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**Santa Barbara Channelkeeper Celebrates 25 Years of Protecting the
Santa Barbara Channel and Local Creeks, Rivers, and Wetlands**

Santa Barbara, Calif. — January 13, 2026 — Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is pleased to announce the kickoff of a year-long celebration of its 25th anniversary as an independent conservation organization, marking a quarter century of science-based environmental advocacy, education, fieldwork, community engagement, and enforcement to protect the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds.

The organization started as a program of the Environmental Defense Center in 1999, at a time when Santa Barbara County had the highest number of public health warnings for poor water quality of any coastal county in California. Channelkeeper established itself as an independent 501 (c)(3) nonprofit in 2001. Since then, Channelkeeper has grown from a small group of concerned community members into a leading environmental organization dedicated to safeguarding one of the world's most biodiverse marine regions.

Through a combination of on-the-water monitoring, educational programming, policy development, and community engagement, Channelkeeper has played a pivotal role in improving water quality and coastal health from Point Conception to the Ventura River, and from the ridges of Santa Ynez to the northern Channel Islands.

“For 25 years, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has served as a vigilant defender of our coast,” said Ted Morton, the organization’s Executive Director. “The commitment of our staff, volunteers, partners, and community members who believe in the importance of a healthy and resilient ocean and coastline has led to significant achievements for clean water and the environment.”

A Quarter Century of Impact

Over the last two and a half decades, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has:

- Conducted scientific monitoring of local creeks, beaches, and marine habitats to safeguard public health and guide environmental policy.
- Advanced key legal and policy initiatives to reduce pollution and protect coastal ecosystems.
- Helped achieve a landmark agreement with the City of Santa Barbara that resulted in a 91% reduction in sewage spills and the repair or replacement of 34 miles of aging sewer infrastructure, contributing to a significant reduction in public health advisories and beach closures.
- Reached over 43,400 young learners and delivered school-based and on-the-water education programs that engage youth, inspire future environmental leaders, and connect young people to their environment.
- Worked alongside community organizations and local governments to improve and align single-use plastic ordinances, reducing plastic pollution at its source.
- Successfully advocated for reforms to Santa Barbara’s Cruise Ship Program, resulting in stronger environmental safeguards, including limits on ship visits, advanced wastewater treatment requirements, and whale-protective measures.
- Advocated for several initiatives to protect the Channel and coast from offshore oil drilling.
- Fostered collaboration among local governments, researchers, nonprofit partners, fishermen, and business leaders in support of a healthier coast.
- Mobilized more than 4,824 volunteers to engage in cleanups along the coast and at the Channel Islands, removing over 67,817 pounds of trash from the environment, including lobster traps and marine debris.

“For 25 years, Channelkeeper has remained committed to science-based advocacy, empowering our community to safeguard its beloved coast. As we celebrate this

milestone, we also look ahead to new partnerships, policy improvements, and stronger protections for our watersheds and ocean,” said Morton.

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper enters its next chapter with a focus on policy leadership, climate resilience, expanded community science initiatives, and strengthened partnerships throughout the region. The organization plans to continue being a leading advocate for clean water and healthy marine and coastal habitats, in addition to broadening community engagement, supporting greater resilience from the impacts of climate change, building on its monitoring programs that address emerging threats to watershed and ocean health.

“Our work brings together science, community action, and advocacy, and that combination has never been more important,” added Morton. “As climate impacts intensify and environmental protections are weakened, we are committed to expanding our efforts to defend and protect the incredibly special Santa Barbara Channel and building on the strong foundation established over the past 25 years.”

About Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds through science-based advocacy, education, field work, enforcement, and community engagement. For 25 years, Channelkeeper has worked to ensure clean water, healthy habitats, abundant wildlife, and thriving communities.