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Updating California's Sea-level Rise Guidance

To support sea-level rise preparedness in California, the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) is partnering with Ocean Science Trust (OST) and a scientific Task Force to update California's Sea-Level Rise Guidance with the best available science and updated planning and decision-making guidance.

Why is California updating the guidance?

In 2018, OPC released the *2018 Update of the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance*,¹ which provided policy direction for state agencies to plan for sea-level rise. At that time, the 2018 guidance reflected the most current science on sea-level rise. In recognition of continued advancements in scientific understanding of sea-level rise, OPC committed to updating the guidance every five (5) years. Since 2018, the scientific community has made significant improvements in its ability to understand and project future sea-level rise, with two recent efforts paving the way: the *IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC AR6)*² and the *2022 Sea-Level Rise Technical Report (Federal Tech Report)*³. The IPCC AR6 demonstrated that previous projections of extreme sea-level rise (i.e., H++ scenario) are now less plausible, but that there is an increased certainty of sea-level rise to 2050. The Federal Tech Report then integrated this knowledge into actionable sea-level rise scenarios to better support and guide sea-level rise decision-making and planning.

To take advantage of this progress, OPC and OST are convening a scientific Task Force to update the scientific foundation for statewide guidance based on these two recent efforts. To learn more about the Task Force, please visit [OST's website](#).

What will be included in the updated guidance? Who can use the guidance?

OPC will deliver an updated statewide guidance that includes: (1) an updated scientific understanding of statewide sea-level rise and related coastal impacts (e.g., flooding); and (2) practical and pragmatic

1 2018 Update of the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance. Available here:

https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20180314/Item3_Exhibit-A_OPC_sea-level_rise_Guidance-rd3.pdf

2 IPCC Sixth Assessment Report. Available here:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/chapter/chapter-9>

3 2022 Sea-Level Rise Technical Report. Available here:

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/hazards/sealevelrise/sealevelrise-tech-report.html>

approaches for state agencies, local governments, and communities to use this new science across their respective planning efforts.

The updated guidance will provide updated estimates of future sea-level rise from now until 2150 with clear instructions for how to incorporate these new numbers across various planning, permitting, investment, and further decisions. The updated guidance is being developed for anyone (e.g., policymakers, planners and consultants, nonprofits, NGOs, etc.) at the local, regional, and state level within California who has a need to use sound sea-level rise science.

How can I get involved?

The updated guidance is anticipated to be presented to the Ocean Protection Council for consideration at its public meeting on December 12th, 2023. Before the December Council meeting, OPC and OST will provide a range of engagement opportunities so that the public and all stakeholders can be involved with and stay informed on this effort. OPC will also initiate formal tribal consultation and host tribal listening sessions to solicit feedback from tribal governments.

In late summer, OPC is anticipating launching a 30-day public comment period. During this period, OPC will welcome written comments and feedback. In addition, OPC and OST will convene a series of public engagement activities (e.g., public workshops and/or virtual listening sessions) to provide additional information about the content within the guidance, and how to use the guidance going forward. Details about these events will be shared broadly in advance.

It is important to OPC that any member of the public who wishes to engage in this effort is able to. Members of the public are also welcome to attend and/or comment during the December Council meeting. OPC is committed to ensuring their public meetings are accessible and members of the public can participate by providing written and oral comment on Council matters. For information on public participation in OPC virtual meetings, please see [instructions here](#).

Contact Us

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Key Resources

To receive timeline updates on future public engagement opportunities and events, please visit: <https://www.opc.ca.gov/news/climate-change/sea-level-rise>

To learn more about the role of OST and the scientific Task Force, please visit: [https://www.oceansciencetrust.org/projects/sea-level rise-update2023](https://www.oceansciencetrust.org/projects/sea-level-rise-update2023)