



Dear Council Members and Ocean Community,

It is summer, and I hope you will all find time to get into the water, and as you swim, dive, or surf, think about how important a healthy ocean is to you, your family and community.

Ocean and coastal health is the lens through which we view our work. Ocean health is the organizing principle that knits together our work from climate change, ocean acidification, hypoxia, fisheries and management of our marine protected areas. It provides us a framework to convene and problem solve. It is the touchstone for our decision-making, from staffing to the projects we bring to the Council. It is a unifying concept that resonates strongly with the public, tribes and our west coast partners. Understanding and adapting to the challenges climate change presents to ocean health is making our job more complex and urgent than ever.

This has been a stressful year for the inhabitants of ocean and coastal ecosystems. From the unusually warm water off our coast, to the Refugio oil spill, to the expansive harmful algal bloom events along the coast, sea life is feeling the pressure of both changing climate and pollution. Our job continues to be using the wealth of science generated in California and beyond to underpin sound policy and management decisions on behalf of restoring and sustaining healthy ocean ecosystems.

On July 29th, we will co-host a workshop with Ocean Science Trust on the findings emerging from the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Panel. This work highlights the need for action, and the importance of a healthy and resilient ocean to help brace for climate change, and I encourage all with an interest in our oceans to come and participate.

At the Council meeting, Fish and Wildlife Director Chuck Bonham will give an update on the response to the Refugio oil spill, and staff will highlight how some of the tools developed by the Ocean Protection Council have been deployed in responding to the event. The balance of the meeting will focus on our advancements on our work on climate change, fisheries and MPAs. As with the workshop, I encourage you to come to the meeting and lend your voice to our shared mission in service of a healthy ocean.

I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the word 'resilience.' With respect to our work with oceans and coasts, my vision is for healthy, 'resilient' ecosystems – that is, functioning communities that are better able to withstand impacts – and also resilient human communities that rely on those ecosystems: thriving local businesses and fishing communities. A key tool to promoting resilience in coastal ecosystems – and human communities - is our network of protected areas. As we set aside critical habitats where both fishing and water quality stressors are eliminated, the ecosystems are provided an opportunity to bounce back, and those systems will serve to seed the rest of the coast. With added complexity and diversity, a healthy structure and functioning, our coastal natural resources are more resilient, and better positioned to adapt to changing ocean chemistry, among other stressors. That is our hope, our intention. And we'll rely on our scientists to help us adaptively manage toward this intent.

The state, with the leadership of Secretary Laird, continues to take a novel approach to managing our protected areas, one that draws on deep partnerships inside and outside of government, one that builds collaborative 'resilience' into governance. I encourage your participation: this work is on behalf of all Californians, and there's room for everyone's participation.

We live in interesting times, and I hope to see you on the 29th at the Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia workshop and the Ocean Protection Council meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Kallman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deputy Secretary for Ocean and Coastal Policy
Executive Director Ocean Protection Council

Attachments



**California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)
Executive Director's Report
July 29, 2015**

The Executive Director's Report provides an update on OPC outcomes and accomplishments since the previous OPC meeting. This report covers December 2014 to July 2015¹.

Staffing: In January Nick Sadrpour and Morgan Ivens-Duran started their 12 month California Sea Grant fellowship with OPC. Nick Sadrpour has an M.S. in Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy from CSU Monterey Bay. Nick's fellowship has focused on adaptation to sea-level rise and the development of OPC's draft Proposition 1 grant guidelines.

Morgan has M.S. in Biological Sciences from CalPoly San Luis Obispo. Both her master's thesis and her fellowship at the OPC are focused on marine protected areas. Morgan is also helping to develop a vision plan for the California Seafloor and Coastal Mapping Program (see more info below).

In April, Jennifer Phillips joined the OPC team as our tribal liaison and lead on the issue of ocean acidification and hypoxia. Jenn most recently worked at the NOAA Administrator's Office where she worked as Dr. Sullivan's Special Assistant for Strategic Initiatives. Jenn has a master's from the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her graduate research explored the ecological, chemical, and physical impacts of CO₂-driven acidification of the Great Lakes through modelling, analysis of existing EPA datasets, and community surveys.

In the FY15-16 budget, OPC was given authorization to hire two additional staff members to aid in the management of competitive grants under the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (see below). OPC was also authorized to hire an additional staff member on a limited-term basis for implementation of AB2516 (sea-level rise planning database, see staff memo on this subject). Solicitations for these positions will be released in the near future and we look forward to introducing the Council to these new team members.

Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014: The OPC has been allocated \$30 million from the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1) passed by voters in November 2014. The act authorizes the OPC funding under chapter 6 for the purposes of ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects that also provide benefits for water resources. As with all Proposition 1 funding, the OPC is obligated to distribute these funds on a competitive basis and to solicit public comment on draft guidelines.

¹The present ED report contains descriptions of OPC grants or contracts that have closed since the last OPC meeting. Each grant or contract is described under the header of the OPC strategic plan issue the work is intended to address.

To this end, staff developed draft Proposition 1 grant guidelines and released them on May 21, 2015 with the public comment period open through August 21, 2015. The draft guidelines are available on the OPC website as well as the Natural Resources Agency bond accountability website². OPC staff participated in a multiagency two day meeting with tribal governments and their representatives on Proposition 1 (June 9-10) and held a public meeting in Sacramento on June 24. Two additional public meetings are scheduled for Costa Mesa on July 14 and Eureka on August 11. Details on these meetings can be found on the OPC website. Staff are anticipating bringing a revised version of the guidelines to the Council at the September meeting after incorporating the public comments received.

Strategic Plan Issue Area 1: Science-Based Decision-making

Refugio Oil Spill: OPC is working daily with trustee agency scientists from DFW, NOAA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife that are conducting the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA)³ to ensure their information requests are being met. OPC's investment of \$4 million in the MPA Baseline Monitoring Program (<http://oceanspaces.org/monitoring>) in the region has provided data and created relationships with the scientific community that are proving invaluable in allowing the state and federal trustee agencies to access information across habitats and disciplines to help determine impacts. OPC's \$15 million investment in seafloor and coastal mapping has also proven critical to the Refugio oil spill response. The data has been integrated into Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA) which is a tool that allows responders to quickly and easily view geospatial data. This event demonstrates the value of the data collection efforts and partnerships (<http://oceanspaces.org/priorities/oilspill>) that have been built through our collective efforts around MPAs. For more information on the Refugio oil spill, please see the July 29, 2015 staff memo on this topic.

California Seafloor and Coastal Mapping Program: OPC is actively engaged in a process to determine the utility of the OPC-funded seafloor and coastal mapping data and its related products for state and federal agency partners. To this end, OPC, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have convened a steering committee of state and federal agencies which met for the first time on April 9, 2015. OPC and its partners are surveying more than 50 state and federal employees at key agencies to better understand how staff use the portfolio of data and associated products, and to identify the potential for an expanded user community at these agencies. The survey results will directly inform the next meeting of the steering committee (on August 6, 2015) where the committee will continue to develop future program priorities with an eye towards potential resource availability. The ultimate goal of the steering committee is to develop a 5-10 year vision for the seafloor and coastal mapping program that is cognizant of funding constraints.

I.Strategic Plan Issue Area 2: Climate Change

Executive Order B-30-15 and Implementation of the Safeguarding California Plan: OPC's Executive Director and staff are implementing Executive Order B-30-15 to advance coordinated action on climate adaptation consistent with the state's guiding principles on climate adaptation.

² <http://bondaccountability.resources.ca.gov/p1.aspx>

³ <http://www.refugioresponse.com/go/doc/7258/2542826/Natural-Resource-Damage-Assessment-factsheet>

In its role as coordinator for ocean and coastal policy for the state, OPC's Executive Director and staff have been designated by the California Natural Resources Agency as the sector leads for implementation of the climate adaptation policies of [Governor Brown's Executive Order B-15-30](http://gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=18938) (<http://gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=18938>), issued on April 29, 2015, which includes actions to implement the state's climate adaptation strategy, [Safeguarding California Plan](http://resources.ca.gov/climate/safeguarding/) (<http://resources.ca.gov/climate/safeguarding/>). Please refer to the July 29, 2015 staff memo for more information on this work.

State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise: OPC's Executive Director and staff have been facilitating the State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise to bring together the key state agencies responsible for coastal stewardship, to lead big picture projects and work together on implementation of state agency policies on sea-level rise. Through a contract using OPC funds, coastal climate adaptation expert Dr. Susi Moser facilitated a workshop for the Leadership Group on February 24, 2015 to increase capacity of state agency staff on communication of climate change and to develop a vision of successful coastal adaptation for 2050. To provide a resource for state agencies and stakeholders, OPC is also funding Dr. Moser to write a communications guide for coastal and ocean climate adaptation. The Leadership Group agencies are collaborating on a Humboldt Pilot Project, led by the Coastal Conservancy, to learn from local and regional stakeholders what roles state agencies can play to catalyze innovative action to address sea-level rise.

Coastal and Ocean Working Group of the Climate Action Team (CO-CAT): To encourage state agency action consistent with state policy priorities on coastal climate change, OPC staff convened a meeting of the approximately thirty agencies that are members of the Coastal and Ocean Working Group of the Climate Action Team (CO-CAT) on March 30, 2015. For this meeting and through two other briefings, OPC staff reached out to the lead staff at the State Water Quality Control Board and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards in particular to provide training on key policies and resources and to encourage systematic action on sea-level rise, especially to address wastewater treatment facilities which are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise. Through the CO-CAT, OPC is providing information to state agencies on significant initiatives on coastal and ocean climate adaptation and upcoming opportunities and requests for actions by state agencies, such as contributing to the Sea-level Rise Planning Database (as mandated by AB2516) and implementing the Safeguarding California Plan.

OPC's Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program: The Coastal Commission's Local Coastal Plans provide a key tool for helping communities prepare for sea level rise. In order to jump start the update of these plans to include climate issues OPC has provided \$2.5 million in funding to catalyze local government action to assess vulnerabilities to sea-level rise, coastal storms and erosion and to support local governments in developing land use policies to address these coastal hazards through updates to Local Coastal Programs (LCPs). By funding these grants and collaborating with the Coastal Commission on implementing these projects, OPC is taking action on a recommendation of the Safeguarding California Plan, which recognizes the importance of LCPs as a key tool for addressing sea-level rise. Staff intend to work closely with the Coastal Commission to onboard lessons learned throughout the life of these grants.

Assembly Committee on Coastal Protection Hearing on Sea-level Rise: OPC has been collaborating with Assembly leaders and Natural Resources Agency legislative staff to educate

the legislature on what state agencies and local and regional leaders are doing to take action on sea-level rise and to explore possible pathways for the legislature to support state policy priorities. OPC staff worked closely with Assemblymember Mark Stone to convene the [Assembly Committee for Coastal Protection's hearing on June 9, 2015 on Sea-level Rise](http://coastalprotection.assembly.ca.gov/sealevelrise) (<http://coastalprotection.assembly.ca.gov/sealevelrise>). One of the objectives of this hearing was for members of the State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise to describe how key state agencies are taking action to implement the Safeguarding California Plan and what additional work state agencies could do with more capacity. Consistent with OPC's enabling legislation, OPC staff will continue to communicate with members of the executive and legislative branches of state government to identify changes in law and policy to improve coastal and ocean management of climate change adaptation.

Sea-Level Rise Planning Database (AB2516): In collaboration with the California Natural Resources Agency, the OPC launched a mandated survey to collect information on sea-level rise plans from a variety of entities throughout the state. Results of the survey will be posted by January 1, 2016. More information can be found in the July 29, 2015 staff memo for this item.

West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel: The West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel, a panel of experts from California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, most recently released, [Ocean Acidification Science Needs for Natural Resource Managers of the North American West Coast](http://westcoastoah.org/boehm-et-al/) (<http://westcoastoah.org/boehm-et-al/>). The Panel, convened by the California Ocean Science Trust in 2013, is continuing to develop a series of products that address priority knowledge needs identified by decision-makers. As the group wraps up this fall, these emerging findings and suite of products will be developed and presented in a way that lays the foundation for policy and management next steps. For more information, please see the July 29, 2015 staff memo on this topic.

2.Strategic Plan Issue Area 3: Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems

Sustainable Fisheries: In the December 2014 Executive Director Report, OPC outlined strategies for its role in supporting sustainable fisheries management. The Fisheries Leadership Group was introduced, along with four key strategies for sustainable management of California's fisheries. One of those strategies was to identify opportunities to support fisheries management in support of the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA). To that end, OPC has worked closely with DFW, the Fish and Game Commission (FGC) and the Ocean Science Trust (OST) to compile and prioritize a list of projects that will support revisions and implementation of the MLMA. These projects are coming before the Council for consideration at the July 29, 2015 OPC Meeting.

OPC is uniquely situated to build a strong portfolio of investments for California fisheries management, but to do so in a strategic manner and in a close partnership with the state fishery managers, DFW, FGC and the legislature. In addition, the OPC has continued to build upon the relationship with the OST, which will ensure investments in fisheries related projects are consistent with the latest thinking in academia based on sound science. In order to ensure OPC's investments in fisheries projects are strong, OPC staff has reviewed the past ten years of OPC-funded projects and will use the information learned from those projects to develop strategies

moving forward for future funding cycles. These strategies will be identified in a report, which is expected to be completed fall 2015.

Whale Entanglements: NOAA Fisheries has confirmed that in 2014 20 different whales were entangled in fishing gear along California's coast. At DFW's request, OPC convened several meetings in May and June with NOAA Fisheries, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), the Dungeness Crab Task Force, and non-governmental organizations to discuss the issue and begin to develop potential solutions for reducing whale entanglements.

Marine Protected Areas:

MPA State Leadership Team Breaks New Ground

Secretary of Natural Resources John Laird convened a meeting of the MPA Statewide Leadership Team (Leadership Team) on April 13, 2015. The team welcomed the participation of State Water Board. The Leadership Team's reflects the state's commitment to manage the statewide MPA network across agencies consistent with the vision articulated in the MPA Partnership Plan⁴. A working group of the Leadership Team has developed the MPA Interagency Work Plan which is currently undergoing internal state review and will be presented to the OPC at its September meeting (<http://www.opc.ca.gov/category/meetings/>). This work plan is an expansion of the document described in the Partnership Plan and lays out a prioritized road map agreed on by the Leadership Team that will guide agency work related to MPA management for the next three years. Additional updates on the MPA Statewide Leadership Team are contained in the July 29, 2015 staff memo.

Statewide Signage Project

Since the long-term durability of the statewide MPA network depends on public understanding of and compliance with MPA regulations, OPC has partnered with DFW to install informational signage throughout the coastal zone with the goal of increasing awareness of MPA regulations. Along with DFW, numerous on the ground partners, and our grantee the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (CMSF) we have made significant progress towards the completion of the Statewide Signage Project. The project will be completed in September 2015; additional updates are contained in the July 29, 2015 staff memo on this topic.

Meeting with National Marine Sanctuaries

The National Marine Sanctuaries are our natural partners in protecting our coastal and ocean resources. In an effort to renew and deepen ties, OPC co-hosted a meeting with the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) at the Sanctuary Exploration Center in Santa Cruz on May 29, 2015. In attendance were the superintendents from all four National Marine Sanctuaries in California (Cordell Banks, Gulf of the Farallones, Monterey Bay and Channel Islands), ONMS West Regional Director Bill Douros and OPC's Executive Director Cat Kuhlman. Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird opened the meeting with inspiring words about partnerships and Assemblymember Mark Stone attended the morning session. At this meeting, we created an action list focusing on better integrating state MPA work with Sanctuary

⁴ <http://www.opc.ca.gov/2014/12/adopted-final-version-of-the-california-collaborative-approach-marine-protected-areas-partnership-plan/>

efforts and have committed to holding these meetings biannually to ensure we support this important and mutually beneficial relationship.

Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Master Plan

The DFW is charged with updating the MLPA Master Plan for MPAs for adoption by the Fish and Game Commission. They have been working closely with FGC, OPC, and OST. The last update was in 2008 after the Central Coast MPAs were adopted and prior to the redesign of the North Central, South, and North Coast MPAs. The current update will shift the focus from an emphasis on designing and siting California's MPAs to setting up a statewide framework for effective MPA management using a partnership based approach. Additions to this update include better aligning how the MPA network relates to other state management priorities such as sustainable fisheries, water quality and climate change. The update will outline the process and partners involved in creating and adapting the long-term monitoring program that will be needed to inform adaptive management. DFW anticipates presenting a first draft to the Commission at their December meeting.

MPA Baseline Monitoring Programs

The MPA Baseline Monitoring Program (Program) is proceeding successfully to establish a baseline of the ecological and socioeconomic conditions at the time of implementation of MPAs in each region. The implementation of the Program has been led by Ocean Science Trust in close collaboration with California Sea Grant, DFW, and OPC. A competitive process was administered by California Sea Grant to award \$4 million in each region to agency, academic, tribal and citizen scientists and other local experts. The data collected will be critical in informing the adaptive management of California's MPA network as well as being important to inform other management priorities like climate change adaptation, water quality and sustainable fisheries. Planning to develop a long-term monitoring program based on the needs of adaptive management and informed by the Baseline Monitoring Program is proceeding for the Central (implemented September 2007), North Central (implemented May 2010) and South (implemented January 2012) MPA Regions. Baseline data collection is still ongoing in the North Region (implemented December 2012).

The recently enacted budget for FY 15/16 includes a [\\$2.5 million General Fund](#)⁵ allocation to support critical monitoring that will inform the ongoing management of the statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs) designated under the Marine Life Management Act (MLPA). The OPC has expended \$16 million of bond funds to establish a baseline condition assessment of ecosystem status at the time of implementation of MPAs in each region. Ongoing monitoring of the MPA network, which will be funded partly by the \$2.5 million allocation, will track future changes and evaluate the effectiveness of the network at meeting the six goal of the MLPA (Fish and Game Section 2853 (c)(3)). Successful implementation of the MPA network is a cornerstone of the Administration's ocean resource management strategy. Funds will be administered by OPC using a variety of mechanisms based on priorities developed by the MPA Statewide Leadership Team in collaboration with stakeholders.

⁵ <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/2015-16/Enacted/StateAgencyBudgets/3000/0540/department.html> NOTE: General Fund Allocation also includes \$155,000 to create sea level rise database required by AB 2516 in addition to the \$2.5 million for MPA Monitoring

AB 298

AB 298, which allows officers in the field the discretion to cite MPA violations as either a misdemeanor or an infraction, was signed into law on June 30th and will go into effect on January 1st, 2016.

MPA violations are currently misdemeanor crimes. AB298 will allow DFW officers and other law enforcement agencies the ability to issue violators either a misdemeanor or an infraction level citation. Infractions will enable more officers to combat poaching and illegal fishing in the MPAs off California's coastline by issuing violators with a ticket – akin to a traffic violation – ensuring that lawbreakers are held accountable without placing a burden on the courts. Egregious violators can still be issued a misdemeanor citation and be prosecuted by the District Attorney's Office.

AB 298 passed both the Assembly and the Senate on unanimous votes, and enjoyed widespread support from law enforcement, user groups and environmental organizations including WILDCOAST, Heal the Bay, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, San Diego Council of Divers, The Fish and Game Wardens Association, and The Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. Calla Allison, MPA CIP Director, is teaming up with CDFW LED to host county based MPA officer trainings that will communicate this new tool to local law enforcement officers.

3.Strategic Plan Issue Area 4: Coastal and Ocean Impacts from Land-Based Sources

Coastal Sediment Management: Many watershed and shoreline erosion and sediment supply problems caused by human activities can be minimized through the development and implementation of an approach known as regional sediment management (RSM). The California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW), co-chaired by the Natural Resources Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), is developing and implementing the California Coastal Sediment Master Plan (SMP) to foster a regional approach for the entire state. The SMP is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2016. Current work underway includes development of coastal regional sediment plans ((Regional Plans) for Humboldt Bay, San Francisco Bay, San Francisco open coast, San Luis Obispo region, and Northern Monterey Bay. The Governor's budget includes \$635K in funding for CRSMP development for the Sonoma-Marin coast and environmental documentation for several already completed CRSMPs. Officials from USACE's Institute for Water Resources have been working with the state over last few months and will continue to do so throughout the year to develop strategies for SMP implementation beginning in 2017. SMP is not one document rather it is a body of work consisting primarily of three types of work products: 1) Regional Plans, 2) informational and scientific reports, and 3) computer-based tools. To date, the state has provided \$7.0 million in funds from a variety of sources for SMP development and to match an equal investment by the USACE.

Closed grants within Coastal and Ocean Impacts from Land-Based Sources

Forecasts and Projections of Environmental and Anthropogenic Impacts on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) (CNRA Agreement #0-10-010): Domoic acid (DA) poisoning in marine mammal and bird populations and the threat of Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning in humans is

considered to be the leading HAB and a key conservation issue for the West Coast. This project developed a real-time HAB forecasting system to inform when and where toxic blooms are occurring to better inform management decisions. This project was successful in developing a model which is hosted through CeNCOOS and is used routinely by shellfish growers, bird and mammal stranding groups, researchers, and members of the public. In the last 6 months of the project the group received funding from the NASA Ecological Forecasting Program to transition the model developed as part of this project to NOAA. By the end of 2018, they anticipate having a fully operational model maintained at the federal level. OPC's investment was crucial to the successful development of a tool to help resource managers forecast and manage harmful algal blooms on the west coast, an issue that is of significant importance to the State.

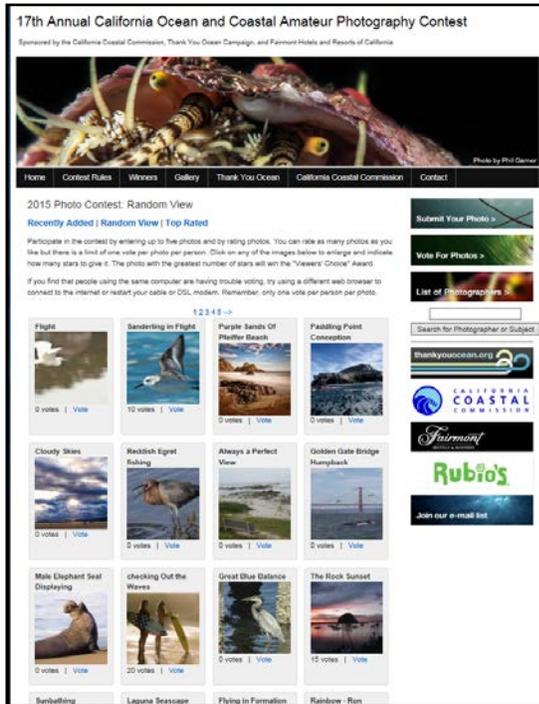
4.Strategic Plan Issue Area 5: Existing and emerging ocean uses

Desalination and Once Through Cooling: On May 6th, 2015, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) approved an amendment to the state's Water Quality Control Plan for the Ocean Waters of California (Ocean Plan) to address effects associated with the construction and operation of seawater desalination facilities. The amendment mandates that the manager of mitigation fees consult with the OPC as well as other state agencies. OPC have and will continue to serve as an information resource for the State Water Board and associated regional boards. This language is mirrored in a SWRCB draft resolution concerning Once Through Cooling.

Related Initiatives

West Coast Ocean Partnership: Guided by a commitment to improve and expand tribal engagement in state discussions of ocean health, OPC and the broader West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health supported the first West Coast Ocean Summit this January in Portland, OR. One hundred fifty four attendees representing state, federal, and tribal governments, including 39 representatives from 17 California tribal governments, gathered to discuss regional ocean governance structures and shared ocean priorities. Over the three days of the summit, participants identified the need for a new, broader regional partnership that explicitly includes both federally and non-federally recognized tribes, and state governments pledged to better support tribal inclusion in planning and decision-making. The meeting culminated with a convergence statement laying out a path forward for this new ocean partnership. OPC is supporting the formation of this new regional collaborative body, and along with other state and federal partners will refocus our efforts from participation in the WCGA to this new regional ocean partnership. Many of the attendees at the West Coast Ocean Summit reconvened June 30-July 1 in Oakland, CA to discuss a strategic framework for the partnership. The structure, process, and regional priorities of the partnership were discussed and the group is eager to build on these discussions throughout the summer and early fall.

California Thank You Ocean campaign: The campaign has been enjoying a busy summer with the launch of the 17th Annual California Coast and Ocean Amateur Photography Contest and gearing up for the California State Fair. The photo contest (<http://mycoastalphoto.com/>) started on June 6th and is sponsored by Thank You Ocean, the California Coastal Commission, and the



Fairmont Hotels of California. Entry is free and open to all amateur photographers, with a deadline to submit photos by July 17, 2015. The contest features photographs that reflect the importance that the coast and ocean has for California residents and the role that the Natural Resources Agency, Ocean Protection Council and Coastal Commission have played in preserving coastal and marine resources.

In addition, for a second year in a row, the Thank You Ocean campaign will be partnering with the California State Fair and Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps to raise ocean awareness through the Beach Buddy Adventure Exhibit from July 10-26, 2015. Similar to last year, the exhibit anticipates over 135,000 visitors passing through the exhibit to learn about marine debris, ocean acidification, invasive species, fisheries decline, and oil spills.