



Staff Recommendation

March 3, 2025

Item 5

Action Item:

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

Megan Williams, Coastal Resilience Program Manager

Recommended Action: Authorization to disburse up to \$2,792,000 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:

- 5.1 Up to \$1,392,000 to the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District for the “Solano Bayshore Resiliency Project”
- 5.2 Up to \$300,000 to the Stinson Beach County Water District for the “Stinson Water Adaptation Plan for a Community Wastewater System”
- 5.3 Up to \$1,100,000 to the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians for “A Coastal Hazard Assessment of Chumash Heritage at Risk from the Impacts of Sea Level Rise”

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 \$2,792,000 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 \$1,392,000 to the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District
- Up to \$300,000 to the Stinson Beach County Water District
- Up to \$1,100,000 to the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians

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 \$2,792,000 to fund three 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 future competitive process, subject to availability of funding. However, recognizing the importance of funding timely implementation projects, OPC is currently accepting the submission of Track Two Letters of Intent (LOI) for urgent projects that address near-term SLR threats.

The total amount requested across all three projects is \$2,792,000. 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 fourth 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.

Among the recommended projects, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (SYBCI) project (Item 4.3) underscores the importance of expanding opportunities for tribes to lead projects that identify culturally significant sites that are at risk from SLR, and create or inform adaptation plans to ensure those sites or cultural resources are protected from the impacts of SLR. This project highlights how tribal-led assessments can address risks to culturally significant sites while safeguarding sensitive information. Recognizing this need, OPC is in the process of 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 mid 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:

5.1 Solano Bayshore Resiliency Project

Project Summary:

The Solano Bayshore Resiliency Project is a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional effort bringing together Solano County, the cities of Vallejo, Fairfield, Suisun City, and Benicia, along with regional partners, to address the growing threat of SLR through the development of a Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan. Led by the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District (FSSD), the project will develop a Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan that integrates nature-based and hybrid strategies to protect critical infrastructure, vulnerable communities, and key ecosystems. The project will begin with planning, coordination, and project oversight to ensure effective collaboration and support successful project execution. A strong focus on equitable community engagement throughout this project will incorporate input from historically underrepresented groups. It will also conduct a SLR vulnerability assessment to identify risks to communities, infrastructure, and natural areas such as Suisun Marsh, Mare Island, and Vallejo’s waterfront. The final component will develop a science-based adaptation plan, equipping local governments and community partners with the tools and strategies needed for long-term resilience. Through regional collaboration, inclusive planning, and sustainable adaptation, this project will help Solano County and its cities proactively address climate challenges while ensuring equitable, community-driven solutions.

Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:

The Solano Bayshore Resiliency Project prioritizes the needs of EJ communities in Solano County, where nearly 56,000 residents live in areas identified as highly vulnerable based on [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#). These communities face disproportionate risks from sea level rise, including flooding, saltwater intrusion, and infrastructure strain. By ensuring broad and meaningful participation, the project will integrate local perspectives into planning and decision-making.

Key efforts include multilingual outreach, community workgroups, and public meetings to engage historically underrepresented populations. The project will also incorporate tribal consultation, creating opportunities for meaningful engagement with the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation and other tribal communities with historical and cultural ties to the project area. The project will prioritize nature-based solutions, such as tidal marsh restoration and floodplain reconnection, to enhance

both ecological resilience and public access. By fostering an inclusive and community-driven planning process, the project will help ensure that climate adaptation strategies equitably protect and benefit Solano County’s most vulnerable residents.

About the Grantee:

FSSD will serve as the lead entity for this project, overseeing grant management and ensuring compliance with OPC requirements. FSSD has extensive experience managing regional infrastructure and environmental planning efforts, making it well-positioned to coordinate this multi-jurisdictional initiative. While FSSD is the primary grant recipient, the project is a collaborative effort among Solano County and the cities of Vallejo, Fairfield, Suisun City, and Benicia, all of which are committed partners receiving pass-through funding to support adaptation planning, vulnerability assessments, and community engagement. Solano County will provide technical oversight and lead the shallow groundwater study, while each participating city will contribute local expertise to ensure planning efforts are tailored to their communities' needs.

This project is intended to fulfill the SB 272 (Laird, 2023) requirement for participating jurisdictions to develop comprehensive sea level rise adaptation plans by 2034. By taking a regional approach, the project will create a coordinated and science-based framework that aligns with state adaptation goals and ensures that local governments have the tools and strategies necessary to address sea level rise impacts effectively. The project also benefits from partnerships with Greenbelt Alliance and Sustainable Solano, which will lead community workgroups, facilitate outreach, and provide technical input. This collaborative effort will strengthen long-term resilience for Solano County’s Bayshore communities while meeting state planning requirements.

Project Timeline:

This project will be completed over two years.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$1,392,000 to the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District for the Solano Bayshore Resiliency Project. This project includes leveraged state funds through the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program (ICARP) of \$362,120 for a project total of \$1,754,120.

5.2 Stinson Water Adaptation Plan for a Community Wastewater System

Project Summary:

The Stinson Beach County Water District (Stinson Water) and the Bolinas Community Public Utility District (BCPUD) are partnering to develop a regional wastewater adaptation plan that will assess design options, costs, and other key considerations for a shared wastewater collection and treatment system. [Originally approved for funding](#) as a Stinson Beach-specific effort, the project has now expanded to formally incorporate the community of Bolinas' wastewater management needs, recognizing the interconnected challenges both communities face due to SLR, rising groundwater, and coastal erosion. Both Stinson Beach and Bolinas communities rely on a combination of individual onsite wastewater treatment systems and small-scale collection systems, many of which are already experiencing significant strain from high groundwater levels, storm events, and saltwater intrusion. This study will evaluate whether a regional wastewater solution can provide a more climate-resilient and cost-effective alternative while addressing public health and environmental risks posed by failing onsite wastewater treatment systems.

With this additional funding, the project will expand data collection, mapping, and vulnerability assessments to include Bolinas, ensuring that adaptation strategies reflect the needs of both communities. The adaptation plan will provide decision-makers with clear implementation pathways for improving wastewater resilience, reducing pollution risks, and protecting public health in this ecologically sensitive coastal region.

Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:

Both Stinson Beach and Bolinas face increasing threats from SLR, with deteriorating wastewater systems that pose risks to public health, drinking water quality, and the environment. Many residents rely on outdated onsite wastewater treatment systems, which are highly susceptible to flooding and groundwater infiltration, exacerbating contamination risks in areas with limited financial and technical resources. This project ensures that all community members, regardless of socioeconomic status, have access to safe and resilient wastewater infrastructure. Extensive public outreach will provide multiple opportunities for residents in both communities to participate in shaping the adaptation plan, ensuring that solutions are aligned with local needs. Additionally, the study will explore regional cost-sharing opportunities, reducing the financial burden on individual property owners. By integrating Stinson Beach and Bolinas into a unified adaptation planning effort, this project ensures a more inclusive and sustainable approach to coastal resilience.

About the Grantee:

Stinson Water serves the unincorporated and vulnerable coastal area of Stinson Beach in Marin County, providing critical water and wastewater services. Positioned in a region prone to environmental challenges such as SLR and coastal erosion, Stinson Water plays a pivotal role in maintaining essential infrastructure for both residents and the many visitors who frequent this popular destination. While Stinson Water is the primary grant recipient, this project is a regional effort that also includes BCPUD as an active partner. BCPUD provides drinking water and operates a small wastewater collection and treatment system in Bolinas, where portions of the aging infrastructure are at risk due to SLR, increased storm intensity, and inflow and infiltration challenges. BCPUD will receive pass-through funding to assess its wastewater vulnerabilities, evaluate potential upgrades to its existing system, and explore opportunities for a coordinated regional approach with Stinson Water. While not directly governed by SB 272, which targets coastal local governments, Stinson Water and BCPUD’s initiatives align with broader regional and state coastal resilience goals by supporting the development of a sector-specific adaptation plan focused on critical infrastructure. The special district’s commitment to enhancing water system sustainability and engaging in proactive regional collaborations ensures effective use of current and future public investments to protect its community against SLR impacts.

Project Timeline:

This project will be completed over two years.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$300,000 to the Stinson Beach County Water District for augmentation of the Stinson Water Adaptation Plan for a Community Wastewater System.

5.3 A Coastal Hazard Assessment of Chumash Heritage at Risk from the Impacts of Sea Level Rise

Project Summary:

This proposed project builds on a preliminary interdisciplinary study produced by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (SYBCI) that characterizes coastal hazard exposure of thirty-three Chumash coastal village sites located in an area from Malibu Point to Morro Bay. This proposed project seeks to complete a more detailed vulnerability assessment of coastal hazards and risks to coastal Chumash village sites with a focus on areas near coastal wetlands; river and creek mouths; and Chumash identified “cultural keystone places” such as Point Conception, a sacred area for the

Chumash maritime peoples. The project combines the use of western scientific information and Chumash Ecological Knowledge to assess the vulnerability of coastal Chumash village areas to coastal hazards and SLR. Based on the coastal vulnerability assessment, the project will provide a matrix of adaptive measures that are recommended by Chumash members and will include outreach and coordination with Chumash tribes. The vulnerability assessment and matrix of adaptive measures will be included in a final report for the project. The project will also include SYBCI's archaeological data, which is used for the Tribe's consultation activities associated with coastal land-use and climate adaptation planning. Overall, the data, vulnerability assessment, and identified adaptive measures that result from this project will increase capacity and ability for Chumash Tribes to engage and inform future climate adaptation planning throughout the region.

Equity and Environmental Justice Benefits:

The SYCBI project focuses on safeguarding the cultural and historical heritage of the Chumash people, who have lived along California's coast for over 10,000 years. The project prioritizes community-led efforts by integrating Chumash Ecological Knowledge with scientific data. It will seek to involve coordination and consultation with all eight bands of Chumash tribes, including the non-federally recognized tribes within the study area, through face-to-face interviews. Compensation will be provided for tribes engaged in the project. These interviews will gather traditional knowledge and perspectives on adaptation measures, land-use strategies, and cultural values. This inclusive approach amplifies Indigenous voices and ensures that the solutions reflect the needs and priorities of the entire Chumash community. Confidential information shared during the process will remain protected, further demonstrating the project's commitment to equity and cultural sensitivity.

About the Grantee:

The SYBCI is the only federally recognized Chumash tribe, with a rich history spanning over 10,000 years in southern and central California. The Tribe manages a reservation near Santa Ynez, as well as cultural sites along the coastline from Morro Bay to Malibu Point. The SYBCI has demonstrated leadership in protecting its ancestral lands and cultural heritage, with a track record of integrating traditional knowledge and modern scientific approaches to address environmental challenges.

This project builds on the Tribe's previous coastal hazard screening study and ongoing consultation efforts with public agencies. The SYBCI's Culture Department, with expertise in archaeology, GIS, and climate adaptation, is well-positioned to lead this project. The Tribe's partnerships with local governments, academic institutions, and other stakeholders further strengthen its capacity to deliver a comprehensive vulnerability assessment and adaptive strategies. These efforts will enhance the Tribe's ability to respond to SLR threats, inform planning processes, and ensure the long-term preservation of Chumash cultural resources.

Project Timeline:

This project will be completed over two years.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that OPC authorize disbursement of up to \$1,100,000 to the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians for A Coastal Hazard Assessment of Chumash Heritage at Risk from the Impacts of Sea Level Rise.

Project Financing:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council authorize encumbrance of up to \$2,792,000 to the following:

Recommended SB 1 Grant Program Projects	OPC	Non-OPC
Track 1 (Pre-Planning, Data Collection, and Planning) Projects		
5.1 Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District	\$1,392,000	\$362,120
5.2 Stinson Beach County Water District	\$300,000	
5.3 Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians	\$1,100,000	
TOTAL	\$2,792,000	\$362,120

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.