

CALIFORNIA OCEAN  
PROTECTION COUNCIL

Staff Recommendation  
Date 4/20/2006

**Council Executive Policy Officer**

Developed By: Christine Blackburn

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Provide a grant to fund the Executive Policy Officer position for the Ocean Protection Council

**NEAREST OCEAN or COASTAL LOCATION:** Sacramento, CA

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**EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: Advertised Position Description

Exhibit 2: Letters of Support

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**RESOLUTION:**

“The Ocean Protection Council finds pursuant to Sections 35600 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code that funding an Executive Policy Officer position for the Ocean Protection Council, as herein described, is of high priority for ocean conservation and authorizes the Secretary to take actions necessary to provide \$350,000 for its implementation.”

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

To better address emerging policy issues that will come before the Ocean Protection Council (Council), additional executive level staff is needed to conduct analyses and foster communication among state agencies and between the state and local and federal governments. The OPC has determined that the best method to obtain this assistance is to hire an Executive Policy Officer (EPO) with the necessary training and experience to aid the Council in achieving its statutory and policy objectives.

The Executive Policy Officer will assume the lead role for strategic planning; implementing the Ocean Protection Council’s policies and initiatives; and coordinating among all relevant regional, federal, and state entities to provide enhanced understanding and conservation of California's ocean resources. The Executive Policy Officer will serve as the primary policy analyst for the Council. This person will:

## Executive Policy Officer, Ocean Protection Council

- Coordinate activities of ocean-related state agencies to improve the effectiveness of state efforts to protect ocean resources within existing fiscal limitations
- Establish policies to coordinate the collection and sharing of scientific data related to coast and ocean resources between agencies
- Identify and recommend to the Legislature and Congress needed changes in law which will improve the protection and management of California's ocean and coastal resources
- Evaluate state agency budget priorities and work with the agencies to create cross-cutting budgets that result in more strategic expenditures

More specific duties include:

- **Operations:** assume overall responsibility for all planning, policy development, and implementation of Council initiatives, and will work closely with the Chair and Secretary of the Council in oversight of operational aspects of the Council
- **Coordination:** work with state agencies, departments, boards and commissions, and with federal and local agencies and non-governmental organizations to develop efficient means to implement strategic goals of the Council
- **Strategic Planning:** develop and guide the implementation of the strategic plan for the Council that sets quantifiable goals and objectives for up to five years to manage and improve California's ocean resources and its ocean ecosystem
- **Setting Funding Priorities:** ensure that project funding is in direct compliance with the goals, objectives, and priorities identified in the Council's Strategic Plan

The Executive Policy Officer will work directly with the State Coastal Conservancy, the California Ocean Resources Management Program, and with the Council Science Advisor to assist the Council in meeting the requirements of California Ocean Protection Act. The EPO will work closely with the staff at the Coastal Conservancy to enhance the project-level work that the Conservancy provides for the Council.

This is a permanent, exempt position that will be located within the Resources Agency.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT:**

COPA mandated the Council to coordinate the activities of multiple state department and agencies in carrying out a multi-faceted program of ocean conservation. Further, the Executive Officer (EO) of the Coastal Conservancy was named as the Secretary to the Council and was given the authority to administrates its affairs, including providing the necessary staff. Consistent with this authority, the EO recommends the creation of this position, but recognizes that the positioning of the EPO, both geographically and within the State hierarchy, should be outside the Conservancy itself in order for them to carry out the mandated task. The Executive Policy Officer should exist at a sufficiently high level within the Administration and should be located in Sacramento, CA. Both these stipulations will allow the EPO to meet and coordinate with the people necessary to achieve the goals of the Council and will allow the Council members more direct access to this person—including frequent meetings between the EPO and the Council Chair. Further, locating the EPO in Sacramento will allow this person to maintain some autonomy from the Conservancy, but will still allow them to coordinate with Council staff on a regular basis.

**PROJECT FINANCING:**

**Possible Funding Sources**

Ocean Protection Council Funds	\$350,000
Other Sources	<u>\$0,000</u>
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>

Funding for the proposed position would come from an appropriation to the Coastal Conservancy from the Environmental License Plate Fund. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21190.5, these funds may be expended upon appropriation by the Legislature in support of the California Ocean Protection Act. These funds are appropriate to assist the Council in the policy development goals of the Ocean Protection Act.

This total would cover 2 years of salary (plus benefits), travel, and other expenses for the Executive Policy Officer. The staff of the OPC is delegated to spend up to \$100,000 for actions such as this, but to provide a 2-year contract, we are requesting this more comprehensive authorization.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA’S OCEAN ACTION STRATEGY:** This action is an essential step to achieving the goals set forth in the Ocean Action Strategy.

More specifically, this person will be the lead staff in achieving Action Item 2, including (1) identifying successful California models of regional ocean and coastal stewardship and designing new federal and state approaches to support them and to use them as models for future management approaches; (2) developing enhanced partnerships with other levels of government (federal and local), industry, academia, non-governmental organization, and philanthropic organization to carry out ocean and coastal management objectives; and (3) monitoring California interests regarding international treaties and its relationships with international organizations regarding ocean and coastal management needs.

The person will also be essential in achieving:

- Action item 10 which states that the State should increase efforts to pursue, support, implement, and establish long-term funding for coordinated ecosystem management approaches at the federal, state, and local levels to guide and improve the stewardship of ocean and coastal resources.
- Action item 13, which states that the State should identify and prioritize issues that may benefit from additional coordination by the California Ocean Council, including issues arising in the context of protection of marine resources and economic uses of the ocean.

**CONSISTENCY WITH OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL'S INTERIM PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

**Mandatory Criteria**

**1. Furthers the following statutory purposes and policies of the California Ocean Protection Act:**

The Executive Policy Officer's role will be to work with the Council, Council staff, and other agencies to achieve actions that support the principles and criteria set forth for prioritizing other projects. In particular, this person will work to coordinate state, regional, and nation actions that:

- Improve management, conservation, and protection of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems
- Encourage those activities and uses that are consistent with sustainable, long-term protection and conservation of ocean and coastal resources
- Promote aesthetic, educational and recreational uses of the coast and ocean
- Improve the health of fish and fosters sustainable fisheries in ocean and coastal waters
- Help to integrate and coordinate the state's laws and institutions responsible for protecting and conserving ocean and coastal resources
- Benefit or further existing state programs or legislative mandates
- Identify changes in federal law and policy necessary to achieve the state's goals for the coast and ocean

**2. Consistent with the purposes of the funding source:** See Project Financing section above.

**3. Has demonstrable support from the public:** See attached letters of support.

**4. Relates directly to the ocean, coast, associated estuaries, and coastal-draining watersheds:** The Executive Policy Officer will only be working on coastal and ocean issues in concert with the Council.

**5. Has greater-than-local interest:** The Executive Policy Officer will focus on statewide actions, initiatives, and standards. In addition, they will be the person responsible for regional and national actions supported by California and the Council.