















### **1. New Priority Issues highlighted reflect local and emerging needs regarding ocean health.**

We applaud OPC for offering more clarity with respect to priority issues to incentivize the types of projects that are most needed. First, it is helpful to clearly list OPC's interest in connecting projects to marine managed areas, including the MPA network, and to areas of special biological significance (ASBS). Projects that leverage the state's ongoing investment in both networks can yield more benefits by building on science-based decisions about where to focus protection, restoration, and management efforts.

We are also happy to see the detail incorporated into the descriptions of Coastal and Ocean Water Quality Impacts issues. Reducing pollution and contaminants, including from stormwater, non-point discharges, and agricultural runoff, is called out as a priority issue area. We are also very happy to see the addition of projects to improve ability to detect and respond to Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). HABs have emerged as a key ocean health issue in recent years, with significant implications for human health, marine life, and the fishing economy.

Likewise, we continue to support projects to address ocean acidification (OA) and hypoxia, which have become increasingly evident in California coastal waters, where we are seeing OA impacts outpace other places. We strongly support additional investment in the projects recommended by the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Panel Report.<sup>1</sup>

### **2. Improvements to application process make it more streamlined and accessible to all communities.**

It is critical that diverse organizations and entities—including those representing disadvantaged communities—have access to and are supported in obtaining Proposition 1 funding. Because small community organizations often do not have the same capacity and experience as larger entities, we had previously requested that OPC to limit time and resources associated with drafting applications. In order to accomplish this, we recommended expanding consultation opportunities outside of the formal process and to streamline the application process where possible. OPC has now removed the LOI stage from the process, which will allow for a more streamlined process for all applicants.

We also support OPC's effort to ensure that the minimum project budget amount of \$250,000 does not create a barrier to underserved communities and small organizations. The revised Guidelines include a limited number of smaller projects with a lower minimum grant amount of \$50,000 that will be made available for disadvantaged communities and pilot projects. The Guidelines also encourage small grants applicants to consult with OPC staff in advance, which can further support disadvantaged communities in accessing these grants.

The revised Guidelines also make clear a "strong preference for projects that are: innovative; demonstrate new approaches or solutions to ocean and coastal problems; employ community-based approaches; and/or address important unmet needs or gaps." Additionally, the OPC prioritizes projects benefitting disadvantaged communities, as defined by California Water Code §79505.5a: "Disadvantaged community is a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income." We strongly support these additions.

### **3. Updated scoring criteria incentivize multi-benefit projects and projects that provide benefits to disadvantaged communities.**

The revised Guidelines include revisions that better ensure that multi-benefit projects should be prioritized for Proposition 1 funding to achieve the best possible outcomes for water quality, ecosystem health, and all

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<sup>1</sup> West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel. *Major Findings, Recommendations, and Actions*. April 2016. Available here: <http://westcoastoah.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/OAH-Panel-Key-Findings-Recommendations-and-Actions-4.4.16-FINAL.pdf>.



Californians. The revised Guidelines better reflect the full spectrum of multiple benefits listed by referencing the issues described in the OPC Priority Issues chart, and now awards a greater number of points for projects that afford multiple benefits. We also support OPC's offering points for projects that utilize green infrastructure, natural systems, or systems that mimic natural systems, which will enhance natural resilience along the coast and in the ocean environment.

We strongly support OPC's inclusion of points for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, as described above.

Sincerely,



Sara Aminzadeh, Executive Director  
California Coastkeeper Alliance

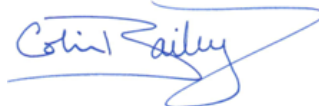
/s/  
Jonathan Nelson, Policy Director  
Community Water Center



Phoebe Seaton, Co-Founder & Co-Director  
Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability



Jennifer Clary, Water Programs Manager  
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Colin Bailey, Executive Director  
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water



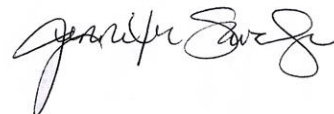
Marce Gutiérrez-Graudiņš, Founder / Director  
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