



**GREATER  
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December 8, 2025

Jenn Eckerle  
Executive Director  
California Ocean Protection Council  
*Sent via email: [COPCpublic@resources.ca.gov](mailto:COPCpublic@resources.ca.gov)*

RE: Comments on agenda items 4 and 6b

Dear Jenn Eckerle,

The Greater Farallones Association (GFA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on agenda items **4 and 6b** of the **December Ocean Protection Council meeting**. As the nonprofit partner to NOAA dedicated to the conservation of the Greater Farallones, Cordell Bank, and northern Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries, GFA advances coordinated science, restoration, policy, management, and community engagement to support a healthy and resilient California coast. Through collaborative partnerships, GFA facilitates innovative and cost-effective initiatives that strengthen coastal resilience and restore critical ecosystems. We offer the following comments in the spirit of collaboration and shared stewardship.

**Agenda Item 4 - Consideration and Approval of the 2026-2030 Ocean Protection Council Strategic Plan**

We applaud OPC for presenting a robust, science-based roadmap and are excited that it aligns closely with GFA's mission to conserve the magnificent ecosystems along California's coastline and offshore, and to foster a thriving coastal and ocean environment for generations to come. The Plan's comprehensive vision, centered on resilience, equity, biodiversity, stewardship, and a sustainable blue economy, is essential to safeguarding California's coast and ocean amid accelerating climate, ecological, and social challenges. GFA is poised to contribute towards achieving OPC's vision for California.

GFA's work strongly aligns with OPC's Strategic Plan (the Plan) **Goal 1: Building resilience to climate change, sea-level rise, coastal storms, erosion, and flooding**. GFA restores and revitalizes critical nearshore habitats (including kelp forests, coastal dune habitats, and wetlands) that provide natural coastal defenses and ecological buffering. This work helps strengthen ecosystem resilience, which advances OPC's objective to safeguard coastal and marine ecosystems and communities.

**Objective 1.1: Advancing Sea-Level Rise Adaptation.** We strongly encourage the Ocean Protection Council to leverage the North-central California Coastal Sediment Coordination Committee as a key partner in achieving Objective 1.1. The Committee - a collaborative of 17 local, state, and federal agencies - provides a proven, collaborative framework for interagency



coordination and has made meaningful progress toward several of the Objective 1.1 targets along California's north-central coast.

To help identify beaches and habitats most at risk, we recommend that OPC draw on the Committee's existing infrastructure, use the long-term shoreline monitoring data from the Beach Watch and MPA Watch programs, and incorporate cutting-edge modeling tools under development by GFA and USGS. These tools can greatly enhance the State's ability to prioritize cost-effective, climate-resilient solutions.

GFA would be pleased to support OPC in scaling the Committee's successful regional model to additional geographies across California, helping ensure coordinated, science-driven sediment management and adaptation planning statewide.

**Objective 1.2: Limit causes and impacts of ocean acidification, hypoxia, and harmful algal blooms.** We strongly support this objective and encourage OPC to leverage data collected through NOAA climate monitoring projects and the Applied California Current Ecosystem Studies (ACCESS) project.

GFA's commitment to environmental education, public outreach, and fostering a diverse community of informed ocean stewards aligns with the OPC Strategic Plan **Goal 2: Maximizing community benefits and stewardship**. Our programs engage youth, volunteers, educators, scientists, and the public in meaningful conservation action. This shared emphasis on outreach, inclusion, and community-driven conservation is vital for the long-term success of state-level strategies.

**Objective 2.2: Strengthening Engagement with Underserved Communities.** We encourage OPC to partner with California's National Marine Sanctuaries to leverage proven, community-centered programs - such as LiMPETS (Long-term Monitoring Program and Experiential Training for Students) - to advance Objective 2.2. The statewide LiMPETS program provides meaningful, place-based opportunities for youth, particularly in underserved communities, to engage directly with their local coastline and participate in hands-on scientific monitoring. Programs like LiMPETS will yield exponential impact, strengthening coastal stewardship, expanding access to scientific learning, and empowering the next generation of ocean leaders.

**Target 2.3.2: Improving Understanding of Coastal Access.** To support progress on Target 2.3.2, we encourage OPC to leverage existing work, such as GFA's data-driven coastal access project, which uses aggregated cell phone mobility data to better understand how different communities experience and access the coast, as well as Beach Watch and MPA Watch, as their community science data continues to shed light on human activities along our coastline. These types of projects provide a powerful, scalable tool for identifying disparities, informing equitable access strategies, and guiding investment where it is most needed.



**Target 2.3.3: Provide recreational and commercial fishing experiences for underserved youth.** To support progress on Target 2.3.3, we encourage OPC to partner on programs such as NOAA’s Fisherman in the Classroom, which supports bringing local commercial fishermen and women into classrooms to teach students about the rich cultural history and current-day relevance of commercial fishing in California.

Under the Plan’s **Goal #3: To safeguard coastal and marine biodiversity**, GFA’s decades-long dedication to conserving sanctuary habitats, tracking species health, restoring kelp ecosystems, supporting recovery efforts, and engaging in science-based stewardship dovetails directly with OPC’s ambitions. In particular, GFA’s kelp-restoration programs and habitat restoration efforts help realize the Plan’s targets to restore degraded ecosystems, support species recovery, and maintain ecological productivity.

**Target 3.1.2: Partnering with National Marine Sanctuaries.** We strongly support OPC’s goal to partner with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to implement policy, management, or funding actions that enhance biodiversity across sanctuary waters. GFA stands ready to assist OPC and sanctuary leadership in identifying and implementing actions that meaningfully strengthen protections within these nationally significant ecosystems.

**Target 3.3.2: Statewide Kelp Restoration and Management Plan.** We strongly support OPC’s commitment to complete the statewide Kelp Restoration and Management Plan by 2027 and to restore at least 500 acres of kelp forest by 2030. As the author of the Sonoma-Mendocino Bull Kelp Recovery and Restoration Plan, GFA encourages OPC to integrate regional lessons learned, Tribal partnerships, and long-term monitoring data into the statewide plan. The Greater Farallones Kelp Restoration Program’s collaborative work with sanctuaries, CDFW, Tribes, researchers, and commercial divers offers a strong foundation for scaling effective restoration approaches.

GFA is well-positioned to partner with OPC and CDFW to complete the statewide plan and contribute to the 500-acre restoration target. We are currently actively restoring 27 acres of strategically selected kelp forests using grazer suppression and innovative outplanting techniques. With strong coordination, continued investment, and support for regional practitioners, California can make meaningful progress toward restoring these critical ecosystems for wildlife, Tribal and coastal communities, and future generations.

**Target 3.3.3: Restoring Coastal Wetlands, Native Oyster Beds, and Eelgrass Meadows.** We strongly support OPC’s targets to restore 7,000 acres of coastal wetlands, 100 acres of native oyster beds, and 200 acres of eelgrass meadows by 2030. To advance this work efficiently, we request that OPC consult with the interagency North-central California Coastal Sediment



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Coordination Committee (the Committee). The Committee has identified high-priority restoration projects and developed collaborative processes for project selection, streamlined permitting, and beneficial sediment reuse - tools that can significantly accelerate progress toward these statewide goals. GFA would welcome the opportunity to support OPC in leveraging this successful regional model to advance habitat restoration across California.

GFA also recommends OPC consult with the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) on native oyster bed and eelgrass meadow restoration. The Sanctuary Advisory Council has forwarded recommendations for native oyster bed restoration in the sanctuary, and GFNMS has implemented a passive eelgrass meadow restoration program in Tomales Bay.

The Plan emphasizes science-driven policymaking, monitoring of ecosystem health, and use of indicators to guide management. GFA's role - collecting long-term ecological data, conducting community science, and participating in collaborative research initiatives such as regional marine-ecosystem studies - supports that same foundation. Our work helps fill data gaps and provides on-the-ground evidence to inform adaptive management, exactly the kind of community-science and stewardship OPC calls for.

For these reasons, **GFA strongly supports Item 4.** As a committed steward and partner, GFA stands ready to support OPC's implementation through continued habitat restoration, monitoring, community engagement, and collaboration.

### **Agenda Item 6b - Consideration and Approval of Disbursement of Funds for the Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program**

GFA coordinates the North-central California Coastal Sediment Coordination Committee (the Committee), a state-federal-local partnership of 17 agencies working across 300 miles of shoreline, representing nearly a quarter of California's coast. The Committee provides an essential forum for interagency coordination, shared science, and implementation of coastal resilience projects at scale.

GFA strongly supports OPC's proposed SB 1 disbursements and sees clear alignment with the Committee's mission. These investments will strengthen regional coordination and directly benefit local agencies that rely on the Committee's technical expertise, monitoring data, and collaborative permitting and project-development processes.

Sonoma County's recent and expanded engagement illustrates this value. As the County ramps up coastal resilience planning, it has turned to the Committee for connections to state partners, technical review, and lessons learned from more advanced sediment-management projects. This support has already helped refine project concepts and improve alignment with broader regional and state efforts. These examples underscore the Committee's core strengths: fostering



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collaboration, improving efficiency, sharing knowledge, and accelerating coastal resilience outcomes. SB 1 funding will build on this foundation. GFA encourages OPC to continue partnering with the Committee as an effective regional model and is prepared to assist with implementation.

For these reasons, **GFA strongly supports Item 6b.** With sea-level rise accelerating and placing coastal ecosystems, cultural resources, and communities at increasing risk, SB 1 funding and statewide coordination are more critical than ever. The proposed investments advance OPC's strategic goal to safeguard California's coast and ocean in the face of climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the OPC agenda items. We commend OPC for its commitment to inclusive, science-based coastal and ocean stewardship. GFA is proud to contribute to the success of this work and looks forward to working with OPC in the years ahead. Please feel free to contact me at [mkrach@farallones.org](mailto:mkrach@farallones.org) with any questions or to further explore opportunities for collaboration.

Sincerely,

Monika Krach  
Executive Director  
Greater Farallones Association