



Staff Recommendation

December 9, 2024

Item 4

Action Item:

**Consideration and Approval of Disbursement of Funds for Senate Bill 1
Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program**

Megan Williams, Coastal Adaptation Program Manager

Recommended Action: Authorization to disburse up to \$3,521,568 to various grantees who submitted successful applications to the Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program (SB 1 Grant Program) for sea level rise (SLR) adaptation planning or implementation projects, as follows:

- 4.1 Up to \$677,610 to the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District for the “Sea Level Rise Community Visioning & Vulnerability Assessment in the Eel River Estuary”
- 4.2 Up to \$1,000,000 to the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors for the “Los Angeles County Regional Coastal Strategic Adaptation Plan”
- 4.3 Up to \$1,500,000 to the City and County of San Francisco for the “San Francisco Bay Shoreline Adaptation Plan”
- 4.4 Up to \$343,958 to the Yurok Tribe for the “Yurok Tribe Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Project”

Location: Statewide

Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives: Goal 1: Safeguard Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Communities in the Face of Climate Change; Objective 1.1: Build Resiliency to Sea-Level Rise, Coastal Storms, Erosion and Flooding

Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:

The SB 1 Grant Program meets many of the strategies and actions outlined in Goal 1 of OPC’s [Equity Plan](#), which is to establish and implement more equitable and sustainable community engagement and funding methods to expand and enhance opportunities for ocean and coastal projects, policies, and research. According to the [SLR Adaptation Criteria](#), each project, regardless of phase, must include outreach, education, and community engagement, especially to environmental justice (EJ) communities and tribes, as part of the project’s scope. Equity and EJ benefits include community engagement, locally driven adaptation priorities, improved coastal habitat, and safer coastal access.

Findings and Resolution:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibit(s), OPC hereby finds that:

1. The proposed projects are consistent with the purposes of Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, the California Ocean Protection Act;
2. The proposed projects are consistent with the Budget Act of 2022 which included a \$37.5 million Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund appropriation for implementation of Chapter 236 of the Statutes of 2021 (SB 1); and
3. The proposed projects are not ‘legal projects’ that trigger the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code section, section 15378.

Staff further recommends that OPC adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“OPC hereby approves the authorization to disburse up to \$3,521,568 to various grantees who submitted successful applications to the Senate Bill 1 Sea-Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program for sea level rise adaptation planning or implementation projects, as follows:

- Up to \$677,610 to the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District
- Up to \$1,000,000 to the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors
- Up to \$1,500,000 to the City and County of San Francisco
- Up to \$343,958 to the Yurok Tribe

This authorization is subject to the condition that prior to disbursement of funds, each grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Director of the OPC detailed work plans, schedules, staff requirements, budgets, and the names of any contractors intended to be used to

complete the projects, as well as discrete deliverables that can be produced in intervals to ensure the projects are on target for successful completion. All projects will be developed under a shared understanding of process, management, and delivery.”

Executive Summary:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council approve the disbursement of up to \$3,521,568 to fund four projects submitted by local, regional, and tribal governments that successfully met the requirements of the Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program (SB 1 Grant Program) and will result in sea level rise (SLR) adaptation planning or implementation projects. In August of 2023, [OPC approved](#) the disbursement of up to \$95.9 million for the SB 1 Grant Program to fund SLR adaptation planning or implementation projects.

The overall goal of the SB 1 Grant Program is to provide funding for coastal communities to develop consistent SLR adaptation plans and projects to build resilience to SLR along the entire coast of California and San Francisco Bay. To achieve this goal, the SB 1 Grant Program offers two tracks of funding: one for pre-planning and planning phases (Track One), and one for the project and implementation phase (Track Two). Track One (projects in the Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning Phases) opened for proposal submission in December of 2023, and accepts proposals on a non-competitive, rolling, quarterly basis, provided the proposals satisfy the program requirements. Track Two proposals (Implementation Project Phase) will be accepted through a competitive process starting in mid-2025, subject to availability of funding. However, recognizing the importance of funding timely implementation projects, OPC is accepting the submission of Track Two Letters of Intent (LOI) before the Track Two solicitation is launched to advance urgent projects that address near-term SLR threats.

The total amount requested across all four projects is \$3,521,568. These projects cover a variety of critical areas, including pre-planning, data collection, detailed adaptation planning, and a sector-specific adaptation plan focused on Tribal Cultural Resources to address vulnerabilities unique to culturally significant sites. All proposals were reviewed by OPC staff, in collaboration with either California Coastal Commission (CCC) or San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) staff, depending on the project area location. Proposals were reviewed for adherence to the [SLR Adaptation Criteria](#) and the evaluation criteria set forth within the solicitation. This resulted in the third set of projects recommended for funding under this program to meet the foundational purpose of equipping California’s coastal communities with robust, consistent, and comprehensive SLR adaptation plans to build resilience against the impacts of SLR and ensure that both local and regional planning and adaptation efforts are well-coordinated and consistently advanced statewide.

Additionally, OPC is developing new funding guidance to support California Native American tribes in developing or informing sea level rise adaptation plans with information specific to tribal cultural resources. Expected in early 2025, this funding guidance will provide tribes the opportunity to evaluate and plan for the impacts of SLR on sacred lands, burial grounds, and other culturally significant areas. This information can help empower tribes to engage effectively with local jurisdictions, ensuring tribal concerns and priorities are integrated into broader SLR planning in a culturally appropriate and impactful manner.

Track 1 (Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning) Project Summaries:

4.1 Sea Level Rise Community Visioning & Vulnerability Assessment in the Eel River Estuary

Project Summary:

The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD) collaborates with landowners, tribes, and governmental partners to address resource concerns, particularly in the Eel River Estuary, and seeks to develop a SLR Vulnerability Assessment through this project. The Eel River Estuary, California’s third-largest estuary located in Humboldt County, supports sensitive fish and wildlife and is home to a significant coastal population, including tribal members, ranchers, dairy operators, small business owners, and residents. This area, characterized by subsided working lands that are protected by aging levees and tide gates, faces risks from flooding and SLR. Landowners are seeking assistance from HCRCD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to address this failing infrastructure. If not addressed, the failure of these systems could critically impact agricultural lands and communities, highlighting the urgent need for SLR planning in the region. This project aims to enhance local understanding of SLR impacts and support SLR planning through a Community Visioning process that will inform a Vulnerability Assessment rooted in community priorities and best available science. It focuses on engaging with community members and tribal stakeholders and collecting and evaluating existing data. The findings will support County of Humboldt’s SLR adaptation planning, helping to protect and prepare Eel River Estuary and local communities for future flooding challenges.

Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:

This project prioritizes the needs of severely disadvantaged communities, identified through the [California Disadvantaged Communities Mapping Tool](#). These frontline communities face increasing risks from SLR, including frequent flooding, saltwater intrusion, and infrastructure degradation. The project enhances equity by ensuring broad participation in its Community Visioning process, including input from tribal stakeholders such as the Wiyot Tribe and Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria.

Key efforts include multilingual outreach, ensuring accessibility for non-English speakers, and specialized workshops to build community understanding of SLR risks and adaptive strategies. The project further integrates traditional ecological knowledge through consultation with California Native American tribes to inform culturally sensitive planning. By fostering a participatory process, the project aims to empower the community to shape their resilience strategies and improve overall preparedness for climate impacts.

About the Grantee:

The HCRCD has a long history of collaboration with local landowners, tribal entities, and government agencies to address environmental challenges in the Eel River Estuary. The HCRCD is well-versed in resource conservation and sustainable land management, playing a pivotal role in balancing ecological restoration with agricultural needs.

HCRCD's experience includes managing large-scale, multi-benefit restoration projects in the estuary, demonstrating its capacity for coordinating complex initiatives. These projects, such as the Salt River Restoration and Cannibal Island efforts, have strengthened HCRCD's ability to leverage partnerships and utilize cutting-edge scientific data. Their ongoing collaboration with the County of Humboldt underscores their leadership in advancing comprehensive SLR adaptation strategies to protect both the natural environment and the livelihoods of local communities.

Project Timeline:

This project will be completed over two years.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$677,610 to the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District for the Sea Level Rise Community Visioning & Vulnerability Assessment in the Eel River Estuary.

4.2 Los Angeles County Regional Coastal Strategic Adaptation Plan

Project Summary:

The Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors (LACDBH) will advance regional SLR adaptation planning and resiliency by developing a coalition of stakeholders, conducting beach profile surveys, and preparing a regional, strategic adaptation plan to facilitate shoreline management across multiple jurisdictions encompassing 45 miles of world-renowned coastline. The proposed Los Angeles County Regional Coastal Strategic Adaptation Plan (RCSAP) will build on the momentum generated by previous SLR vulnerability assessments and resiliency plans in Los

Angeles County. The RCSAP will explore and formalize a preferred coalition structure, and collaboratively plan for SLR adaptation projects to build resilient beaches for coastal residents and visitors directly impacted by SLR, as well as inland communities who rely on public beaches for respite from increasingly frequent extreme heat events. When completed, the Los Angeles County RCSAP will provide the foundation for coastal resilience, informed by current science, and implementation of SLR adaptation measures vetted through intentional regional collaboration and community engagement achieving long term coastal resilience in Los Angeles County for generations to come.

Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:

The RCSAP will enhance equity and environmental justice by preserving access to public beaches for diverse communities, particularly inland disadvantaged populations who rely on these spaces as vital respite areas from extreme heat events. According to [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#), Los Angeles County contains 50% of California’s most disadvantaged census tracts (defined as those in the top 25% statewide, or scoring above the 75th percentile), where residents experience limited park access, high urban heat exposure, and elevated health risks. The RCSAP aims to protect these communities' access to safe, low-cost recreational opportunities along the coast.

LACDBH also intends to actively engage California Native American tribal communities and organizations to incorporate their perspectives into the adaptation planning process. The initiative prioritizes community-driven planning through workshops, surveys, and stakeholder meetings that amplify the voices of tribal and historically marginalized communities. These efforts align with statewide equity goals, ensuring that future coastal resilience projects reflect community priorities and foster sustainable, inclusive adaptation strategies.

About the Grantee:

The LACDBH manages 16 County-operated beaches along 45 miles of California’s coastline. These beaches are vital to the region, providing recreation, economic benefits, and environmental value. LACDBH has a strong track record in shoreline management and advancing regional coastal resilience, including the completed [2023 Coastal Resilience Study](#) and the ongoing feasibility studies for Living Shoreline demonstration projects.

LACDBH’s leadership in regional planning is further strengthened by widespread local support. The project includes support from the California Coastal Commission, California State Parks, and the cities of El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles, Redondo Beach, Santa Monica, and Torrance. These entities have committed to working collaboratively within the proposed coalition to address shared challenges posed by SLR. This regional commitment underscores LACDBH’s ability to foster

partnerships and deliver a unified approach to coastal adaptation, ensuring a resilient future for California’s coastline.

Project Timeline:

This project will be completed over two years.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$1,000,000 to the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors for the Los Angeles County Regional Coastal Strategic Adaptation Plan. This project includes leveraged non-state funds of \$100,000 for a project total of \$1,100,000.

4.3 San Francisco Bay Shoreline Adaptation Plan

Project Summary:

The City and County of San Francisco (the City) seeks SB 1 Grant Program funds to complete an equitable, actionable, and adaptive San Francisco Bay Shoreline Adaptation Plan that addresses SLR. Notwithstanding extensive prior work, such as the City’s completed Waterfront Flood Study, significant areas of the City’s Bay shoreline lack planning for adaptation that accounts for projected levels of SLR. The project’s primary objective is to advance the planning for vulnerable areas, including updating past assessments and plans with current science. The resulting plan will include additional community engagement, new data, such as groundwater inundation risks, and incorporate additional adaptation strategies tailored to local needs to comply with Senate Bill 272 (Laird, 2023). The project will be managed by the San Francisco Planning Department (SF Planning) in close collaboration with the City’s Climate SF program, other City agencies, interested parties, and community-based organizations (CBOs). Project benefits include improved coordinated adaptation planning, climate resilience, better protected critical infrastructure, and enhanced equity for vulnerable Bay shoreline neighborhoods.

Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:

The San Francisco Bay Shoreline Adaptation Plan will focus on advancing equity and climate resilience for San Francisco’s most vulnerable communities. The City’s EJ communities, identified through tools like [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#) and its [Environmental Justice Communities Map](#), are primarily located in neighborhoods such as Bayview, South of Market, and the Financial District. These areas face heightened risks from SLR, including flooding, groundwater inundation, and infrastructure vulnerabilities.

The project prioritizes inclusive, community-driven planning, with dedicated outreach integrated in the project. A core component of the project involves engaging community-based organizations (CBOs) and amplifying the voices of historically marginalized residents. The City will leverage its existing relationships and establish new partnerships with local CBOs to ensure comprehensive representation throughout the project. Additionally, the project acknowledges the ancestral lands of the Ramaytush Ohlone and will engage tribal communities through established CBO partnerships to integrate their perspectives into the planning process. By incorporating social vulnerability data and prioritizing equity, the project aims to reduce disproportionate climate impacts on disadvantaged communities while enhancing public access to the Bay shoreline.

About the Grantee:

The City and County of San Francisco, through its Planning Department and the [ClimateSF](#) program, has a well-established track record in climate resilience and SLR adaptation planning. Previous initiatives include the completed 2020 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Consequences Assessment, the Islais Creek Southeast Mobility and Adaptation Strategy, and the ongoing Waterfront Coastal Flood Study. These efforts demonstrate the City’s capability to manage complex, multidisciplinary projects and foster collaboration across agencies and stakeholders.

The City’s approach emphasizes regional cooperation and community engagement. The City’s Technical Advisory Committee will include representatives from local, regional, and state entities such as the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), California State Parks, and San Mateo County. These partnerships, combined with the City’s established expertise in equitable planning, position it to deliver a comprehensive San Francisco Bay Shoreline Adaptation Plan that protects critical infrastructure, enhances public access, and ensures long-term resilience for its diverse communities.

Project Timeline:

This project will be completed over two years.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$1,500,000 to the City and County of San Francisco for the San Francisco Bay Shoreline Adaptation Plan. This project includes leveraged non-state funds of \$250,000 for a project total of \$1,750,000.

4.4 Yurok Tribe Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Project

Project Summary:

The Yurok Tribe, California’s largest federally recognized Indian tribe with over 6,300 members, seeks to develop a SLR Vulnerability Assessment to guide future adaptation strategies for critical resources within the Yurok Reservation. Yurok People, known for their deep cultural traditions as fishermen, eelers, hunters, basket weavers, canoe makers, storytellers, singers, dancers, healers, and medicine people, have always relied upon a multitude of subsistence foods from the Pacific coastline and the Klamath River. These vital resources, spanning estuarine habitats to floodplain forests, are under threat from SLR and climate change, jeopardizing the Tribe’s cultural identity, food sovereignty, and ecosystem balance. To address these challenges, the Yurok Tribe will implement a two-year project that combines Traditional Ecological Knowledge with scientific data to conduct a comprehensive SLR Vulnerability Assessment and community visioning process. This effort will identify vulnerabilities, engage stakeholders, and provide foundation for developing future adaptive strategies to protect critical biological and cultural resources. By equipping the Tribe with actionable data, tools, and increased capacity, the project will strengthen the Yurok community’s ability to plan for and address climate impacts along the coast and the Klamath River.

Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:

This project will empower the Yurok Tribe to protect its cultural, natural, and economic resources, which are deeply intertwined with the Klamath River and the Pacific coastline. Yurok Tribe communities, particularly those along the lower Klamath River, are vulnerable to SLR impacts such as flooding, erosion, and habitat loss, all of which threaten their traditional way of life and food sovereignty.

This project will leverage the Tribe’s Traditional Ecological Knowledge alongside western scientific data to develop a SLR Vulnerability Assessment and adaptation strategies. The project will focus on engaging Yurok community members, including elders and youth, through a robust community visioning process. By centering the voices of those most impacted, the Yurok Tribe aims to safeguard critical cultural and ecological assets while building climate resilience. The project supports the Tribe’s mission to steward its lands and resources for future generations.

About the Grantee:

The Yurok Tribe has a long history of environmental stewardship and climate resilience. With jurisdiction over 63,035 acres of reservation land along the Klamath River, the Tribe has been a leader in natural resource management, including fisheries restoration, forest conservation, and

climate adaptation. The Yurok Constitution mandates the protection and enhancement of tribal lands and resources, reflecting the Tribe’s commitment to sustainability and cultural preservation.

Building on past successes, the Tribe is well-positioned to implement this project. The Yurok Tribe’s Environmental Program and Fisheries Department have extensive experience in data collection, community engagement, and collaborative planning. Additionally, the Tribe has strong partnerships with local counties, neighboring tribes, and state agencies, ensuring a coordinated approach to addressing SLR impacts.

Project Timeline:

This project will be completed over two years.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$343,958 to the Yurok Tribe for the Yurok Tribe Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Project.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council authorize encumbrance of up to \$3,521,568 to the following:

Recommended SB 1 Grant Program Projects	OPC	Non-OPC
Track 1 (Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning) Projects		
4.1 Humboldt County Resource Conservation District	\$677,610	
4.2 Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors	\$1,000,000	\$100,000
4.3 City and County of San Francisco	\$1,500,000	\$250,000
4.4 Yurok Tribe	\$343,958	
TOTAL	\$3,521,568	\$350,000

The anticipated source of funds will be from the Budget Act of 2022, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund appropriation (Fiscal Year 2022/2023) to OPC for implementation of Chapter 236 of Statutes

of 2021 (SB 1, Atkins). Pursuant to SB 1, funding is designated “for the purpose of making grants to local and regional governments to update local and regional land use plans to take into account sea level rise and for directly related investments to implement those plans.” Consequently, all projects under the SB 1 Grant Program will focus on SLR adaptation and fall within the pre-planning, planning, or implementation project phases. These projects will follow the SLR Adaptation Criteria, developed in accordance with SB 1 and in consultation with the SLR Collaborative.

Consistency with California Ocean Protection Act:

The proposed project is consistent with the Ocean Protection Act, Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, because it is consistent with trust-fund allowable projects, defined in Public Resources Code Section 35650(b)(2) as projects which:

- Eliminate or reduce threats to coastal and ocean ecosystems, habitats, and species.
- Allow for increased public access to, and enjoyment of, ocean and coastal resources, consistent with sustainable, long-term protection and conservation of those resources.
- Improve management, conservation, and protection of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems.
- Provide funding for adaptive management, planning coordination, monitoring, research, and other necessary activities to minimize the adverse impacts of climate change on California's ocean ecosystem.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

The various proposed projects under Track 1 (Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning) are not ‘legal projects’ that trigger the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21068 and Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, section 15378. If a project were determined to be a ‘legal project’ under CEQA, the proposed projects are statutorily exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations section 15262 as feasibility and planning studies.