



MEMORANDUM

TO: California Ocean Protection Council
FROM: Amber Mace, Executive Director, Ocean Protection Council
DATE: August 11, 2011
RE: Release of Draft Ocean Protection Council Strategic Action Plan
ATTACHMENT: [Draft Ocean Protection Council Strategic Action Plan](#)

Today, the Ocean Protection Council staff are pleased to present a draft vision and strategic action plan for the next five years to improve management and protection of California's ocean and coastal resources. This action plan identifies the complex challenges to our ocean that can be addressed by the OPC's leadership and core strengths as a science-informed coordinating body. The plan provides vision, context, guidance, and objectives that form a targeted and tractable approach to address these mounting challenges. It recognizes the economic value of our ocean resources to the state of California and honors the OPC mission to protect and preserve the health of marine ecosystems. This plan identifies both opportunities and responsibility; it is intended to be a roadmap for the Council to apply its leadership, expertise, and resources. This draft plan is in response to a sense of urgency as we face the increasing threats to our coast and ocean, but we likewise acknowledge California's readiness to tackle them with forward looking policy and an engaged public. The OPC staff look forward to your feedback and guidance.

Background

The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) is a cabinet-level body created in 2004 to help ensure that state and local actions are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the protection, conservation, and maintenance of healthy coastal and ocean ecosystems and the economy they support. The OPC's overarching role is to coordinate and lead ocean management and protection in California in three primary ways: 1) by addressing cross-cutting ocean issues that do not fall neatly under the purview of one agency; 2) by developing forward looking policy recommendations to advance new or refine existing laws and regulations; and 3) by coordinating across state institutions whose decisions affect coastal waters and the ocean environment.

Approach

After five years of undertaking large, cross-cutting projects and creating a foundation for comprehensive ocean resource management, the OPC has now developed a more focused action plan that identifies targeted areas where the OPC can be the most effective and efficient in this current challenging economic and fiscal climate. This second strategic action plan recognizes that the OPC will not be able to address every ocean issue facing the state of California. With

this constraint in mind, this plan has been crafted to strategically guide the OPC's efforts so that they have maximal effect on the most important issues given the OPC's strengths as well as funding and staffing constraints. The OPC will continue to provide leadership on key issues and steward high priority initiatives begun during its first five years, but in a way consistent with this new strategic approach moving forward.

Focus

The plan focuses on four substantive areas that will comprise the core of the OPC's efforts over the next five years, including: 1) climate change, 2) fisheries and marine ecosystems, 3) coastal and ocean impacts from land, and 4) industrial uses of the ocean. The plan also identifies a fifth area—improved use and sharing of scientific information to support ocean governance and management—that cuts across all of these focal areas. The OPC will focus its work on these issues and on the cross cutting need to improve the use of scientific information in decision-making.

This plan outlines specific goals, objectives, and actions that the OPC will implement in each area to protect ocean and coastal resources. It has been developed within the context of the National Ocean Policy adopted by President Obama in his July 2010 Executive Order No. 14547, and is consistent with the nine national priority objectives that were identified in the *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*¹. To achieve these goals, the OPC will continue to take a leadership role and utilize the OPC's strengths and unique function in state government by: recommending meaningful changes to state and federal policies and laws; coordinating and fostering collaboration among agencies; “seeding” and “catalyzing” projects by leveraging existing funding and identifying new funding sources; and improving and enhancing the use of science in decision-making. The OPC will also work closely and in partnership with other state agencies responsible for managing ocean and coastal resources as well as federal, tribal, academic, non-governmental, and industry partners.

Plan Development and Outline

The OPC staff have developed this draft plan in cooperation and consultation with Ocean Protection Council members, the OPC Steering Committee, and the OPC Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT). The plan has also been informed by an evaluation of the OPC's first five years.

The document contains five main sections:

- **Section I. Introduction** - section I introduces the plan and describes the OPC's statutory purpose, guiding principles, and mission.
- **Section II. The First Five Years** - section II describes major accomplishments and lessons learned under the first five-year strategic plan.
- **Section III. OPC's Strategic Approach** – section III describes the OPC's strategic approach, introduces the key focal areas, and describes communications and outreach, funding, and staffing considerations.

¹ *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force July 19, 2010 (The White House Council on Environmental Quality)*. http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf.

- **Section IV. Five Year Action Plan** – section IV contains the priority goals, objectives, actions, and performance metrics associated with four focal areas and one cross-cutting issue.
- **Section V. Appendices** – section V contains the following appendices:
 - Appendix A is a comprehensive table summarizing goals, objectives, actions, metrics, and roles.
 - Appendix B is a summary of accomplishments under the first strategic plan.

Timeline and Public Engagement

The OPC staff are soliciting feedback from the public on this draft action plan. The plan is available on the OPC website and open for public comment through 12 September 2011. Comments can be emailed to opc.comments@scc.ca.gov or mailed to:

John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

To facilitate a dialogue with constituents, the OPC staff will host three workshops throughout California:

Southern California -- Monday, August 22, 2011 (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

Southern California Coastal Water Research Project Facility, Main Conference Room
3535 Harbor Blvd., Suite 110, Costa Mesa, CA

Northern California -- Friday, August 26, 2011 (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

Arcata City Hall Chambers
736 F Street, Arcata, CA

North Central California -- Monday, August 29, 2011 (2:00 – 5:00 p.m.)

The Alameda County Training Center, Hayward Room
125 12th Street, Oakland, CA