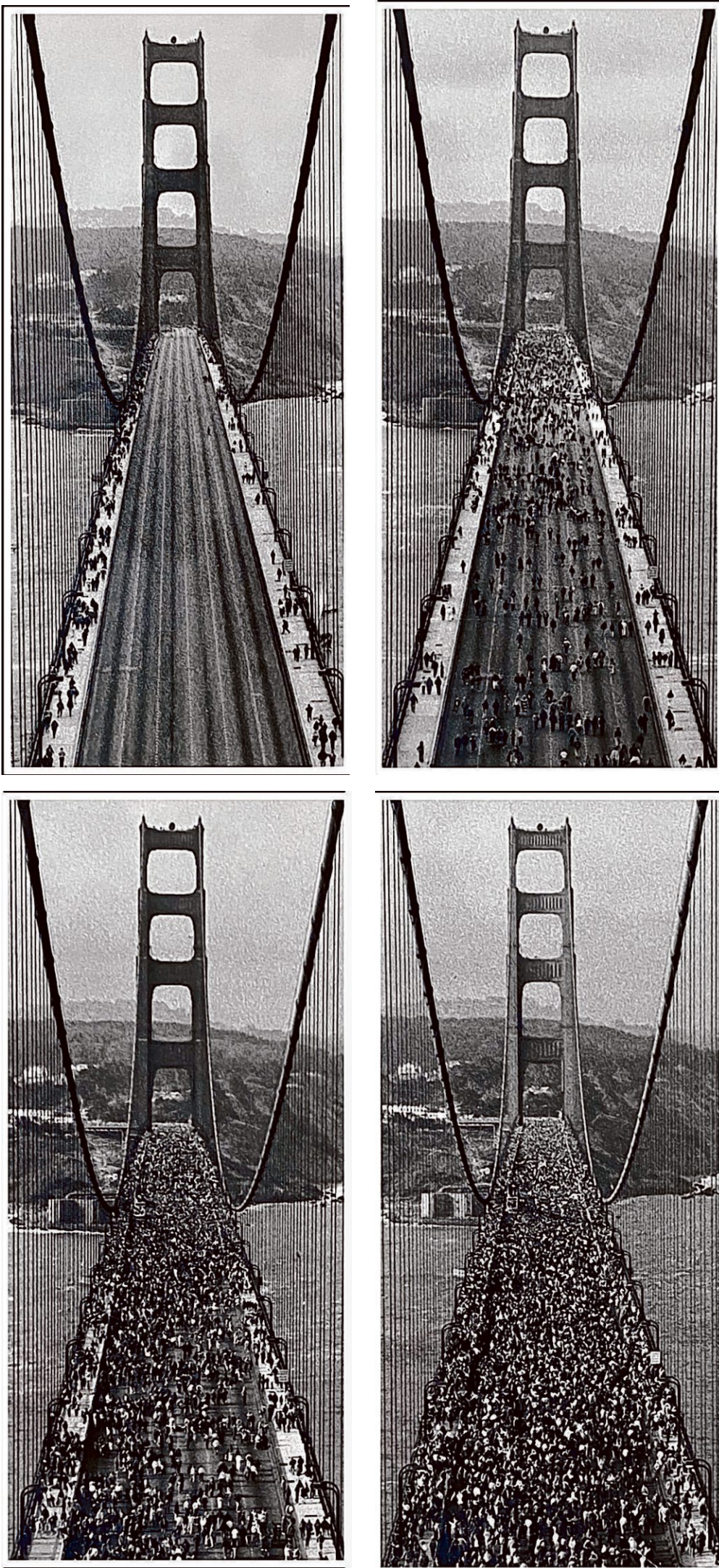
By Tara Duggan

By 2060, a third of Stinson Beach’s fabled sandy beach could be permanently underwater. By 2085, when sea levels are expected to rise by 3.3 feet, nearly all seaside homes could flood in a major storm.

Those are some of the conclusions of the most comprehensive sea level rise vulnerability and adaptation plan yet for Stinson Beach, released by Marin County this month. Different approaches to mitigating those expected climate change impacts could add up to at least \$1.2 billion, the report finds — the equivalent of \$2.4 million apiece for each of its approximately 500 residents. But the cost of doing nothing would be much worse, planners say — and because the town already sees regular beach erosion and flooding, they recommend that some measures be taken right away.

“We’ve identified this as the most vulnerable space in West Marin,” said Kathleen Kilgariff, senior planner for the Marin County Community Development Agency. The beach itself also plays an important role in

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Deanne Fitzmaurice/S.F. Chronicle

May 24, 1987: A time-lapse from the Golden Gate Bridge north tower records crowd size during the overcrowded pedestrian walk to celebrate its 50th birthday.

Don’t underestimate the Golden Gate’s allure

Photos from 1987 reveal great pedestrian gridlock of 50th anniversary

It was a day for San Francisco to honor the Golden Gate Bridge. But by midmorning on May 24, 1987, the gridlocked horde trying to celebrate its 50th anniversary got so desperate that people were urinating off the side of the landmark.

“For a few, necessity overcame modesty, producing a rush to the railing and relief into the choppy waters below,” the Chronicle’s Carl Nolte wrote the next day.

That was just one indelible memory from the bridge’s golden anniversary celebration, where officials planned for 50,000 revelers and more than 800,000 showed up. Muni service was brought to a standstill.

PETER HARTLAUB

TOTAL SF

Hundreds of children were lost. And, most alarmingly in the moment, the bridge itself visibly flattened and warped under the weight of the masses.

I called my mother, Jeanne Hartlaub, who attended the event, and she raged like it happened yesterday.

“What a freaking s— show,” she said. “We had no control over where we were going. I lifted my feet off the ground, and I was being carried by the crowd.”

A recent search in the Chronicle archive revealed unpublished images —

including one of a frustrated walker who hopped over the bridge railing to shimmy precariously sideways over the San Francisco Bay, plus time-lapse photos taken from high on the span that document the mounting chaos. I searched further in the archive to get the full story.

Bridge organizers had reason to anticipate massive crowds would show up. More than 200,000 people arrived for the bridge’s opening in 1937, when the Bay Area population was one-third its 1987 size. A similar fiasco occurred in 1982 at the 49ers’ first Super Bowl victory parade, when City Hall planned for 25,000 fans but half a mil-

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Senate passes Trump tax bill

Tiebreaker vote cast by Vance sends package back to House

By Lisa Mascaro, Mary Clare Jalonick and Matt Brown

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans hauled President Donald Trump’s big tax breaks and spending cuts bill to passage Tuesday by the narrowest of margins, pushing past opposition from Democrats and their own GOP ranks after a turbulent overnight session.

The outcome capped an unusually tense weekend of work at the Capitol, the president’s signature legislative priority teetering on the edge of approval or collapse. In the end that tally was 50-50, with Vice President JD Vance casting the tie-breaking vote.

Three Republican senators — Thom Tillis of North Carolina, Susan Collins of Maine and Rand Paul of Kentucky — joined all Democrats in voting against it.

“In the end we got the job done,” Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota said afterward.

The difficulty for Republicans, who have the majority in Congress, to wrestle the bill to this point is not expected to let up. The package now goes back to the House, where Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana had warned senators not to overhaul what his chamber had already approved. But the Senate did make changes, particularly to Medicaid, risking more problems ahead. House GOP leaders vowed to put it on Trump’s desk by his July Fourth deadline.

It’s a pivotal moment for the president and his party, as they have been consumed by the 940-page “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” which was its formal title before Democrats filed an amendment to strip out the name. Republicans invested their political capital in delivering on their sweep of power in Washington.

Trump acknowledged it’s “very complicated stuff” as he departed the White House for Florida.

“I don’t want to go too crazy with cuts,” he said. “I don’t like cuts.”

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