

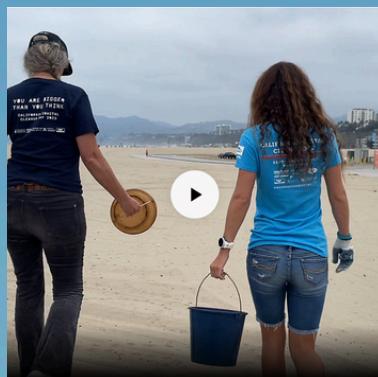
2023

ANNUAL REPORT

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Heal the Bay®



20 FUN FROM SUMMIT 23 TO SEA

Backed by a team of scientists, advocates, educators, and more than 25,000 passionate volunteers, Heal the Bay is a force for change, protecting our coastal waters, watersheds, and communities from the summit to the sea. Driven by science and fueled by community, we fight to safeguard clean water, healthy ecosystems, and safe beaches for all. From hands-on cleanups to youth education, from the Beach Report Card© to watershed advocacy, our programs protect what we love most about California. But we can't do it without you.

Take a look back at one of our biggest years of impact yet!

20 23



FROM THE DESK OF TRACY QUINN, PRESIDENT & CEO HEAL THE BAY

2023 was a landmark year for Heal the Bay—one of celebration, impact, advocacy, and renewed focus.

The City of Los Angeles officially declared October 20, 2023, “Heal the Bay Day”, recognizing nearly 40 years of environmental leadership. We also marked the 20th anniversaries of both our Angler Outreach Program and the Heal the Bay Aquarium, which unveiled its new Welcome Center atop the iconic Santa Monica Pier.



We continued to lead on critical water issues, hosting the 3rd annual One Water Symposium at Will Rogers State Beach. The event brought together engineers, water experts, and policymakers to shape a more sustainable future. We were also honored to be one of the only nonprofits appointed to the Environmental Sustainability Committee for the LA 2028 Summer Olympics.

Thanks to our volunteers, we removed over 12,000 pounds of trash—mostly plastic—from local beaches and neighborhoods. This work directly informed the passage of three major plastic-reduction laws in Los Angeles in 2023. Your support turned advocacy into action.

As I look back on my first year as CEO, I want to acknowledge the hard choices we made. We restructured to align spending with revenue and refocused our work around what matters most: science-based advocacy. Every initiative is now guided by our strategic pillars—science, education, community action, and advocacy—to fulfill our mission of protecting coastal waters and watersheds in Southern California, with a focus on public health, climate change, and biodiversity.

This streamlined approach is working—and in the pages that follow, you’ll see the impact we’ve made together.

I’m deeply grateful for your trust and support, and I’m excited for what we’ll accomplish in the year ahead.



LA City Councilwoman Traci Park (CD11), Councilmembers Katy Yaroslavsky (CD5) and Tim McCosker (CD15), held a special presentation on October 20, 2023, to honor Heal the Bay.

OUR IMPACT

From the lab to the legislature, the classroom to the coastline, and the community to the Capitol — every Heal the Bay department played a role in making 2023 a year of impact.

Water Conservation

SCIENCE & POLICY

Heal the Bay played a pivotal role in successfully advancing policies and legislation that benefit water quality, affordability, and coastal ecosystems, ensuring a more sustainable Los Angeles region and a climate-resilient California.

Heal the Bay co-sponsored Assembly Bill 1572 (Friedman) alongside the NRDC and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Water District. This new law bans the use of drinking water to irrigate non-functional (purely ornamental) turf on governmental and commercial landscapes. It is expected to save the equivalent amount of water used by 780,000 households in a year.



Protecting Groundwater

Heal the Bay advocated for water quality protection at the Boeing Santa Susana Field Laboratory site in Ventura County. The Los Angeles Regional Water Board voted in October to maintain regulations on surface water that flows from the previously industrial site. The decision retains strict water quality standards, strengthens monitoring, and safeguards against groundwater contamination. It's a significant victory in the ongoing effort to safeguard water quality.

Fish & Fishermen

Our policy team worked to strengthen and streamline fishing regulations through Assembly Bill 1611 (Lowenthal), thereby making fishery enforcement more equitable and effective. This new law, sponsored by Heal the Bay, was supported by conservationists and fishery regulatory agencies alike as a win-win for both nature and the fishing community.



SHARING OUR VISION

Heal the Bay co-authored a new (and well-received) Vision 2045 report and shared it with LA County decision-makers who are tasked with overseeing the ambitious Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP).

This collaborative “vision” laid out a roadmap of bolder goals and recommendations to more quickly and definitively reach 2045 SCWP targets.

NO DRILLING WHERE WE'RE LIVING

In 2023, Heal the Bay publicly endorsed the Campaign for a Safe and Healthy California and will work alongside public health groups, community and faith organizations, and environmental justice leaders from across California to “KEEP THE LAW” (SB 1137) on the November 2024 ballot.

This law prohibits the construction of new oil wells within 3,200 feet of homes, schools, day care centers, parks, healthcare facilities, and businesses.

VISION 2045

THRIVING IN A HOTTER AND DRIER LA COUNTY
THROUGH LOCAL STORMWATER CAPTURE AND
POLLUTANT REDUCTION



DECadal Review Shows MPA Protections Work

As a watchdog for Marine Protected Areas, Heal the Bay's MPA Team is actively contributing and analyzing critical data on California's first decade-long review that began in 2023. One of the biggest conclusions of the review highlighted the fact that the work of groups like our MPA Watch team and the laws protecting these precious estuaries for the past decade has worked, allowing for flourishing biodiversity, larger populations, and bigger individual animals in these safeguarded areas.



DDT IN 2023: HISTORY, IMPACT, AND LESSONS LEARNED

Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, commonly known as DDT, a once widely used insecticide banned in the 1970s, persists in the environment and continues to impact wildlife and human health. After successfully advocating for state funding in 2022–2023 to support DDT research, the Heal the Bay team is now working within a statewide coalition to lead public meetings and educate Californians about the ongoing risks DDT poses to biodiversity and public health.

THE BEACH REPORT CARD

Our annual Beach Report Card, released this year, remains the gold standard, providing access to the latest water quality information based on levels of fecal-indicator bacterial pollution in the ocean at over 700 West Coast beaches. For more than 30 years, our annual report has assigned A-to-F letter grades and ranked the best and “Bummer” lists across beaches from Washington to Tijuana, Mexico.

THE RIVER REPORT CARD

The 5th annual River Report Card was also released, ranking freshwater quality and providing grades for 35 freshwater recreation areas in Los Angeles County tested during the summer of 2022. This summer, we introduced our upgraded River Report Card, featuring an intuitive letter-grading system, and celebrated the achievements of our 2023 Summer Stream Team. These two programs are at the forefront of our efforts to keep LA's waters safe and enjoyable for all.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

In 2023, Heal the Bay volunteers collected more than 22,000 pounds of trash and contributed 71,048 hours to protecting our precious watershed and coastal waters.

In September, Heal the Bay mobilized 7,337 volunteers on Coastal Cleanup Day, removing 16,211 pounds of trash (including 429 pounds of recyclables) from greater Los Angeles coastlines and waterways.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

This year, Heal the Bay's education programs inspired thousands through interactive, science-based learning. Our Aquarium Field Trip Program welcomed 10,285 students from 22 school districts across L.A. County—with 79% coming from Title 1 schools—ensuring that diverse young voices are included in shaping a more resilient future.



STICKING A FORK IN PLASTICS

Steps Toward A Plastic Free LA

Recognizing the urgent need to combat plastic pollution, Heal the Bay continues impactful campaigns encouraging individuals and businesses to adopt sustainable practices. For several years, staff has been working with LA City and County to help create legislation aiming to break the harmful plastic cycle. By advocating for reducing single-use plastics and promoting responsible waste management, we took significant steps toward a plastic-free future.

Our “No Bag November” campaign reaffirmed Heal the Bay’s commitment to a plastic-free Los Angeles. Through partnerships and community activations, No Bag November urged Angelenos to say “no” to single-use plastic bags and encouraged everyone to grab their reusable bags instead.

In 2023, after years of advocacy by Heal the Bay, three new laws were passed to reduce single-use plastics across LA City and County, including bans on Styrofoam products, expanded plastic bag restrictions, and requirements for reusable foodware—marking a hopeful step toward a cleaner, plastic-free future.

As a leader in the Reusable LA Coalition, we co-launched the “Hold the Plastic, please,” campaign to educate businesses and the public about LA City and County plastic bans that Heal the Bay and partners advocated to pass.



HEAL THE BAY AQUARIUM CELEBRATED 20 YEARS UNDER THE SANTA MONICA PIER



Heal the Bay Aquarium celebrated its 20th anniversary by expanding its presence on the Santa Monica Pier with the grand opening of a new welcome center and gift shop. This prime location atop the pier marked a major milestone in making the Heal the Bay Aquarium—long considered “Santa Monica’s best-kept secret”—more visible and accessible to visitors. The aquarium, located underneath the pier, featured hands-on exhibits showcasing local marine species and inspired the community to protect the Bay’s delicate ecosystems. With this expanded footprint, Heal the Bay strengthened its mission of environmental education, public health advocacy, and coastal conservation, while offering sustainable merchandise that reflected its commitment to the Bay.

Heal the Bay Aquarium plays a pivotal role in species conservation through research, breeding programs, and public awareness campaigns. In 2023, sixteen fish, three swell sharks, and dozens of moon jellies were born at the Aquarium; and our animal care team released five species of protected and rehabilitated marine life including a keystone species, the California Sheephead fish, and a critically endangered Giant Spotted Bass into the Santa Monica Bay. By releasing these animals back into the wild, Heal the Bay continues its mission to protect and support the biodiversity of wild fish populations.



As part of our collective commitment to successful conservation efforts, Heal the Bay Aquarium officially joined the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Wildlife Trafficking Alliance. As an official member of US Fish & Wildlife Department’s Wildlife Confiscation Network pilot program, the aquarium is certified to care for the well-being of wildlife confiscated from illegal trade.



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Our mission is to make the coastal waters and watersheds in Greater Los Angeles safe, healthy, and clean. We fulfill this mission through science, education, community action, and advocacy. We cannot do this ambitious work without the financial support of donors like you.

As the last line of defense against polluters, Heal the Bay needs your help to continue the fight for stronger protections to keep our waterways safe and clean.

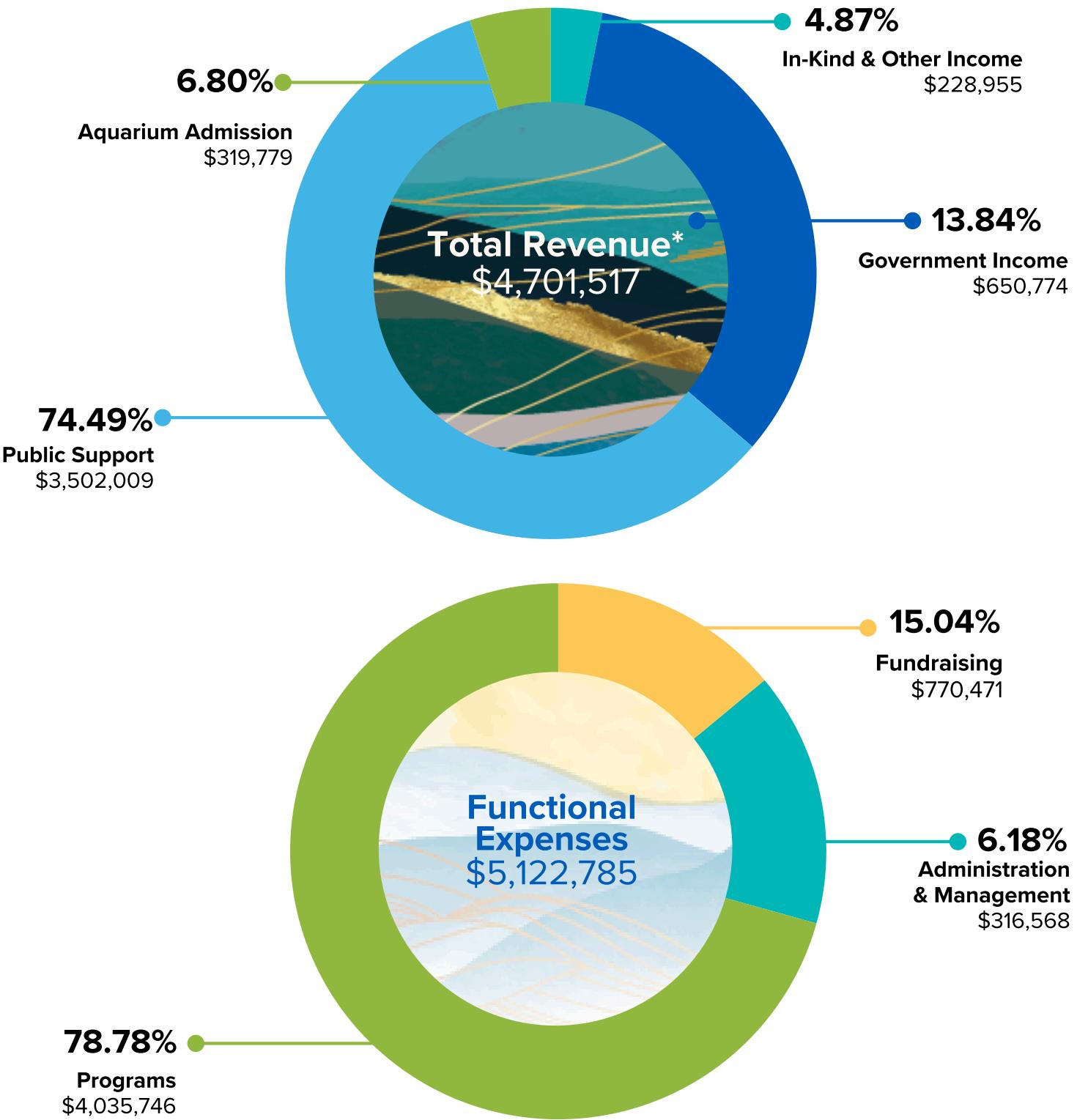
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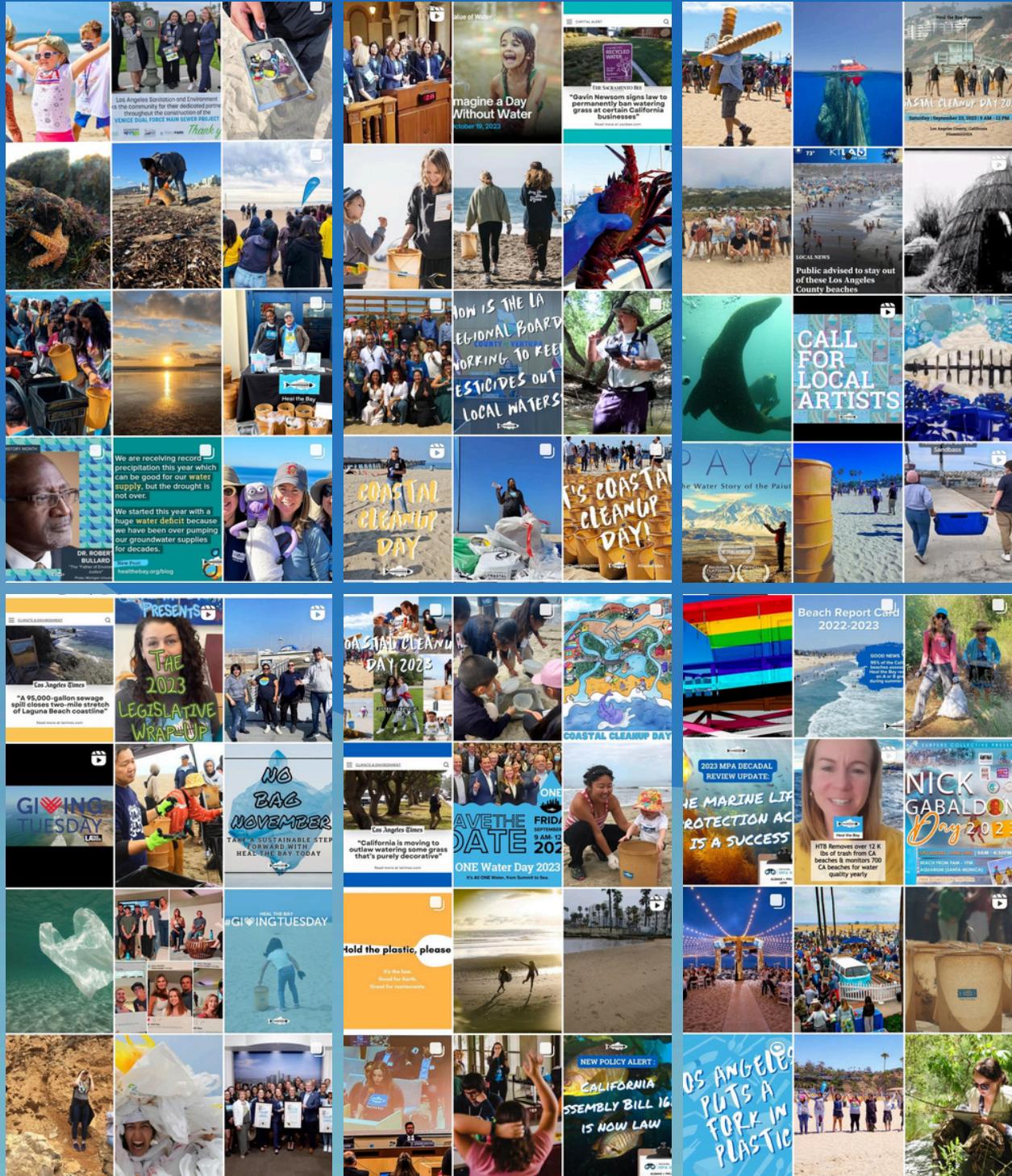
-TRACY QUINN

PRESIDENT & CEO, HEAL THE BAY

OUR FINANCIALS

2023 Fiscal Year: October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023





20 MAKING WAVES AS 24 WE MOVE AHEAD

We accomplished so much from summit to sea in 2023. It was a year of legislative wins, resilience, and collaboration for Heal the Bay. These achievements highlight the collective efforts of our dedicated team, volunteers, and supporters, who have made a positive impact on the health of our oceans and coastal ecosystems.

In 2024, Heal the Bay will enter a bold five-year strategic plan with a focus on protecting and restoring the Los Angeles environment and water. The plan aims to improve water quality, increase access to clean water, and advocate for policies that benefit the environment. We have outlined specific goals and initiatives, such as reducing plastic pollution, restoring wetlands, and engaging communities in environmental education and action.

Thank you to all our supporters, both past and present. Here's to another great year down by the bay.



Your donation makes waves.
Make your impact today:
healthebay.org/donate