



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Item 6

TO: Ocean Protection Council
FROM: Abe Doherty, Climate Change Policy Advisor and Karen Kayfetz, Sea Grant Fellow
DATE: December 2nd, 2014
RE: Second Round of OPC's Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program
ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) [November 29, 2012 OPC Staff Recommendation \(Approval of Funding for the Grant Program\)](#)
- 2) [March 27, 2013 OPC Staff Recommendation \(Approval of Program Priorities and Selection Criteria and Application for the Grant Program\)](#)
- 3) [November 21, 2013 OPC Staff Recommendation \(Project Selection for First Round of Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program\)](#)
- 4) [Grant Program Announcement, Second Round](#)

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Approval of projects for the second round of the Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program. Enter into interagency agreement with the California Coastal Commission to perform grant administration, technical services and policy integration for these projects approved under the second round of the program.

LOCATION: Statewide

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE: Climate Change

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code and the Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise grant guidelines adopted by the Ocean Protection Council on March 27, 2013:

“The Ocean Protection Council hereby approves the projects for the Second Round of the OPC Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program, as shown in Table 1 (below), as recommended by staff from the Ocean Protection Council and California Coastal Commission as being consistent with the previously adopted grant selection criteria for the Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program.

Further, the Ocean Protection Council hereby approves that the California Natural Resources Agency, on behalf of the Ocean Protection Council, enter into an interagency agreement with the California Coastal Commission for a total of \$1,195,000. Up to \$1,015,750 will be used to reimburse local governments for the projects approved by the Ocean Protection Council as part of this second round of the Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program and up to \$179,250 will reimburse the California Coastal Commission for its provision of grant administration, technical services, and to ensure that sea-level rise vulnerability assessments are efficiently integrated into land-use planning documents under the Coastal Act.”

Staff further recommends that the Ocean Protection Council adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the Ocean Protection Council hereby finds that:

1. The proposed projects are consistent with the purposes of Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, the Ocean Protection Act.
2. The proposed projects are consistent with the Ocean Protection Council's Grant Funding Procedures (Interim Standards and Protocols, August 2013).
3. The California Coastal Commission has authority to administer this program on behalf of the OPC and the technical expertise to ensure that the vulnerability assessments are properly incorporated into local land use planning documents and their corresponding ordinances.
4. The amount sought by the California Coastal Commission for purposes of grant administration is justified and reasonable, and does not cause the OPC's support allocation to be exceeded.”

BACKGROUND:

In November of 2012, the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) approved \$2,500,000 for competitive grants to provide funds for local and regional vulnerability assessments and updates to Local Coastal Programs and other Coastal Act authorized plans to address sea-level rise, coastal hazards and other climate change-related impacts (Exhibit 1). This authorization was subject to the condition that the OPC approve the grant criteria prior to soliciting grant proposals. On March 27, 2013, the OPC approved the grant criteria and application form for the grant program and authorized staff to solicit and evaluate proposals, subject to the condition that the OPC shall approve final selection of any grants under this program (Exhibit 2).

Staff from the Ocean Protection Council, Coastal Conservancy, and the California Coastal Commission (Coastal Commission) worked together to write the grant program announcement, answer questions from potential applicants, review the applications and develop recommendations for the projects which best fit the grant selection criteria. The first round of applications was received in 2013, and seven of the 18 applications were recommended for funding in a motion that passed at the November 21st, 2013 OPC meeting (Exhibit 3), for a total of \$1,305,000.

OPC staff worked in collaboration with the Coastal Commission to develop a joint application and announcement for the second round of the OPC's Local Coastal Program (LCP) SLR Grant Program and for the Coastal Commission's LCP Planning Assistance Grant Program. Ten (10) applications were received for the OPC grant program, of which eight applications requested funding from both the Coastal Commission and OPC grant programs (Table 1). OPC staff worked in collaboration with the Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy to review the applications and develop recommendations.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Sea-level rise, extreme high tides, storms and coastal erosion are already impacting California's coast and the impacts will increase as sea-level rise accelerates due to changing climatic conditions. These impacts are unfolding differently in each region of the coast depending on the shoreline structure, development patterns and many other variables. Understanding, planning for, and reducing risk from these impacts must be done at the local, regional, and statewide scale in a collaborative manner. The purpose of these grants is to fund this work, particularly through local coastal planning pursuant to the California Coastal Act.

This grant program is focused on addressing sea-level rise in order to update Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) and other plans authorized under the Coastal Act such as Port Master Plans, Long Range Development Plans and Public Works Plans, which are fundamental planning documents for the California coast. LCPs and

other Coastal Act authorized plans are required by the Coastal Act for each coastal jurisdiction, and are the basic planning and regulatory tool that guides development in the coastal zone in conformity with Coastal Act goals and policies. These plans must specify the kind, location, and intensity of land uses, the applicable resource protection and development policies and implementing ordinances. LCPs and other Coastal Act authorized plans are prepared primarily by local governments, and once certified, these plans govern most coastal permit decisions that can affect the short- and long-term conservation and use of coastal resources. Following adoption by the local planning authority, a LCP or other Coastal Act authorized plan is submitted to the Coastal Commission, which reviews and certifies as consistent with state law.

Due to the tremendous need to update and certify LCPs and to address sea-level rise in land use planning documents, the OPC provided funding for this grant program to catalyze early adaptor projects to demonstrate how to integrate sea-level rise into LCPs. The purpose of this grant program is to support and encourage local governments and other entities responsible for planning under the Coastal Act to address sea-level rise as they develop and adopt updated plans that conserve and protect coastal resources, such as public accessways and recreation sites, environmentally sensitive habitat areas and other coastal and terrestrial resources, agricultural areas, new and existing development, coastal-dependent and visitor-serving uses, critical infrastructure, and other resources and priority uses identified by the Coastal Act. Grant funds will pay for technical planning work, evaluation of planning alternatives and transfer of this information to other jurisdictions; it is also the intent of this program to support development of adaptation policies and/or ordinances that could serve as planning examples for use by multiple jurisdictions. Finally, it is the goal of this program to encourage proactive planning that will protect public resources (including ecosystem function and public recreation) in the face of rising sea-levels and other impacts.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED SELECTION CRITERIA

The staff from OPC, Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy reviewed the proposals using the following selection criteria that were developed by staff from these agencies and approved by the OPC in March 2013. The projects recommended for approval are consistent with these selection criteria.

1. **Likelihood of adoption/approval/implementation** – The applicants for projects recommended for funding explained specifically how the grant will support updating of an LCP (or other Coastal Act authorized plan) to address sea-level rise. All of the applicants recommended for funding adopted resolutions committing to addressing sea-level rise and completing a LCP Amendment submittal to the Coastal Commission for updating the LCP.
2. **Public Benefit** – The review team gave priority in awarding of grant funds to projects that committed to maximize public benefits of the coast in addressing sea-level rise as articulated in the Coastal Act and California Ocean Protection Act. These benefits include: preserving and enhancing habitat such as coastal wetlands and natural lands; conserving biodiversity; protecting, providing and enhancing public access; protecting priority land uses such as coastal dependent development and recreational opportunities; and protecting visitor-serving amenities.
3. **Use of Best Available Science** – The review team considered whether applicants were proposing to use the best available science on sea-level rise in projects, and will continue to work with the entities implementing projects funded through this grant program to ensure that they consider the recommendations presented in the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance and other key references. As required by the application process, all of the applicants submitted preliminary analysis of potential impacts from sea-level rise using the NOAA Coastal Services Center Sea-level rise and Coastal Flooding Impacts Viewer or other readily-available planning tools.
4. **Effectiveness** - The goal of these grants is to encourage local entities to conserve and protect

coastal resources, such as such as public accessways and recreation sites, environmentally sensitive habitat areas and other coastal and terrestrial resources, agricultural areas, new and existing development, coastal-dependent and visitor-serving uses, critical infrastructure, and other resources and priority uses identified by the Coastal Act. Applicants for projects recommended for funding demonstrated how the proposed project will be effective in conserving and protecting these resources from future impacts from sea-level rise and related climate change impacts through changes in LCPs or other applicable plans, and how the proposed projects build upon or complement existing efforts that may be underway or completed for their local jurisdiction

5. **Urgency and Need** – The projects selected by the review team demonstrated urgency due to the specific resources that are at risk from sea-level rise and the relationships with planning decisions that will have long-lasting effects
6. **Transferability** – The projects recommended by the review team address issues in a manner that may be useful as a model for other communities and will result in analysis, strategies, or draft ordinance language that may be used by other communities. Staff will continue to work with grantees to include in the work program specific activities to actively share information with others and to report on lessons learned.
7. **Matching Funds/Leverage** – The review team considered the extent to which the applicants were able to provide matching funds or leverage resources and concluded that the applicants for the selected projects demonstrated their capacity to achieve the proposed work.

Ocean Protection Council staff ranked the applications according to the adopted criteria, with input from Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy staff. Staff from the OPC and Coastal Commission then worked together to determine how to leverage the two grant programs to fund as many high-ranking projects as possible. To maximize the awards for high-ranked projects, the OPC staff, with support from Commission staff, recommends that OPC fund some sea-level rise-related portions of the Coastal Commission proposals that fit the OPC criteria. This frees up funds for the Commission to fund high-ranked proposals that only requested Coastal Commission funds.

The joint application process provided an opportunity for the OPC and Coastal Commission to work together to develop staff recommendations, and the Coastal Commission staff fully support the recommendations provided in this staff report. However, the OPC and Coastal Commission staff recommendations are separate staff recommendations, to be acted on separately by the governing bodies of the respective agencies, based on the adopted criteria of the two grant programs.

RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

Based on a collaborative review process with staff from the Coastal Conservancy, Coastal Commission, and OPC using the adopted criteria for the LCP Sea-level Rise Grant Program, OPC staff recommends that the Council approve funding the following seven projects from the second grant round. See Table 1 for additional information on all of the proposals that were received. The Coastal Commission voted unanimously on November 12, 2014 to approve Commission staff's recommendations for the Coastal Commission's LCP Planning Assistance Grant Program. Project descriptions below include the amounts funded by the Coastal Commission.

Humboldt County Update to the Humboldt Bay Area Plan

Staff recommends providing \$90,000 to the County of Humboldt to prepare a comprehensive update to the Humboldt Bay Area Plan. The Cities of Eureka and Arcata will be working together with the County to comprehensively analyze and plan coastal-dependent uses around Humboldt Bay, and coordinate LCP

updates. This work will build on the recently completed Humboldt Bay Shoreline Inventory, Mapping and Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Project, which identified the condition of shoreline protection structures such as levees and road and rail beds. The second phase of the project is currently underway and involves site-specific inundation modeling and mapping which the County will use in the LCP update. The Coastal Commission's staff has recommended that the Coastal Commission provide a grant of \$35,000 for this project. The County will provide \$4,900 in match for this current effort, along with \$20,000 in staff time for this project and \$150,000 in staff time for General Plan update relevant for the Humboldt Bay Area Plan. An additional \$630,000 has been provided in matching funds from other entities.

San Francisco Local Coastal Program Amendment

Staff recommends providing \$160,750 to the City and County of San Francisco to prepare a LCP amendment addressing erosion of beaches and bluffs, maintenance and improvement of public recreation facilities, and protection and maintenance of public wastewater infrastructure. The proposed amendment would incorporate studies currently underway to address sea-level rise, as well as build on the 2012 Ocean Beach Master Plan. The Coastal Commission's staff has recommended that the Coastal Commission provide a grant of \$13,000 and San Francisco has committed to an in-kind match of \$398,792 in staffing and operating costs to support the project.

City of Monterey Local Coastal Plan

Staff recommends providing \$200,000 to the City of Monterey to create a LCP for certification by the Coastal Commission that integrates coastal erosion and sea-level rise strategies. This would be the City's first attempt at a comprehensive coastal program. One of the project aims is to increase public awareness of sea-level rise, which will be done in partnership with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and to encourage public input on the LCP and other documents. The Coastal Commission's staff has recommended that the Coastal Commission provide a grant of \$35,000 for this effort, and the City has committed to expending \$25,000, in addition to \$50,000 of in-kind staff services.

Santa Barbara County Coastal Resiliency Project, Phase I

Staff recommends providing a grant of \$175,000 to the County of Santa Barbara to fill data gaps for planning sea-level analysis and projections of future coastal hazards. The objectives of the project are to model and map coastal hazards resulting from a variety of climate scenarios, analyze social and economic vulnerability to coastal hazards, and develop a database for vulnerable social, economic, infrastructure, coastal defenses, and ecological coastal resources. This project has received funding from the Coastal Conservancy's Climate Ready Grant Program, and the Coastal Commission's staff has recommended that the Coastal Commission provide an additional grant of \$8,000 for tasks related to a LCP update. The County intends to provide \$45,000 of in-kind staffing and operating expenses.

Oxnard Sea Level Rise Analysis and LCP Update

Staff recommends providing a grant of \$110,000 to the City of Oxnard to analyze sea-level rise hazards and update their LCP consistent with the state sea-level rise guidance documents. The project will resolve differences between the sea-level rise adaptation policies for the Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach wetlands that conflict with the Oxnard LCP, originally adopted in 1982, and will include new plans for conserving and protecting coastal resources from future sea-level rise impacts and storm flooding events. The project will take advantage of a Ventura County-specific sea-level rise topography dataset and scenario mapping tool valued at \$150,000. The City has an existing encumbrance of \$133,000 and has committed an additional \$150,000 match, along with additional funds to support LCP certification, and the Coastal Commission's staff has recommended that the Coastal Commission provide a \$40,000 grant.

City of Carlsbad LCP Planning and Sea Level Rise Update

Staff recommends providing \$180,000 to the City of Carlsbad to produce a fully updated LCP that establishes policies and adaptation measures for sea-level rise, and to certify a new LCP for the Agua Hedioneta Lagoon Segment. The work will be completed in conjunction with an update to the City's General Plan currently

underway. The City will perform comprehensive risk-analyses related to sea-level rise projections and identify adaptation measures to minimize risks, including new or revised land-use designations, policies, standards, or ordinances. The Coastal Commission's staff has recommended that the Coastal Commission provide a grant of \$48,000 to support this LCP update, and the City has committed to providing \$345,930 for contractor expenses, \$387,000 for in-kind staffing costs and \$4,100 for operating expenses.

City of Del Mar LCP Amendment to Address Sea-Level Rise

Staff recommends providing \$100,000 to the City of Del Mar to produce a LCP update incorporating sea-level rise and coastal flooding impacts. The project will include a vulnerability assessment, a risk assessment, and an adaptation plan that identifies effective accommodation, protection, and retreat strategies. After conversations with OPC and Commission staff, Del Mar has agreed to modify their original proposed work plan to additionally include an evaluation of impacts to public access along the shoreline, and an assessment of adaptation strategies to protect public access. The City has committed \$63,810 for funding technical studies and a match of in-kind services of \$36,190.

INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) staff recommends that the OPC approve that the California Natural Resources Agency, on behalf of OPC, enter into an interagency agreement to transfer administration of this second round of the OPC LCP SLR Grant Program to the Coastal Commission, which is administering a related grant program, the LCP Planning Assistance Grant Program. The Coastal Commission voted unanimously on November 12, 2014 to authorize the Commission to enter into the interagency agreement to administer the second round of the OPC LCP SLR Grant Program.

A single grant administrator for both grant programs will allow jurisdictions that receive grants from both the OPC and the Coastal Commission to develop one work program and to execute a single contract with the Coastal Commission for both awards. This will streamline the grant execution process, simplify reporting and invoicing requirements for local governments, save the state money and increase success of the projects through early and on-going communication between the local governments and Coastal Commission staff on development of projects supporting applications for LCPs or LCP updates under the Coastal Act.

In addition to providing grant administration services, the Coastal Commission will provide subject matter expertise to guide the development and implementation of the projects so that they meet the state's sea-level rise guidance documents, are based on the best available science, and can be efficiently incorporated into draft LCPs for consideration by the Coastal Commission. By the Coastal Commission staff performing these administrative, technical and policy integration services, OPC staff time will be freed up to work on actions to support the OPC's Resolution on Implementation of the Safeguarding California Plan, which the OPC adopted on August 27, 2014.

PROGRAM FINANCING

Table 1. Recommendations for OPC LCP SLR Grant Awards and Coastal Commission Staff Recommendations on Projects Funded Jointly

Jurisdiction	Type of Project	Grant Request (\$)			Staff Recommendation (\$)	
		Coastal Commission	OPC	Total Request	Coastal Commission ¹	OPC
North Coast						
Humboldt County	LCP update	\$100,000	\$25,000	\$125,000	\$35,000	\$90,000
North Central						
City and County of San Francisco	LCP update	\$94,573	\$91,046	\$185,619	\$13,000	\$160,750
Central						
City of Monterey	New LCP	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$35,000	\$200,000
South Central						
County of Santa Barbara	LCP update	\$64,000	\$119,000	\$183,000	\$8,000	\$175,000
City of Oxnard	LCP update	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	\$40,000	\$110,000
San Diego						
City of Carlsbad	LCP update/ Certification of 2 Areas of Deferred Certification	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$250,000	\$48,000	\$180,000
City of Del Mar	LCP update	\$100,000		\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000
Total		\$783,573	\$1,105,046	\$1,888,619	\$179,000	\$1,015,750

The anticipated source of funds for the OPC LCP SLR Grant Program will be the fiscal year 2008 appropriation from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 authorizes the use of these funds for purposes consistent with Section 35650 of the Public Resources Code, establishing the California Ocean Protection Trust Fund (Pub. Res. Code § 75060(g)). Under section 35650(b), Ocean Protection Trust Fund monies may be expended for projects authorized by the OPC that are identified as appropriate Trust Fund purposes. These purposes include projects that provide funding for adaptive management, planning, coordination, and other activities to minimize the adverse impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise on California's ocean ecosystem (Pub. Res. Code § 35650(b)(2)(J)). Modernizing local coastal plans will directly improve the management of coastal and ocean resources as specified by this section. Any information developed under the grants which identifies early action measures for the elimination or reduction of emissions from greenhouse sources will be shared with the California Air Resources Board, consistent with PRC § 35650(b)(2)(J)(ii).

¹ The Coastal Commission approved Commission staff recommendations as shown in this table on November 12, 2014.

Proposition 84 provides for 5% for grant administration and 10% for planning and monitoring necessary for successful design, selection and implementation of the projects authorized under that program. As part of the proposed interagency agreement, the Coastal Commission will be reimbursed up to \$179,250, which is a total of up to 5% of the total of the grants to local governments for grant administration services and up to 10% for technical services and policy integration to ensure that sea-level rise vulnerability assessments are efficiently integrated into land use planning documents under the Coastal Act.

Total OPC FY14-15 grant funds available	\$1,195,000
Less 15% for Coastal Commission administration	<u>- \$179,250</u>
Amount available for OPC grant awards	\$1,015,750

The administration funds are for duties related to administration, implementation, and technical review of the final awarded OPC SLR LCP grant projects. Administration and implementation duties include development of the grant work program, contract execution, tracking progress and ensuring timely implementation of projects, processing invoices and payment, coordination with the Coastal Commission district staff, communication with the grantees, and other duties. Grant funds will be distributed to grantees in arrears, according to the terms of the contract.

The Coastal Commission staff involvement in ongoing coordination with and input to local governments on these LCP planning efforts is a critical element for project success. When final grant awards are made and contracts executed, a Commission staff person will be assigned to work with each grantee as the LCP project proceeds. The 10% of funds allocated for technical services and policy integration will cover the planning and monitoring necessary for successful implementation of the projects, and is essential to fund the staff support for planning work with grantees.

CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT:

The proposed project is consistent with the Ocean Protection Act (Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code). Specifically, the project is consistent with Public Resources Code Section 35621, in that the council will coordinate with the Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy to improve the effectiveness of state efforts to protect ocean resources, and create a mechanism for sharing scientific data related to coastal and ocean resources among agencies. This section authorizes the council to award grants and provide assistance to public agencies and nonprofit organizations to support this effort. In allocating grants and assistance, the council is directed to give preference to public agencies that are meeting the goals described in Section 35620. Section 35620 goals include council support to: 1) state agencies’ use and sharing of scientific and geospatial information for coastal- and ocean-relevant decision making, and 2) baseline scientific and geospatial information that is available to public agencies which assess, inter alia, the effects of climate change, cumulative effects, predicted patterns of human activities along the coast and other social, economic and cultural effects. (See Pub. Res. Code § 35620(a)).

The proposed project will potentially result in maps, scientific and technical assessments, and sea-level rise assessments at the scale of a local community that will enable the Coastal Commission and local governments to evaluate one of the major effects of climate change on coastal California, and develop ordinances and policies that limits new expansion and protects existing lives and property in those areas. The grant criteria will ensure that the products will be publicly available for other planning agencies to extend the benefits of each grant awarded.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE OPC'S STRATEGIC PLAN:

Focal Area B (Climate Change), Issue 4: Impacts to Coastal Communities by Storms, Erosion and Sea-Level Rise.

This project directly implements two objectives from OPC's 2011 Strategic Plan:

Objective 4.1: "Improve knowledge and understanding of climate change impacts among state, regional and local decision-makers." By providing grants to improve local and regional entities to conduct vulnerabilities assessments this project will improve understanding of climate change impacts.

Objective 4.2: "Encourage the development and adoption of sea-level rise adaptation strategies." By providing grants to local and regional entities to develop LCP updates and local adaptation plans, this project will encourage development and implementation of adaptation strategies.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE OPC'S GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING GUIDELINES:

The OPC previously resolved that the LCP Sea-level Rise Grant Program is consistent with the OPC's Grant Program Funding Guidelines that were adopted on November 20, 2008 (see Exhibit 1 - November 29, 2012 OPC Staff Recommendation). The OPC adopted specific criteria and a grant application to use to evaluate projects for this grant round on March 27, 2013. The projects recommended for selection under the grant program are also consistent with the Interim Standards and Protocols for the OPC Grant Funding Procedures (August 2013) in the following respects:

1. **Project Eligibility** – The projects recommended for funding under the LCP Sea-Level Rise Grant Round are consistent with the California Ocean Protection Act and the OPC Strategic Plan and are directly related to the coast, associated estuaries and coastal-draining watersheds since they all pertain to projects that address sea-level rise vulnerabilities. All of the projects recommended for funding are supported by resolutions adopted by the governing bodies of local governments, indicating demonstrable support from the public. The selected projects are of greater-than-local interest since they all involve urgent vulnerabilities to sea-level rise and are designed to support transferability to other jurisdictions.
2. **Applicant Eligibility** – All of the proposed projects are led by local governments.
3. **Program Priorities** – The projects recommended for funding under the Grant Round support implementation of the OPC's Strategic Plan, including the following goals:
 - Improve decision-making through use of best available science by state entities and agencies charged with ocean and coastal stewardship.
 - Prepare for and reduce harmful impacts of climate change on coastal development and infrastructure, public health and safety, the economy, and ecosystems by encouraging adaptation to climate change and engaging decision makers at all levels of government.
 - Reduce the negative impacts of land-based activities on marine ecosystems and the state's coastal and ocean economy.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed projects are categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15306 because they involve data collection, research and resource evaluation activities that will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource; and Section 15262 in that they involve feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which have not yet been approved, adopted or funded. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval by the OPC.