

**Proposed Resolution of the California Ocean Protection Council to Adopt and Advance a
Vision for California’s Coastal Future
July 25, 2018**

WHEREAS, On April 26, 2017, the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) adopted a resolution¹ to update the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance Document, in coordination with the California Natural Resources Agency and other state agency partners, to reflect the best available science and projections of sea-level rise; and

WHEREAS, On March 14, 2018, OPC adopted an update to the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance Document, which incorporates the findings of a comprehensive scientific review of sea level rise science undertaken by OPC’s Science Advisory Team in 2017², along with recommendations for sea-level rise planning and adaptation that consider social equity, protection of coastal habitat and public access, and the unique characteristics, constraints and values of existing water-dependent infrastructure, ports and Public Trust uses, among other things; and

WHEREAS, Multiple federal, state and local agencies make planning, permitting and funding decisions to address impacts of sea-level rise along the coast. A collaborative effort among agencies is necessary to ensure coordinated action to protect coastal habitats in response to rising seas.

WHEREAS, In 2018, the Natural Resources Agency released its fourth edition of the California Climate Adaptation Strategy (Safeguarding California Plan)³, which provides a roadmap of climate adaptation actions for state agencies to take to address climate change, including actions to protect and enhance the adaptive capacity of coastal and marine ecosystems in the face of sea-level rise and coastal change; and

WHEREAS, Led by OPC staff, California Ocean Science Trust staff, and a working group of OPC’s Science Advisory Team, California’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment (Assessment) includes a first ever chapter on California’s ocean and coast, aggregating research projects of the Assessment relating to the ocean and coast and outlining the state of climate science, projections for the future, and approaches to prepare for change; and

¹ Ocean Protection Council Resolution to Update Sea-Level Rise Guidance
http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20170426/ADOPTED-SLR-Resolution-20170426.pdf

² “Risings Seas in California” Report
<http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/docs/rising-seas-in-california-an-update-on-sea-level-rise-science.pdf>

³ 2018 Safeguarding California Plan
<http://resources.ca.gov/docs/climate/safeguarding/update2018/safeguarding-california-plan-2018-update.pdf>

WHEREAS, As mandated by Senate Bill 1363⁴ and recommended by the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel⁵, OPC is actively exploring the use of submerged aquatic vegetation and other nature-based actions as tools to reduce ocean acidification⁶ and its effects, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance carbon sequestration as prescribed by the Natural and Working Lands Sector⁷ to implement Assembly Bill 32⁸; and

WHEREAS, California's coastal habitats provide several additional important ecosystem benefits and services, including filtration of agricultural runoff and pollutants, nursery habitats for fish, support to commercial fisheries, buffers for seaside communities against wave and storm surge, carbon storage and sequestration and recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive, statewide habitat assessment by the California State Coastal Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, "*Conserving California's Coastal Habitats: A Legacy and A Future with Sea Level Rise*," found that 55% of current habitat by area is highly vulnerable to five feet of sea-level rise⁹. That includes 60% of California's iconic beaches, 58% of rocky intertidal habitat, 58% of coastal marshes, and 55% of tidal flats. In addition, sea-level rise will further stress populations of 39 rare, threatened, or endangered species, and 41,000 acres of public conservation lands are projected to be drowned by subtidal waters. The study presents a blueprint for conservation of coastal habitat in the face of sea-level rise, through which it is possible to have as much coastal habitat statewide as there is today with five feet of sea-level rise, but only with concerted, coordinated and sustained action; and

WHEREAS, California's Legislature has made considerable investments to enhance resilience of our coast and ocean to changing conditions. For example, on July 2, 2018, an Assembly joint resolution was passed¹⁰ that affirms the Legislature's support for science-based action to conserve, protect, restore, and effectively manage California's coastal and ocean ecosystems, which the state holds in trust for the people of California, in the face of challenges presented by climate change, ocean acidification, hypoxia, and other changing ocean conditions, and would urge federal and state government entities to take specified actions to preserve the state's ocean and coastal resources as well as protect disadvantaged and low-income communities impacted by these challenges; and

⁴ Senate Bill 1363

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB1363

⁵ West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel

<http://westcoastoaah.org/westcoastpanel/>

⁶ "*Emerging Understanding of Eelgrass and Kelp as an Ocean Acidification Management Tool in California*"

<http://www.oceansciencetrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/OA-SAV-emerging-findings-report-1.30.18.pdf>

⁷ Natural and Working Lands Sector

<https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/natandworkinglands/natandworkinglands.htm>

⁸ Assembly Bill 32

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/05-06/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ab_32_bill_20060927_chaptered.pdf

⁹ "*Conserving California's Coastal Habitats: A Legacy and A Future with Sea Level Rise*"

https://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/Marine/crr/library/Documents/TNC_SCC_CoastalAssessment_hi%20snql.pdf

¹⁰ Assembly Joint Resolution AJR-47

http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AJR47

WHEREAS, The Global Climate Action Summit¹¹ will bring together leaders across the world this September in San Francisco to showcase their achievements and make renewed commitments to put the world on track to prevent the most serious impacts of climate change. Given the central role the ocean plays in regulating climate and absorbing greenhouse gas emissions and the importance of healthy coastal and ocean ecosystems in safeguarding global populations from climate change impacts, ocean-related actions will be integrated throughout Summit programming and events. Oceans and coasts will be formally addressed and discussed through one of the five challenge areas of the Summit, the Land and Ocean Stewardship challenge; and

WHEREAS, the Ocean Protection Council has awarded over \$10 million in grants over the past five years to advance understanding of and provide strategies to best respond and adapt to climate impacts to California's ocean, coasts, and coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, Ocean Protection Council currently has designated funding from Proposition 68, Proposition 1 and the California Environmental License Plate Fund to advance climate adaptation and resilience in the ocean and along the coast with the use of best available science and implementation of recent and innovative strategies and tools.

NOW, THEREFORE, the California Ocean Protection Council hereby:

RESOLVES that OPC will adopt the following coastal vision for the protection of coastal habitats: *In science-guided, collective action, we will maintain and enhance California's coastal habitats in the face of sea level rise, other climate change-induced challenges, and development, ensuring a protected coast for future generations to enjoy, replete with as much or more habitat and wildlife, as well as social, economic, and recreational benefits, as we have today;* and

FURTHER RESOLVES that OPC reaffirms its mission to protect, conserve and maintain healthy coastal and ocean ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. OPC will commit to the following actions to advance the coastal vision:

- (a) Use the coastal vision to guide ongoing and future policy recommendations by OPC on sea-level rise adaptation and coastal habitat protection and restoration;
- (b) Support science-driven collective action to achieve the coastal vision at the local, state, federal, and international levels;
- (c) Take a leadership role among California state agencies in developing and implementing strategies to ensure that natural habitats and the values they provide are considered in permitting, planning and investment decisions;
- (d) Utilize all the financial tools available to OPC in furtherance of the coastal vision, such as through discretionary and competitive grant funding; and

¹¹ Global Climate Action Summit
<http://globalclimateactionsummit.org/>

FURTHER RESOLVES to call on California state and local agencies to adopt the coastal vision and make commitments to advance the coastal vision to be elevated at public stages, such as the upcoming Global Climate Action Summit.