



SEA LEVEL RISE

California Coast and Ocean Report *Status, Progress, and What's Ahead* 2026

California has nearly 1,100 miles of coastline, and rising seas are affecting almost every stretch of it. Sea level rise, driven by warming oceans and melting ice sheets, is steadily pushing water higher onto shores, increasing flooding, erosion, and the risk of saltwater reaching freshwater supplies. For the millions of Californians who live, work, and play along the coast, it is one of the most consequential long-term threats they face.

STATUS

Over the past century, **California's coast has seen about 6–8 inches of sea level rise** and is experiencing accelerated sea level rise, with a projected statewide average increase of **0.8 feet by 2050 and between 1.6 and 3.1 feet by 2100**. Sea level rise poses significant threats to coastal infrastructure, habitats and wildlife, and communities, with **some scenarios estimating over 5 feet of rise and over \$250 billion in property exposed to sea level rise-related threats** by the end of this century.



PROGRESS

California is one of the few places in the world requiring every coastal city and county to have a sea level rise plan — a law passed in 2023 that sets a 2034 deadline and mandates use of the best available science. The state has backed that requirement with real money: the Ocean Protection Council's **Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Grant Program has invested more than \$36 million** across the state to help coastal and Bay Area communities plan and prepare for a changing coastline. The **2024 Climate Bond (Proposition 4) includes substantial new funding** to accelerate this program and support coastal resilience statewide.

LOOKING AHEAD

Sea level rise planning and implementation of adaptation projects are expected to progress significantly in the coming years with **continued funding** from the Ocean Protection Council's **Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Grant Program and Climate Bond investments**. The Ocean Protection Council is also committed to **updating the best available science** on sea level rise approximately every 5 years.

SEA LEVEL RISE PLANNING VARIES ACROSS THE CALIFORNIA COAST

Proactive, consistent, and long-term planning for sea level rise is essential for coastal communities to prepare and build resilience by minimizing threats to public health, infrastructure, and safety, while ensuring investments are smart and long-lasting. Statewide, planning for sea level rise is currently underway across 68% of coastal and Bay jurisdictions. This requires early and consistent community engagement to ensure local support and consensus, making adaptation efforts reflective of community values, and therefore more effective and sustainable for long term planning and local investments.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

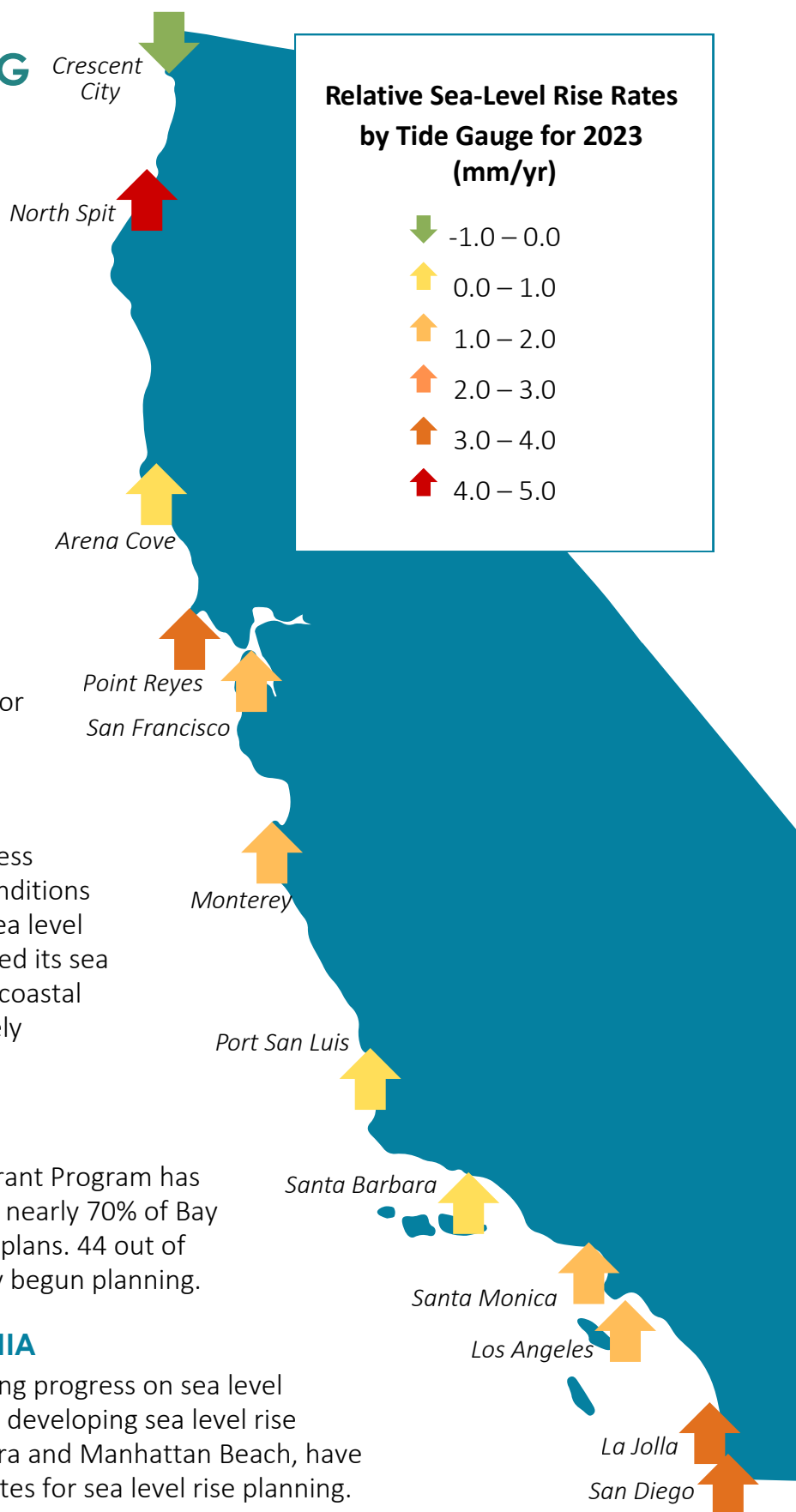
The North Coast is unique in its relatively less developed coastal areas and geological conditions that make some areas less vulnerable to sea level rise. While only Sonoma County has certified its sea level rise plan, 75% of Northern California coastal and Bay Area cities and counties are actively underway in planning.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Ocean Protection Council's Senate Bill 1 Grant Program has invested more than \$20 million to support nearly 70% of Bay Area jurisdictions to develop sea level rise plans. 44 out of 51 jurisdictions have formally or informally begun planning.

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Central and South Coast are also making progress on sea level planning, with 64% of jurisdictions actively developing sea level rise plans. Two South Coast cities, Santa Barbara and Manhattan Beach, have certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) updates for sea level rise planning.



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