

Open Letter to the California Ocean Protection Council

June 15, 2021

Dear Secretary Crowfoot and fellow OPC Councilmembers;

First and foremost, thank you for your commitment in protecting the great Pacific Ocean that creates our beautiful California Coast.

A proper running democracy has its roots in good science and is made up of a body of individuals whose minds hunger for knowledge and hearts care for others. Good science leads to quality policy making which strengthens our democracy; as such these policies create opportunities for such individuals. Some of the principal guidelines directing the OPC include; recognizing the interconnection of the land and the sea, and enhancing scientific understanding including monitoring and data gathering. With recent data showing an unprecedented rise in the acceleration of atmospheric Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) one can argue that there needs to be a three-pronged approach of land, sea and air in ensuring the health of our coastal ecosystems.

With such a changing environment the OPC is faced with a considerable and formidable challenge. However, these challenges can lead to innovative opportunities. For example, the creation of egalitarian policies where citizen scientist job opportunities are created through grants stimulating a collaboration with academia, researchers and educators. These actions would lead to: public awareness of local environmental issues and concerns, help fill in data gaps necessary for research and development of future groundwork, and promote environmental justice actions locally. With the new administration in Washington set on policies to reduce greenhouse gases and address the climate crisis, the OPC is once again in a position to set an example by showing how ocean protection, economic prosperity and environmental justice could coexist in an oceanic policy.

A few years ago, at an OPC meeting two young women spoke at public comment regarding the urgency in addressing the climate crisis, 'our house is on fire, please don't take our future away from us' was their cry. The challenges before us are great and are exacerbated by lack of political will and willful ignorance marinated in pride. We live on one planet, we are of one humanity, we are all called to be good stewards of where we call home so our kids and their kids could enjoy what we ourselves have done.

Once again, thank you and your wonderful staff for sharing your blessings in helping heal our oceans.

Richard E.T. Sadowski

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