



MEMORANDUM

TO: Ocean Protection Council

FROM: Brian E. Baird,
Assistant Secretary Resources Agency
Chair, Coastal States Organization

DATE: May 15, 2008

RE: Endorsement of the Ocean and Coastal Community Call for Action

ATTACHMENTS: (1) [Ocean and Coastal Community Call for Action \(Call for Action\)](#)
(2) [Letters of support](#)

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends the council approve the following resolution:

“The Ocean Protection Council endorses the *Ocean and Coastal Community Call for Action* (Call for Action) that calls for the establishment of a national ocean trust fund, federal support of state and local government efforts to prepare for the impacts of climate change, and the reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act.”

BACKGROUND:

The Coastal States Organization (CSO), which California currently chairs, is a 35 member organization of coastal states, territories, and commonwealths dedicated to the health and well being of the nation’s ocean and coastal resources. The organization represents its member states, territories, and commonwealths with positions on federal funding levels, legislation, or other policy issues at the national level that can impact ocean and coastal resources. U.S. Congressional committee staff in Washington DC have observed that the ocean and coastal community (state and local governments, academia, private industry, and NGOs) have not come together to speak with one voice and advocate for some of the large-scale needs for ocean and coastal resource management. To address this void and to plan for a new administration and Congress in 2009, a CSO workgroup was formed to identify three top priorities for protecting our oceans and coastlines and to seek support from the broader ocean and community on these issues.

The attached Call for Action is the product of this CSO effort. The document calls for three significant actions at the federal level:

- Establish a national ocean trust fund to provide new money to support ocean and coastal management
- Obtain support to state and local governments in their efforts to address the impacts of climate change
- Support the re-authorization of a strong national Coastal Zone Management Act

The OPC has been approached to endorse the attached Call for Action because of the Council's role, success, and reputation in proactive ocean governance. Other organizations throughout the United States including federal, state, regional, and local agencies; non-governmental organizations; partnerships; the private sector; and various associations are also being asked to provide their support. Endorsement of the Call to Action by the OPC will add the Council's authority and prestige to this important initiative—focusing the next Administration and Congress on a select set of achievable actions in the near term. Upon adoption of the OPC endorsement of this Call for Action, the staff will notify the Coastal States Organization and appropriate members of the administration, congress, and other interested parties.

National Trust Fund

Both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Ocean Commission identified a systematic failure of state and national governments to adequately protect and manage the nation's coasts and oceans. America's oceans are in crisis and the environment, jobs, the economy, and human health and safety are at stake. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy found in 2004 that almost \$5 trillion is generated each year within coastal watershed counties. However, that economic contribution is threatened by the degradation of our oceans and coasts. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, the Pew Oceans Commission, and now the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative have all identified the need for a national trust fund to support the activities necessary for ocean and coastal management and protection. No action has been taken at the national level to implement this long standing recommendation. The fund, if established, would be used to support needed research, education, and management actions for federal, state, and regional agencies and organizations. These funds should be used to supplement—not replace—existing appropriations for ocean and coastal programs.

Climate Change Impacts

The Call to Action also requests support for state and local governments to respond to the projected impacts of climate change, especially sea level rise. Increasing development pressure along our coasts also raises concerns about the health of coastal waters, habitats, and fisheries. Nationally, our coastal watersheds comprise 17 percent of the land yet these areas support over half the population. Coastal states are on the front lines of efforts to reduce the causes of climate change, but coastal states are also concerned about how they can adapt to the changes that are now predicted to occur. While many actions are necessary, it is clear that this nation needs to substantially increase its fiscal investment in programs to protect and manage our oceans and

coastlines. In addition, enhanced federal support of state and local efforts will be critical to address the impacts of climate change.

Coastal Zone Management Act

Finally, the Coastal Zone Management Act, which has been called the “Constitution for the Coasts”, needs to be reauthorized to help meet the existing and emerging needs along our nation’s coasts and provide renewed authority to fund the critical programs it authorizes. The Coastal Zone Management Act is over 35 years old and the time has come for this nation to think about bold new approaches that should be considered when reauthorizing this landmark statute. The endorsement by the OPC of the attached Call for Action will help strengthen the message to the next Administration and Congress that action on CZMA reauthorization is critical for the protection of our nation’s ocean and coastal resources.

CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT:

The OPC endorsement of the attached Call for Action is consistent the Ocean Protection Act, Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, in the following respects:

- The Call for Action addresses changes in federal law and policy that are necessary to improve protection, conservation, and restoration of ocean ecosystems in federal and state waters off the state’s coast.
- The Call for Action is consistent with positions taken by the Governor and the Legislature regarding actions the state should take to encourage changes in federal law and policy. Both the Governor and the legislature support additional federal funding for ocean and coastal management, federal support for ways to address the impacts of climate change, and for the maintenance and support of a strong Coastal Zone Management Act.

CONSISTENCY WITH OPC'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

The endorsement of the Call for Action will help implement specific provisions of the OPC’s Five-year Strategic Plan. Specifically, Goal A – Governance, Objective 5b calls for the Council to actively engage in efforts to support increased funding for state and federal programs and for reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act. The plan urges the OPC to work with the President, Congress, the Council on Environmental Quality, the National and Western Governors’ Associations, and the Coastal States Organization to achieve this goal.

The Strategic plan also calls for the OPC to work with the Climate Action Team to investigate the long-term impacts of sea level rise and develop statewide adaptive management policies to help deal with these impacts (Goal D, Objective 3a). The additional federal support and guidance, which is called for in the Call to Action, will help the OPC and all state agencies better plan for and adapt to rising sea levels.