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October 7, 2016

John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
Via electronic submission to COPCpublic@resources.ca.gov

Dear Secretary Laird and Members of the Ocean Protection Council,

We write to express strong support for the suite of ocean acidification and hypoxia projects under consideration at the October 17th council meeting for funding from Proposition 84. These projects will help coordinate and facilitate research and action to address ocean acidification and hypoxia.

Our ocean absorbs approximately a third of the carbon dioxide produced by human activity, altering its chemistry and leading to ocean acidification (OA). In addition, many ocean areas become abnormally deficient in oxygen, a condition called hypoxia. OA and hypoxia affect our ocean in a range of ways that put ocean ecosystems and ocean-dependent industries at risk.

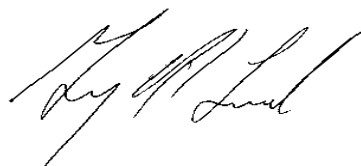
The West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel (Panel) this year released a report concluding that OA and hypoxia will grow in intensity over time, particularly along the West Coast. The Panel outlined a number of recommendations to address these issues, and the California Legislature passed two bills (AB 2139, Williams, and SB 1363, Monning) that will implement several of the Panel's recommendations. The projects identified and recommended for funding here will help take the next step on furthering the Panel's recommendations.

The six recommended projects will advance these recommendations in several important areas, by improving our understanding of the role of seagrass in ameliorating OA, designing water quality criteria, providing improved modeling to understand and address the impacts of OA and hypoxia, and assessing the role and effectiveness of MPAs under ocean change. These investments will help inform effective policy and management of California's coasts and ocean in a time of global change.

We appreciate the remarkable work done to date by OPC, OST, the OST-SAT, other state agencies, the Legislature, and the Governor's office in recognizing the importance of this issue to the state, and in prioritizing it for action. The projects recommended for funding today will provide important

information to allow the state to continue to be a global leader in addressing the impending effects of climate change.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George H. Leonard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "George" being the most prominent.

George H. Leonard
Chief Scientist
Ocean Conservancy