



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Marine Region
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



February 26, 2025

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural
Resources Chair, California Ocean Protection
Council California Natural Resources Agency
715 P St, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: Support for Funding to Advance Management of California’s Marine Protected Area Network (Item 8) and Advance Climate-Ready Fisheries Management (Item 9)

Dear Secretary Crowfoot,

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has worked closely with Ocean Protection Council (OPC) staff to develop funding priorities for California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) program and climate ready fisheries management activities and supports the authorization for disbursement of funding for **Item 8: To Advance Management of California’s Marine Protected Area Network** and **Item 9: To Advance Climate-Ready Fisheries Management**.

In 2023, the Department released the first comprehensive Decadal Management Review of the MPA Network and Management Program that included 28 recommendations prioritizing adaptive management of the Network over the next decade. The proposed funding for **Item 8** will address critical Decadal Management Review recommendations to advance human dimensions monitoring, continue to build on the critical investments to the state’s MPA Monitoring Program, and support the nexus between the Department’s MPA and fisheries management priorities. The Department’s continued partnership with OPC will be integral in moving these recommendations forward.

The proposed funding for **Item 9** will support the pilot testing of electronic fisheries data solutions across several commercial and recreational fisheries. The results of the pilot will be used to modernize California’s fisheries data collection programs to streamline reporting for fishermen, better align data collection with management needs, improve accuracy of data, and reduce the time needed to record, transmit, and analyze fisheries data. This will enable the Department to expand its collection of near real-time fisheries data, a crucial element of climate-ready fisheries management.

Conserving California’s Wildlife Since 1870

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for California Natural Resources Agency

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Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support sustainable fisheries and California's network of MPAs. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (805) 568-1246 or by email at r7regionalmgr@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Craig Shuman, D. Env.
Marine Regional Manager

ec: Claire Waggoner, Environmental Program Manager
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Claire.Waggoner@wildlife.ca.gov

Todd Neahr, Environmental Program Manager
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Todd.Neahr@wildlife.ca.gov

Sara Worden, Environmental Scientist
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Sara.Worden@wildlife.ca.gov



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February 28, 2025

VIA Electronic Transmission

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
715 P St., 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Ocean Protection Council March 3, 2025 Meeting – Support for Items 8 and Item 9

Dear Chair Crowfoot and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) is pleased to submit this letter of support for Item 8 related to marine protected area (MPA) investments and Item 9 related to climate-ready fisheries management on your March 3, 2025 agenda. Both items build upon past state and philanthropic investments and demonstrate the Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) commitment to a healthier and more resilient ocean for all.

Item 8: RLF has served as a long-term partner to OPC and the California Natural Resources Agency to advance MPA implementation. The proposed project "Expansion of the MPA Watch Program" will support the MPA Watch program, which engages more than 200 volunteers per year and has cataloged more than 54,000 surveys of human uses inside and outside of MPAs since 2010. RLF serves as a philanthropic funder and thought partner to the MPA Watch program, and will leverage the proposed OPC funds to support a subset of MPA Watch programs to implement intercept surveys. This data will provide novel insights into MPA visitation and perceptions of MPAs among the public. RLF also supports approval of the other four projects proposed under item 8, which will address critical components of the state's MPA Management Program.

Item 9: RLF has partnered with OPC and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to advance the state's fisheries technologies and management frameworks for more than a decade. Through the proposed project, RLF will work with OPC, CDFW, and California fishing fleets to modernize data collection to advance climate-ready fisheries management. This project builds on RLF's philanthropic investments in projects such as climate vulnerability analyses, engagement with fishing communities, enhancing CDFW technical capacity, and supporting fishery stakeholder processes. This represents an important opportunity to advance our Memorandum of Understanding with CDFW and OPC, and we look forward to working in close partnership to ensure California's fisheries can meet the climate challenges ahead.



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We applaud OPC's forward-thinking approach to ensuring that our ocean and coasts are managed and protected for future generations. Thank you for your consideration of these comments in support of the important investments in Item 8 and Item 9.

Sincerely,

Liz Parissenti

Liz Parissenti
Program Officer
Resources Legacy Fund