

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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March 29, 2013

TO: California Coastal Commissioners and Interested Persons

FROM: Charles Lester, Executive Director
Susan Hansch, Chief Deputy Director
Michelle Jesperson, Federal Programs Manager

SUBJECT: **Proposed Final 2013 – 2018 Strategic Plan** for public hearing and action at the California Coastal Commission April 2013 meeting

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the California Coastal Commission (Commission) approve the Final 2013-2018 Strategic Plan and authorize the Executive Director to submit the Final Strategic Plan to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) by June 30, 2013.

MOTION

“I move that the Commission approve the Final 2013 – 2018 Strategic Plan and authorize the Executive Director to submit the Final Strategic Plan to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration by June 30, 2013.”

STAFF ANALYSIS:

At the January 2013 meeting, staff presented a 2013 – 2018 Draft Strategic Plan (Draft Plan) for Commission review, discussion and public hearing. The Commission discussed the plan, provided comments, and requested that staff extend the public comment review period. Staff extended the written public comment period from the original date of February 4, 2013 to February 22, 2013. The Draft Strategic Plan was released for public review on the Commission’s website on December 21, 2012.

As explained at the January meeting, updating of the Commission’s Strategic Plan is long overdue. There is a strong need, therefore, for the Commission to update the plan to provide strategic guidance and priorities in the allocation of extremely limited agency resources. In addition, in 2008 NOAA conducted a review of the Commission’s federally approved program. In their final evaluation report,

NOAA issued a necessary action which required the Commission to update its 1997 Strategic Plan “...to prioritize the functions, programs, and processes that it administers in light of insufficient staff and financial resources to fully address its workload and to provide a framework that ensures transparency and logic in decision-making in the face of challenging budgets” (Final Evaluation Findings of the California Coastal Management Program March 2005 through December 2008, issued in March 2010). This Final Strategic Plan is the result of Commission staff efforts to both respond to the NOAA requirement and to develop an update strategic plan that will provide a blueprint for Commission’s priorities to implement the Coastal Act for the next five years.

As discussed below, Commission staff has reviewed the Commission and public comments on the draft plan, and have made a variety of changes to the Draft Plan, including amending, adding, and deleting strategic actions to implement the seven goals and associated objectives of the Plan. Staff believes that the Plan provides a strong framework for strategic action across the seven goals, and recommends that the Commission adopt the Plan for submission to the NOAA. Once adopted, the plan will inform both the work and allocation of resources of the agency. Staff will provide periodic updates to the Commission on Plan implementation, and anticipates initiating an update of the Plan in 2017.

Summary and Response to Public Comments

The Commission received 28 letters of written public comment from various local governments, nonprofit organizations, and members of the public. All of the comments are provided in Exhibit 1 of this staff report.

Support for the Plan, Setting Priorities and Resources

Overall, the comments expressed general and strong support for the Commission completing a strategic plan and recognition of the significant effort put into developing the plan, as well as the general content of the Plan. This includes broad support for the goals of Strengthening the LCP Program, pursuing E-government, and addressing climate change. Where appropriate, actions and background text have been amended to reflect comments, highlight connections between actions, and provide greater clarity.

However, as also described by staff at the January hearing, and in the Draft document, there was common concern about the Commission’s ability to accomplish all the actions as laid out in the Draft Plan without significant new funding and staffing resources. Many comments emphasized the need to prioritize among the goals, objectives and actions laid out in the Draft Plan. This was also a primary concern of the Commission in January. The Plan now includes updates to the background discussion, as well as **Appendix 1**, which summarizes each proposed action, the anticipated timing of implementation over the next five years (near, mid, and longer term), and whether or not additional funding will be needed to implement the action. As shown therein, many of the tasks can be completed without additional funding. But many are also dependent on additional resources, particularly staff intensive actions such as proposed enhancements to the LCP and Enforcement programs, and actions related to increased policy coordination and development with other agencies (such as enhanced participation in and development of Ocean and Marine Policy and responding to climate change). Overall, it is clear that the Commission needs significantly increased staffing to implement many of the actions and more fully achieve implementation of the Coastal Act.

Policy-related Comments

Many of the comments received highlight or express interest in the Commission pursuing and implementing specific resource management policies and approaches. These range from general calls for increased protection of private property and existing development to implementing strong planned retreat policies in light of sea level rise and extreme events. Many policy comments are specific, such as asking the Commission to prioritize bioengineered approaches to streambank stabilization, implementing integrated water management, addressing changes in the coastal dependency of power plants, and addressing the impacts of sand replenishment on surfing. There are also broad calls for the Commission to engage in more “big picture” policy visioning and to address environmental justice.

In general, the Strategic Plan is not intended to be a specific policy document, though it does place strategic emphasis on actions in the areas of public access, protection of coastal resources, and responding to climate change. Many of the proposed actions involve the development of policy guidance, either through Commission LCP planning and regulatory work or in coordination with other agencies and stakeholders. Many of the comments will be necessarily addressed through these guidance development actions (for example, in the preparation of sea level rise and coastal hazard guidance). Others will simply be addressed through the Commission’s on-going decisions concerning LCPs and coastal development. Where appropriate, specific actions have been amended to capture policy directions consistent with the intent of the actions. Also, a new action has been added to highlight the Commission’s participation in the newly established Assembly Select Committee on Coastal Protection, which may be a forum for addressing calls for bigger picture policy visioning and assessment (7.2.6). In terms of Environmental Justice, many of the public access actions are related to enhancing and continuing to protect public access and recreation along the coast for all California citizens, which is one of the ways the Commission has historically addressed concerns about Environmental Justice. In addition, although distinct from environmental justice concerns, an action has been added to assess the Commission’s current programs in relation to the protection and cultural resources and the recent Natural Resources Agency Tribal Consultation policy (7.2.7).

Process-related Comments

Many comments addressed concerns about the Commission’s procedures and relationships to other planning and regulatory programs. In particular, many comments were supportive both of actions and underscoring the need for streamlining of decision process, such as providing online permit processing. Other comments emphasized the need for the Commission to prioritize actions that would facilitate review and comment on LCP actions or facilitate local coastal development permitting. There was also support for facilitating the review of public projects that result in beneficial outcomes for coastal resources or development.

Another common theme was the need for the Commission to avoid duplication or redundancy with other existing programs. For example, there is concern about the Commission’s role in the protection of water quality and how its programs relate to the programs of the Regional Water Quality Control Boards. There is also widespread support for the Commission enhancing its collaboration and coordination with other agencies such as the OPC. The actions designed to enhance the LCP program are widely supported by local government comments.

Many of the Strategic Plan actions are specifically geared towards organization and procedural enhancements that will address these process-related concerns. One objective of providing LCP

guidance, for example, is to facilitate the integration of and harmonize policies with other agency programs. There is a specific action designed to address potential overlap and conflict in the area of water quality. Many actions are also designed to improve coordination and collaboration with other agencies, including OPC, State Lands Commission, BCDC, DFW, State Parks, the Conservancy, etc. As the plan notes, though, the extent to which the Commission is able to do this is directly dependent on staffing levels.

Finally, many of the actions are designed to address procedural concerns. These include many enhancements envisioned under the Goal of enhanced information management and e-government. Other actions, including many of the LCP program actions and the actions to update the Commission's regulations, will also specifically address process issues. Ultimately, much of the plan is focused on improving the functioning, efficiency, and public accessibility of the Commission's programs.

Other New Programs and Actions

Certain comments identified policy areas or other actions to improve the Commission's program that warranted new actions. This includes adding an action to enhance the Commission's work on sand replenishment and beach management issues (1.2.3). While the Commission is very active in the state Coastal Sediment Management Task Force, more resources allocated to this policy area would enable the Commission to be more proactive on the regional and district level concerning specific beach and sediment needs, proposed programs, and decision-making. The importance of these issues also warrants separating out separate policy guidance work on beach management and dredging issues.

Other new actions address numerous comments concerning the need to enhance the Commission's Enforcement Program, including seeking administrative penalty authority, increased staffing, and other cross-cutting strategies (5.4.5, 5.4.6, 5.4.7, 5.4.8). Many comments noted the importance of the Commission responding to and enhancing its programmatic connections the new Marine Protected Area network in California. Commission staff concur and in addition to further highlighting the role of MPAs already expressed in certain actions, new action 2.2.11 is added to address this policy area. Other marine and ocean policy actions added include 2.2.10 (participation in the West Coast Governor's Marine Debris and Climate Change Work Groups); and 7.8.4, coordination with the Ocean Science Trust.

Finally, previously proposed actions related to staff training have been consolidated and reformulated to highlight the importance of developing a staff training and professional development program, and providing training in multiple areas and skills. These actions are perhaps the most fundamental to enhancing the Commission's future capacity to effectively implement the Coastal Act.

Conclusion

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the proposed final Strategic Plan as revised herein. The Plan provides background on the Commission's authorities, vision, mission, and core values. As detailed in the Plan itself, it also presents an integrated framework for strategic action in seven overarching goals. The four organizational goals support each other and ultimately will directly enhance the Commission's ability to meet the three policy goals highlighted by the Plan as well as the Coastal Act more broadly. The Plan recognizes that all of the actions are important, but that many of them cannot be implemented without additional funding. It also provides for sequencing of the actions over the next five years, again, subject to the availability of additional funding.

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CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2018

PROTECTING CALIFORNIA'S COAST FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS



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Commonly Used Acronyms and Agency Names

Terms:

LCP – Local Coastal Program
CDP – Coastal Development Permit
ESHA – environmentally sensitive habitat areas
CCT – California Coastal Trail
FLAN – Final Local Action Notice
ADCs – Areas of Deferred Certification
SLR – Sea Level Rise

Agency Names:

CCC/Commission – California Coastal Commission
BCDC – San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Conservancy – State Coastal Conservancy
Caltrans – California Department of Transportation
CDFG – California Department of Fish and Game
NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NMFS – National Marine Fisheries Service
OPC – Ocean Protection Council
OSPR – Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response
State Parks – California Department of Parks and Recreation
SWRCB – State Water Resources Control Board
USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS – United States Geological Survey

I. INTRODUCTION

Since its creation forty years ago, the California Coastal Commission has become nationally and internationally recognized as a leader in coastal resource protection and management. The passage of Proposition 20 in 1972 and the California Coastal Act in 1976 enabled the Commission to protect thousands of public coastal accessways and recreational visitor-serving resources from Oregon to Mexico. Scenic rural and agricultural areas like the Gaviota coast, Big Sur, the Santa Cruz-San Mateo County coastline, and Mendocino County are largely unchanged even while new development has continued apace in already urbanized coastal areas. Critical open space and resource areas that provide public access near dense urban areas have been protected, including in the Santa Monica Mountains, along Bolsa Chica and the Newport Coast, and around the lagoons in San Diego County. Much of the rich ecological diversity of California's coastal habitats, wetlands and sensitive coastal and marine waters has been protected and restored. Public support for the program is strong, and 85% of the geographic area of the coast is governed by local government coastal programs in partnership with the Commission. Since 1976 the Commission and local governments have approved more than 165,000 permits for new development in the coastal zone and experts estimate that the coast and ocean economy contributes more than 40 billion dollars to the state each year.

Yet, the Commission also faces many challenges and opportunities that must be addressed directly and strategically if its success in protecting California's coastal resources is to endure. These include continued population growth and development pressure, growing and changing demands for public access and recreation, emerging marine resource protection and management issues and new technologies, and global climate change. In addition, many organizational challenges must be addressed to effectively implement the Coastal Act. These include chronically flat or declining budgets, inadequate staffing levels, increasing retirements of senior staff resulting in loss of institutional knowledge, insufficient resources for new information technologies, and a limited capacity to work with local governments to maintain and update increasingly out-of-date Local Coastal Programs (LCPs).

While the challenges and opportunities are many, the commitment of the Commission to its mission – to protect and enhance California's coast – is paramount. The Commission's institutional framework is sound and its actions are guided by strong core values such as commitment to public service, stewardship, science, and the rule of law. The agency's mission and its core values inspire this Strategic Plan, and the ultimate purpose of the Plan is to strengthen the agency's implementation of the Coastal Act. This includes supporting the planning and regulatory programs set out in the law, and implementation of all of the resource and economic development policies of Chapter 3 of the Act.

But the plan does identify seven priority goals with associated objectives and actions for guiding strategic implementation of the California Coastal Act over the next five years (2013-2018). Three goals focus on core Commission policy concerns:

- ❖ *Maximize Public Access and Recreation*
- ❖ *Protect Coastal Resources*
- ❖ *Address Climate Change through Local Coastal Program Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education*

Calling out these three goals does not mean that other resource policies of the Act are not important. The Commission will continue to protect all of the resources identified for such in the Coastal Act, including scenic resources and community character, cultural resources, and protection of coastal-dependent land uses to name a few.. The Commission’s vision for the coast embodies all of the goals and policies of the Coastal Act, and it will continue to do its utmost to apply the entirety of the Act as necessary in any regulatory or planning matter before it. The Commission is deeply committed to sustaining and building on its forty-year history of successful coastal protection and management in California. The goals, though, do frame out a set of actions for special attention to further certain policy objectives that are clearly a high priority for California.

In addition to the policy goals, four other goals focus on critical *organizational* needs to improve how the agency works and to build the capacity of the agency for the future. These goals, too, speak directly to the Commission’s overall objective of effective implementation of the Coastal Act. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the Commission is determined largely by its organizational capacity, including its funding and agency capacity to address the on-going challenges of working with local governments and other stakeholders, addressing information management needs, and the reality of looming staff retirements. The core organizational goals of the Plan are:

- ❖ *Strengthen the LCP Program*
- ❖ *Improve the Regulatory Process, Compliance, and Enforcement*
- ❖ *Enhance Information Management and E-Government*
- ❖ *Build Agency Capacity*

Together the 3 policy and 4 organizational goals frame out 35 objectives with 163 specific actions. These actions have been developed by an agency and public review process, including two public hearings. All of the objectives and actions identified are considered important, but not all of them can be the highest priorities; nor will the Commission be able to successfully implement all of them without additional agency funding and staffing. This plan thus includes a summary chart (see Appendix A) that identifies when each of the actions is planned for action – near term (1-2 years), mid (2-3 years) and longer term (4-5 years) -- and whether funding will be needed to achieve the action. Some actions are high priorities, have funding, or can be achieved with existing staff resources. Many more, though, will likely not occur without additional resources. Similarly, some actions will occur at some level of implementation, but the extent of implementation is directly tied to staffing resources. For example, the Commission’s capacity to improve implementation of the LCP program is directly related to the number of planning staff in the agency – a critical funding need.

The Commission will continue to allocate most of its limited resources to its core statutory work, including reviewing LCPs and amendments, monitoring local coastal program implementation, making determinations on federal consistency matters, and regulating coastal development. Nonetheless, the Commission is committed to focusing on policy priorities as identified in this plan, and on strategically allocating available staff resources and funding to the identified actions to improve the overall functioning of the organization, which will ultimately benefit the core mission and implementation of all of the policies of the Coastal Act.

It should be noted that the goals do represent an integrated and mutually-supportive strategy. The four organization goals, and the policy goals, have many overlapping objectives and

components. For example, a fundamental goal is improving agency capacity, particularly through increased funding, and this directly benefits all of the other goals. Similarly, policy guidance for the LCP program will benefit the Regulatory Program. Enhancing information management supports the other organizational goals and will improve implementation of the policy goals. There are also connections across the policy goals, such as between the Climate Change objectives and the protection of public access and coastal resources; addressing climate change is thus an integrating goal that will advance implementation of many Coastal Act objectives.

Finally, examined as a whole, the Strategic Plan presents several cross-cutting themes that can also be considered programmatic priorities. Most important, there is a significant need for increased funding for the Coastal Commission, and many of the actions will be dependent on such increases. Most critical, the Commission needs increased staff capacity to effectively implement its partnership with local governments and the LCP program. And as discussed in more detail below, the Commission generally needs additional planning, policy, and enforcement staff, as well as specific programmatic personnel (such as a public information/communications officer) to fully and effectively implement its statutory responsibilities.

Second, many of the actions address the need for updated or improved policy guidance in multiple issue areas. The intent of these guidance-related actions is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of both Commission and local government decision-making, consistent with the Coastal Act. Providing such guidance has been a dominant theme of the Commission's work with local governments in recent years; it is also critical to supporting Commission staff, particularly as senior staff retire. Certain guidance is needed to address changed circumstances or emerging coastal resource trends, but the purpose is not to expand the Commission's authority but rather to facilitate consistent application of existing state law to new conditions and knowledge. In some cases guidance may help to facilitate streamlining of planning and permitting decisions. Coastal management is a dynamic field, and policy guidance is an on-going need to support effective management and local coastal program implementation.

Third, many of the actions concern enhancing coordination or collaboration with various governmental and non-governmental resource management partners. For example, the roles and issues addressed by various actors have evolved (such as the creation of Marine Protected Areas), and there is continuing need to coordinate on an on-going basis with other state agencies such as the State Coastal Conservancy, State Parks, State Lands Commission, BCDC, the Ocean Protection Council, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and state water quality control boards. Effective coordination, though, also requires staff resources, and the degree to which the Commission will be able to enhance its coordination with other agencies and stakeholders will depend on the available resources.

Lastly, many of the actions address organizational system improvements to modernize the agency, provide increased public accessibility and transfer of information, and ultimately, improve public service. In particular, the E-government actions will enhance implementation of the agency's other organizational goals as well as its ability to implement the Coastal Act. For example, implementing an online permitting system may help streamline the process and eliminate paperwork.

The next sections of the Plan provide a brief background on the Commission and its mandates, present the Agency's vision, mission and core values, and elaborate the objectives and actions in

the seven goal areas. Again, while the Commission will continue to implement its core planning and regulatory programs in support of all of the policies of the Coastal Act, the plan is a roadmap for strategically enhancing the Commission's work both organizationally and in critically-important policy areas. It also provides a menu of actions for which funding is needed, the support of which will enable the Commission to more fully achieve the vision of the Coastal Act. The Commission will also seek to update this plan beginning in 2017, and actions not yet achieved, as well as new actions that may be identified by then, can be rolled forward in an updated Strategic Plan.

II. AGENCY BACKGROUND AND LEGAL MANDATES

The California Coastal Commission is charged with implementing the California Coastal Act of 1976 (<http://www.coastal.ca.gov/coactact.pdf>). The Coastal Act was enacted by the Legislature to carry out the original mandate of Proposition 20, which was passed by the citizens of California in 1972. Proposition 20 created the Coastal Zone Conservation Commission, which both performed an interim regulatory function and created the Coastal Plan for consideration by the Legislature in the drafting of the Coastal Act. See <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/legal/proposition-20.pdf> for more information on Proposition 20.

The Coastal Act establishes strong resource protection and coastal development policies for California's coastal zone, which extends 3 miles seaward to the outer extent of state jurisdiction, and which on land can be as narrow as several blocks in certain urban areas and up to 5 miles inland in rural areas (see <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/lcps.html> to view regional maps of the coastal zone). The Act's core development policies are found in Chapter 3 and include policies to protect and provide maximum public access to and along the shoreline, protect sensitive coastal resources, and provide for priority coastal dependent development and visitor-serving land uses. The Act establishes an independent Commission within the Natural Resources Agency, with twelve voting Commissioners appointed (four each) by the Governor, the Senate Committee on Rules, and the Speaker of the Assembly and three ex-officio members representing state agencies (Natural Resources Agency, Transportation and Housing Agency and the State Lands Commission). The Commission is supported by and receives recommendations from an independent professional civil service staff, including analysts, lawyers, technical experts in the areas of biology, ecology, geology and coastal engineering and a cadre of business service professionals. The Executive Director is directly appointed by the Commission (See Organizational Chart in Appendix x).

The core program of the Commission includes both planning and regulatory functions required by the Coastal Act. The Coastal Act is implemented through permitting new development, and local planning and regulation, through which most development review authority is delegated to local government. All local governments in the coastal zone must prepare Local Coastal Programs (LCPs), which are Commission certified land use plans, zoning ordinances, and other implementing actions designed to implement the statewide policies of the Coastal Act. Once an LCP is certified, most permitting review and enforcement authority of the Commission is delegated to local governments, subject to appellate review by the Commission in certain circumstances. The Commission retains permitting and enforcement jurisdiction below the mean high tide line, on public trust lands, and in areas not governed by a certified LCP. Development in the coastal zone must be evaluated through a permit review process for consistency with the LCPs where they are certified, or the Coastal Act where the Commission may retain permitting jurisdiction.

Since 1976 the Commission has directly reviewed more than 125,000 coastal development permits (CDPs), including more than 1,300 appeals of local government permit approvals. As of 2012, 80% of local governments in the coastal zone have certified LCPs (includes jurisdictions with only a certified Land Use Plan), covering more than 85% of the geographic area of the coastal zone. Since 1981, more than 40,600 coastal development permits have been issued by local governments pursuant to their certified LCPs. The Commission also works with local

governments to keep LCPs up to date and in recent years on average processes 60 LCP amendments a year.

The Coastal Commission's planning and regulatory program is also part of the federally-approved California Coastal Management Program (CCMP) under the national Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The CCMP also includes the planning and regulatory program of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and the State Coastal Conservancy's (Conservancy) program. As a certified federal program, the Commission receives significant funding from the federal government to support implementation of the Coastal Act. Under the CZMA, the Commission also has "federal consistency review authority," which enables the Commission to review federal and federally-approved activities that may affect coastal resources for consistency with the enforceable policies of the California Coastal Act. The Commission uses the federal consistency authority to review many federal activities, including federally-licensed offshore oil development plans and projects, federal dredging activities, and various military activities that have potential impacts on coastal resources.

III. VISION, MISSION & CORE VALUES

THE COASTAL ACT'S VISION FOR THE COAST

The Commission's vision for the coast derives from basic policy objectives of the Coastal Act, and inspires us in the pursuit of the agency's mission.

***Our Vision:** The California coast is available for all to enjoy through thousands of public accessways to and along the shoreline, a completed California Coastal Trail, a well-supported network of parks and open spaces, and a wide range of visitor-serving facilities, including lower-cost campgrounds, hostels, and hotels. The rich ecological diversity of the coast and ocean, including beaches, rocky shorelines, wetlands, riparian areas, and sensitive terrestrial habitats, is protected and thriving. Scenic rural landscapes are maintained, coastal agriculture is flourishing, and cultural resources are protected. The California Coastal Commission works collaboratively with local governments, other agencies, and an engaged and knowledgeable public committed to coastal stewardship to support and manage environmentally-sustainable development, including assuring priority for coastal-dependent and related uses of land and water, concentrating new growth in existing urban areas, and promoting well-adapted, resilient communities in the face of global climate change. The coast endures as a vital part of California's social and cultural fabric and the coastal and ocean economy is strong.*

Each part of the mission finds statutory direction in the Coastal Act. Public access and recreation must be protected and maximized, and lower-cost, water-oriented, and other visitor-serving land uses should be provided (PRC 30210-30224; 30252). Sensitive resources in the ocean and on land are to be protected (30230-233; 30240). Likewise, the Coastal Act protects visual resources (30251), cultural resources (30244), and coastal agriculture (30241-30243). Priority is also given to coastal dependent and related land uses (30220-30224; 30234-30234.5; 30255; 30260). New development should be concentrated in existing developed areas (30250) and coastal hazards must be minimized through effective shoreline resource management (30235; 30253). To achieve the mission, the Coastal Act calls for a strong state-local government partnership, a public education program, and the effective use of science.

OUR MISSION: PROTECTING & ENHANCING CALIFORNIA'S COAST

The Commission's mission is to protect and enhance California's coast for present and future generations. The coast is a public resource of enduring significance. It embodies natural and cultural resources, scenic beauty, public access, recreation and enjoyment, coastal dependent and related land uses, and vibrant and sustainable coastal communities and economies – all of which must be protected and enhanced.

OUR MISSION: PROTECTING & ENHANCING CALIFORNIA'S COAST

The Commission is committed to protecting and enhancing California's coast and ocean for present and future generations. It does so through careful planning and regulation of environmentally-sustainable development, rigorous use of science, strong public participation, education, and effective intergovernmental coordination.

OUR CORE VALUES: GUIDING IMPLEMENTATION

The core values of the Commission guide its implementation of the mission and shape the norms of behavior for the Commission, its staff, and an engaged public.

Public Service: The Commission is a public agency comprising appointed public officials, civil service staff and volunteers. The agency is charged with implementing the California Coastal Act to benefit all citizens of California. The Commission and staff strive to serve the public, respond to public inquiries, and provide effective customer service.

Stewardship: In partnership with local government, other governmental and non-governmental actors, and the public, the Commission is charged with protecting California's coastal resources and providing for priority coastal land uses. Through LCP planning, implementation oversight, and coastal development permitting, the Commission assures that the Coastal Act resource protection policies are effectively implemented statewide. The Commission fully embraces the Legislative findings of the Coastal Act, and applies the precautionary principle in the face of scientific uncertainty to avoid irreparable harm to the environment. Through education and outreach, the Commission fosters public stewardship of coastal resources.

Rule of Law: The Commission follows and applies the law fairly and consistently in each matter before it. The Coastal Act, certified LCPs, and Commission regulations govern the Commission's decisions. The Commission abides by all applicable state and federal laws, administrative procedures, and Constitutional requirements, including providing due process under the law.

Science/Objectivity: The Commission applies the scientific method and reasoned analysis in its daily work. The Commission identifies facts, uses the best available science, and produces objective evaluations. The Commission strives to be dispassionate in its analysis of impacts and consideration of alternatives.

Maximum Public Participation: The Coastal Act mandates the right of the people to understand and participate in the coastal program. The Commission welcomes public input into our daily work and we strive to provide complete and useful information about our program. The Commission believes its procedures for participation are fair to all participants.

Excellence: Commission staff members are professionals seeking to be effective and efficient. We treat each other with respect as professional colleagues, work hard, and strive for excellence in our relationships and all of our work products, recognizing the responsibility to use public funds effectively and wisely.

Teamwork: The Commission embraces teamwork within the agency and with outside entities, recognizing that teamwork is essential to producing excellent work. The Commission strives to take full advantage of the diverse expertise and experience of our staff and other organizations. We support each other and acknowledge the critical role that each unit of the agency plays in achieving the Commission's mission.

Integrity: The Commission adheres to the highest ethical standards for interpersonal and civil service behavior. The Commission recognizes the humanity of all persons, and treats

individuals with respect, fairness, and compassion. We are patient, honest and forthright with each other and the public.

Problem-Solving: The Commission uses common sense and seeks practical solutions to the planning and regulatory challenges we face and listens carefully to find positive alternatives. We avoid rigid bureaucratic response and embrace the role that learning, discovery, and creativity play in the Commission's daily work.

Balance: The Commission seeks balance between our personal and professional lives. We recognize that a productive workplace requires healthy minds and bodies, and that the Commission's work suffers without sufficient personal and family time and relaxation. Commission staff members communicate openly with supervisors and managers about maintaining balance and identifying priorities. We embrace flexibility to support the need for professional and personal balance.

IV. STRATEGIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

A. CORE PROGRAM RESOURCES, PRIORITIES & PLAN INTEGRATION

The Commission has identified seven strategic goals with associated objectives and actions for the next five years. While the Commission will seek to implement all of the policies of the Coastal Act as necessary in any given case before it, the three policy goals and the four organizational goals are identified as *strategic* priorities to strengthen and improve the Commission's achievement of its core mission of protecting the coast. .

Together they frame out 35 objectives with 163 specific actions. These actions have been developed by an agency and public review process, including two public hearings. All of the objectives and actions identified are considered important, but not all of them can be the highest priorities; nor will the Commission be able to successfully implement all of them without additional agency funding and staffing. This plan thus includes an appendix chart that identifies when each of the actions is targeted for action – near term (1-2 years), mid (2-3 years) and longer term (4-5 years) -- and whether funding will be needed to achieve the action. Some actions are higher priorities, have funding, or can be achieved with existing staff resources. Many more, though, will likely not occur without additional resources. Similarly, some actions will occur at some level of implementation, but the extent of implementation is directly tied to staffing resources. For example, the Commission's capacity to improve implementation of the LCP program is directly related to the number of planning staff in the agency – a critical funding need.

Core Program and Agency Resource Constraints

The Commission's capacity to work with local governments to implement the planning program as fully envisioned in the Coastal Act is significantly constrained by insufficient funding. As shown in Figure 1, in present-day dollars the Commission's general fund budget is less than half of what it was in 1981. The Commission had 212 full-time staff in 1981; today, the Commission has 142 authorized positions and the effective, actual number of personnel will be something less than this after staff furloughs, vacancies, and other reductions are factored in (last year the Commission's actual staffing was approximately 128 py for the year). The most significant reductions in staffing have occurred in the core program analytic staff but also in management capacity. At the peak of early LCP planning work in 1981, the Commission had significantly more planners and managers, including 14 people in a statewide planning unit in San Francisco and executive managers in each district that supported the development of policy guidance, local assistance programs and early coordination on LCP planning. The Commission also received significant federal funding to support the Commission's LCP planning work and to provide planning grants to local governments.

The nature of the Commission's workload has evolved from reviewing a much higher number and proportion of original coastal development permit items to more LCP planning and implementation oversight, including LCP amendments and appeals of local coastal permits. However, the Commission's planning staff must still process a significant number of original jurisdiction permits that have statutory deadlines for action and that because of their location more often raise complex issues of statewide significance. Significantly, the Commission now works with 60 plus local governments with certified LCPs, including processing approximately 55 LCP amendments a year on average and monitoring hundreds of local development actions

every year. The increasing demand to keep LCPs up-to-date and work with local governments has placed a severe constraint on the agency, and there is wide recognition of the need to enhance the LCP planning process by increasing the Commission's capacity to work more collaboratively with local governments earlier in the process.^[1] The Strategic Plan highlights this challenge, but it also recognizes that significant new investment in the agency will be needed to fully meet the needs of the LCP planning program and the state-local partnership.

Increased staff will be needed in other areas too if the Strategic Plan is to be fully implemented. For example, the Commission has a case load of more than 1800 pending violations. Currently, there are insufficient enforcement staff, including no officer for the North Coast, which severely hampers the Commission's ability to protect coastal resources. The Commission also needs additional staff in other programmatic areas, including public information management and statewide policy coordination. Without such staffing, the Commission's ability to communicate effectively about its programs and decisions is significantly diminished. The Commission currently has limited ability to keep its website current and almost no social media capacity in its core planning and regulatory programs. Likewise, many of the policy challenges that deserve increased inter-agency collaboration and coordination will not be effectively addressed without additional staff to participate in such efforts. For example, the Commission would benefit greatly from increased staffing in the Energy, Oceans, and Federal Consistency Unit, and in the area of climate change. With current staffing, such proactive policy efforts must be relegated to the time available after necessary regulatory and federal consistency work is completed.

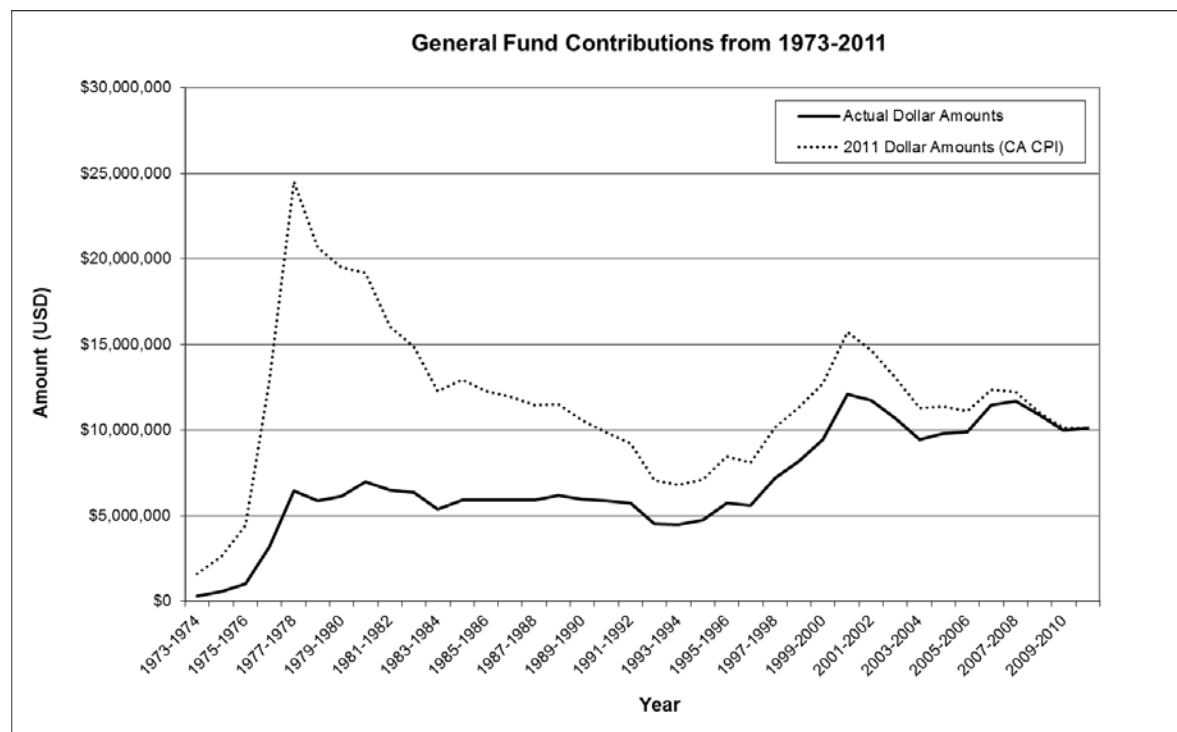


Figure 1. Coastal Commission General Fund Budget, Actual & 2011 Dollar Amounts. Adjusted with Consumer Price Indices for California, CA Department of Finance (http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/FS_DATA/LatestEconData/FS_Price.htm).

^[1] See Agenda Item 3, Public Workshop: Improving the Local Coastal Planning Process. (<http://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/mtg-mm12-12.html>).

Strategic Plan Integration and Implementation

As discussed in the Introduction, the Strategic Plan frames out an integrated set of goals, objectives and actions that are mutually-supportive. All of the goals support the ultimate objective of effective implementation of the Coastal Act and the Commission's mission to protect the coast for present and future generations. The goal of improving Agency Capacity is fundamental to the success of the core LCP and Regulatory programs of the Commission. In this respect, the immediate and highest priorities in the plan concern securing increased funding for the Agency, addressing staff succession planning, and building staff capacity. Without these actions, effective implementation will be more difficult.

High priority is also placed on the LCP Program, as this is the core implementation mechanism of the Coastal Act and the area most in need of increased investment to assure long run success in program implementation. Further, enhancing information management supports both improved Agency Capacity and the implementation of the LCP and Regulatory Programs. And, together, the four organizational goals directly support the Commission's implementation of the Coastal Act, including the priority policy areas identified for specific strategic action. As discussed earlier, ultimately all of the Coastal Act policies are supported by the Strategic Plan. The plan does focus, though, on enhancements to address specific aspects of public access, the protection of coastal resources, and responding to climate change.

In terms of the specific proposed actions, Appendix A indicates the relative timing of each action, and also whether additional funding is needed to undertake the action. A general estimation of the extent of funding needed is indicated with the range (\$-\$\$\$), with one dollar sign meaning a task could be accomplished with some additional funding or staffing, such as part time staffing, interns, or perhaps even volunteers; two dollar signs indicated that one or more new staff would be required; and three dollar signs indicating that multiple additional staff would be needed to fully implement the action. For example, to make significant progress with the LCP management actions, many more staff and a significant increase in the Commission's long-term baseline funding is needed. In contrast, developing the compendium of coastal habitats (2.1.1) – a discrete task -- may only require an additional part-time staff person for a limited duration.

B. POLICY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

The Coastal Act's resource management policies are captured in three fundamental goals:

- ◆ *Maximize Public Access and Recreation*
- ◆ *Protect Coastal Resources*
- ◆ *Address Climate Change through Local Coastal Program Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education*

The goal “Maximize Public Access and Recreation” expresses the mandates of Coastal Act sections 30210-30214 and 30220-30224, 30234-30234.5, 30240(b), 30250(c), 30251, 30252, and 30253(e). “Protect Coastal Resources” addresses sections 30222.5, 30230-30236, 30240-30244, 30250-30255, and 30260-30265.5. “Addressing Climate Change” will involve application of most if not all of the Coastal Act policies, but particularly those concerning hazards, the protection of public access and coastal resources, and providing for smart urban growth (e.g., concentrating development, minimizing energy use and vehicle miles traveled, and promoting public transportation, walking and bicycling). While distinct, the three goals are mutually supportive and complimentary. Responding to climate change through proactive planning and preparation will help protect coastal resources (including natural resources); protecting coastal resources enhances effective climate change response; and both of these goals contribute to a vital public access and recreational experience and a thriving economy along the coast.

GOAL 1: Maximize Public Access and Recreation

The Commission historically focuses on three major aspects of the Coastal Act mandate to protect public access and recreation: (a) protecting existing public access to and along the shoreline, including public views, (b) maximizing new public access opportunities including mitigating new development impacts to public access, and (c) protecting and providing visitor-serving commercial and recreational land uses, particularly lower-cost recreational opportunities like affordable overnight accommodations. In its forty-year history the Commission has secured more than 2,000 public access easements statewide, protected innumerable existing access resources, and provided a variety of lower-cost recreational opportunities, such as securing millions of in-lieu fee dollars to support new lower-cost visitor-serving uses.

Nonetheless public access and recreation on the coast is under continual and increasing pressure. California's population continues to grow and demand for coastal recreation and tourism opportunities increase. At the same time, public access continues to be threatened by private development, illegal encroachments or blockages, beach curfews and other restrictions on local beach access, and lack of adequate public parking or other restrictions, such as preferential residential parking programs, particularly in highly urbanized areas. In addition, climate change and sea level rise could jeopardize access and availability of state beaches, trails and other coastal access opportunities. These threats are magnified when coupled with fiscal pressures at the state and local level that both limit the ability to open and maintain new accessways and lead to closures, increases in access or parking fees, or reductions of existing public access.

The draft Strategic Plan focuses on four primary areas for achieving the goal of maximizing public access and recreation. First, there is a need to better understand, inventory, and assess current public access resources, including the state of vertical access to the coast and existing public parking resources or restrictions that support or inhibit public access. The Commission plays a central role through its own permitting process and in working with local governments in their permitting processes to ensure that public access is maintained consistent with principles and methodologies that are responsive to the local context yet consistently applied statewide. Objective 1.1 is intended to strengthen the Commission's informational and analytic resources in this area.

Second, the Commission is increasingly confronted with projects that have unavoidable impacts to access and recreation that must be mitigated. In particular, the Commission grapples with shoreline armoring projects that result in adverse impacts to beach recreational areas. There is a need for improved mitigation strategies, including methodologies to measure beach impacts, potentially such as economic and ecosystem services approaches. This need will be even greater with accelerated coastal erosion due to sea level rise (see Goal 3 also). The Commission must also continue to improve its implementation of previous mitigation requirements, including use of in-lieu fees for access, recreation, and overnight visitor-serving amenities, so that the impacts of previously-approved projects will be offset. Objective 1.2 frames multiple actions to improve the Commission's implementation of impact mitigation strategies.

Third, while the Commission has done a good job over the years providing public information about the state's public access resources, through the statewide Coastal Access Guide, the more recent Regional Guides, and on its website, improving the delivery of this information in digital form, through updated website information and social media would benefit public access. There is also a need to increase outreach to all Californians, particularly those in inland communities and in areas where the coast is less accessible, so that all Californians, not just those who live along the coast, have the information they need to better appreciate and access the wide array of coastal resources in the state. Objective 1.3 frames six actions to address these needs.

Finally, over the last decade the Commission has been directly involved with the State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy), Coastwalk California, and other stakeholders in the planning, designation, permitting, and implementation of the California Coastal Trail (CCT), including all vertical accessways and support facilities that serve to connect the public to the state's bluffs and beaches. There is an increasing need to focus on completion of the CCT as more of it is planned and designated. Community-level planning exercises are underway, and projects on or around Highway 1 continue to raise CCT issues. It is important, therefore, that the Commission focus its support of the CCT and its implementation through LCP planning and on-going permit reviews where applicable. This includes identifying and assessing constraints or potential conflicts between public access goals and other policy objectives, such as protection of sensitive habitats, agriculture and private property rights, and developing strategies to achieve the optimum balance between them while achieving the goal of a continuous and robust CCT. Objective 1.4 provides for this work.

Objective 1.1 – Enhance Public Access through Updated Beach Access Assessment and Constraints Analysis

Actions:

- 1.1.1 Document and assess existing public access facilities including vertical and lateral public accessways, parking constraints and fees, beach curfews, hours of operation, physical impediments, encroachments, and other unpermitted development that may be blocking or limiting public access.
- 1.1.2 Coordinate with local governments to develop guidelines regarding beach curfews, parking, hours of operation, and other access and management issues.
- 1.1.3 Coordinate with California State Parks on statewide shoreline access issues, including parking management, at state parks.
- 1.1.4 Conduct an assessment of existing and potential future public accessways, including unsecured Offers to Dedicate (OTD) vertical and lateral accessways, deed restrictions, prescriptive accessways, etc.; ensure those accessways are secured in permanent protection; identify the steps and work with partners to develop and open accessways for public use.
- 1.1.5 Identify locations where access may be limited or eliminated in the future due to sea level rise and increased storm events and begin planning for other options such as new vertical accessways to maintain maximum beach access (see also Action 3.2.1).

Objective 1.2 – Protect Public Access and Recreation by Implementing Improved Mitigation Strategies

Actions:

- 1.2.1 Evaluate methodologies for valuing and mitigating impacts to beach and coastal recreation and ecology from shoreline armoring. Provide updated guidance to applicants and local governments on assessing and mitigating impacts to public access and beach ecosystem services from shoreline armoring projects.
- 1.2.2 Work with the Conservancy, State Parks, and other state and local partners to identify, plan for, and provide new public access and recreational opportunities and lower-cost visitor-serving accommodations through effective allocation of existing and potential future in-lieu fees for such.
- 1.2.3 Enhance sediment management planning and programs in relation to beach impact mitigation through inter-agency coordination, research, and policy guidance.

Objective 1.3 – Improve Public Information about Public Access Opportunities and the California Coastal Trail (CCT) through Outreach and Education

Actions:

- 1.3.1 Update the statewide Coastal Access Guide book to include information produced for the Commission’s regional guide series and other new features that enhance the public’s knowledge about coastal access and how to experience coastal areas. Identify funding to support the provision of the Coastal Access Guide book in multiple languages.
- 1.3.2 Create county-level regional public access guide maps where feasible.
- 1.3.3 In coordination with the Conservancy, develop a web-based and/or mobile web application that provides maps and descriptions of coastal access and recreation resources.
- 1.3.4 Evaluate and pursue opportunities to provide information and increase public access and recreation for inland communities and other areas of the state to which the coast is less accessible.
- 1.3.5 Integrate the Commission’s existing database of secured public accessways into the new Coastal Data Management System (see Objective 6.1).
- 1.3.6 Develop recommended signage for new public accessways required by regulatory and enforcement decisions that recognizes the role of the Commission and other partners.

Objective 1.4 – Expand the California Coastal Trail System through Enhanced Planning and Implementation

Actions:

- 1.4.1 Evaluate the public access component of LCPs proposed for update to identify trail gaps, potential alignments, and policies and programs to establish and enhance CCT segments.
- 1.4.2 Coordinate with partners including the Conservancy, State Parks, and local governments to plan for and implement new CCT segments through an enhanced joint coastal access program.
- 1.4.3 Enhance coordination with Caltrans, State Parks and the Conservancy to assure effective CCT implementation through transportation project planning and development.
- 1.4.4 Identify locations of the CCT that might be at risk from rising sea level and increased storm events and begin planning for trail relocations or other alternatives to insure continued functionality of the CCT (see also Action 3.2.1).

GOAL 2: Protect Coastal Resources

Protecting and restoring sensitive coastal resources is also one of the highest priorities of the Commission. The Commission implements strong Coastal Act policies to protect and restore environmentally sensitive habitats, wetlands, and the marine environment. The Coastal Act also protects public access and recreation (see Goal 1), coastal agriculture, scenic and cultural resources, and priority coastal dependent and related land uses. All coastal resources are important, and when faced with a need to address potential impacts to these resources under the Coastal Act, the Commission does so.

However, there are certain priority needs under the broad goal of protecting coastal resources that require strategic action. In particular, the coastal environment is a dynamic system. Over the years the Commission continues to gain important knowledge and experience about coastal habitats and other resources. Scientific understanding has advanced, including concerning the vulnerability of various habitat types and species, restoration capabilities and limits, and the effects of climate change. Coastal planning and regulatory work incorporates and reflects this knowledge and experience, both to benefit the coastal environment and to provide clear and informative planning and regulatory policies for local government, applicants, and the public.

Objective 2.1 outlines various actions to develop, synthesize and update policy guidance materials concerning the protection, enhancement, restoration, and mitigation of wetlands and environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA). The Commission has developed significant expertise in wetlands definition, identification, delineation, restoration, and mitigation in the last decade. Provision of this knowledge to local governments, applicants, and professional staff would support LCP planning and coastal permitting. A similar need exists for the Commission's expertise and policy guidance concerning terrestrial habitats. In particular, there is a need to provide guidance on the types of habitats and species that typically trigger an ESHA concern, to provide for more certainty in the regulatory process and to assure adequate protection of ESHA, as well as on recommended policy approaches for identification, protection, restoration, mitigation, and buffering of ESHAs. Actions related to addressing climate change impacts on coastal resources like ESHA and wetlands are discussed in Goal 3.

Objective 2.2 specifically addresses a variety of marine resource protection actions to further the goal of protecting coastal resources. The Commission has been involved in statewide policy discussions and coordination concerning such topics as Marine Protected Areas, desalination, aquaculture, ecologically sound beach management, beach nourishment, and renewable energy, and the actions provided recognize the need to continue this work. Updated policy guidance on these topics is needed, as is on-going coordination with the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and other state agencies. The Commission continues to play an important role in the acquisition and provision of valuable marine mapping data. Of specific concern, the Commission needs to coordinate with the OPC, Fish and Wildlife Department, and Fish and Game Commission on issues related to implementation of the state's Marine Protected Areas network.

Objective 2.3 identifies high priority actions for continuing the Commission's work in the areas of oil spill prevention and response. As identified in the Lempert-Keen-Seastrand Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act, the Commission has responsibilities and receives funding from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response

(OSPR) to support coordination and other work to prevent oil spills that could adversely affect coastal resources.

Objective 2.4 identifies priorities for the Commission's water quality program, guided by information needs and statewide efforts to address polluted runoff. The Commission's water quality staff implements California's Nonpoint Source Program in cooperation with the State Water Board. The actions proposed will evaluate the effectiveness of implementing this Program over the past decade and propose updated guidance to improve effectiveness and evolving storm water requirements. Of particular concern, the Commission will need to work with the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards to coordinate on areas of mutual concern, such as providing LCP update guidance to effectively integrate and implement new stormwater policies in the coastal zone. In addition, staff will continue to promote measures, such as Low Impact Development, that minimize runoff from development in coastal areas through working with other state and local partners, developing tools, and conducting public education and outreach.

Finally, Objective 2.5 concerning coastal agriculture has several actions designed to further the Commission's mandate to protect agriculture in the coastal zone, as well as address the potential resource impacts of agriculture-related development. Updated guidance is needed to address changing agricultural economics and demographics and to assure that agriculture is not undermined by development pressures. The Commission also plans to conduct a public workshop on agricultural issues.

Objective 2.1 – Strengthen Implementation of Coastal Act ESHA and Wetland Policies with Updated Policy Guidance

Actions:

- 2.1.1 Develop a coastal habitats compendium that includes habitat characterizations and a summary of related planning and regulatory issues to support review of coastal development permit applications and LCP amendments by local governments and the Commission.
- 2.1.2 Collaborate with state and federal partners such as DFW and USFWS to improve understanding and implementation of best methods for avoiding and mitigating impacts to sensitive habitats.
- 2.1.3 Review and update as necessary policy guidance for coastal permitting and revising LCPs to address changed circumstances (ESHA definition and identification), habitat mapping, buffer and mitigation policies and emerging issues (e.g. bird safe buildings, beach grooming, fuel modification, native plant landscaping), to protect, enhance, and restore sensitive habitats.
- 2.1.4 Provide guidance on wetland identification, delineation, protection, enhancement, restoration and mitigation in the coastal zone for use by project applicants and local government.

- 2.1.5 Provide guidance to staff and local planners to facilitate projects that propose to enhance or restore coastal resources.
- 2.1.6 In cooperation with other agencies, nonprofits, and local governments, direct mitigation monies to identified habitat areas in need of restoration and protection.

Objective 2.2 – Protect Marine and Ocean Resources through Inter-Agency Coordination, Policy Review, and Updated Guidance

Actions:

- 2.2.1 Develop guidance for desalination, marine renewable energy, and near/offshore aquaculture applicants/interested parties describing applicable Coastal Act policies, necessary information for project review, appropriate impact avoidance and mitigation approaches, examples of permitted projects, and lessons learned.
- 2.2.2 Contribute data and design guidance to the OPC and State Technology Officer for the development of a State of California Data Portal for Ocean and Marine Geospatial Information.
- 2.2.3 Participate through interagency work groups, workshops, and reviewing and commenting on documents in the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) effort to develop a statewide "desalination policy" that addresses the use of marine intakes, in-plant dilution and brine disposal.
- 2.2.4 Participate in implementing the SWRCB's Once-Through Cooling (OTC) Policy and retirements/modifications to power plant OTC systems through membership on the Statewide Advisory Committee on Cooling Water Intake Structures ("SACCWIS") and the Nuclear Review Committee (for Diablo Canyon and the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS)).
- 2.2.5 Work with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the development of a statewide California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy.
- 2.2.6 Contribute as a member of the OPC's multi-agency work groups (e.g., the California Coastal and Marine Geospatial Working Group, the California Marine Renewable Energy Working Group, the California Emerging Industrial Uses of Ocean Working Group, and the Marine Debris Steering Committee).
- 2.2.7 Contribute to the CDFG Aquaculture Development Committee.
- 2.2.8 Work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Aquaculture Office in the development of the National Aquaculture Research and Development Strategic Plan.
- 2.2.9 Participate as a member or stakeholder in the potential future efforts of the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Regional Working Group organized by the West Coast

Governors Alliance (WCGA) to develop a West Coast Region Coastal and Marine Spatial Plan.

- 2.2.10 Continue to lead the Marine Debris Action Coordination Team (ACT) and improve participation in other WCGA ACTs like the Ocean Awareness and Literacy ACT and Climate Change ACT.
- 2.2.11 Coordinate with OPC and other agencies to develop guidance or other protocols for addressing the protection and management of Marine Protected Areas through Commission programs and decisions.
- 2.2.12 Develop new or updated policy guidance to address beach nourishment, beach grooming, shoreline armoring, and dredging.

Objective 2.3 – Improve Oil Spill Prevention and Response with Educational Materials

Actions:

- 2.3.1 Produce and disseminate public outreach educational materials explaining the Coastal Commission’s role and responsibilities in oil spill prevention and response.
- 2.3.2 Participate in efforts to improve communication between state and federal agencies, county offices of emergency services, and boating facilities in the event of a large oil spill, such as helping to disseminate the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Toolkit for Boating Facilities.

Objective 2.4 – Avoid and Mitigate Adverse Impacts of Development on Water Quality

Actions:

- 2.4.1 Assess effectiveness of permit conditions and LCP amendments approved by the Commission over the last decade in protecting coastal water quality.
- 2.4.2 Provide LCP and regulatory guidance to address Coastal Act water quality protection policies, incorporate and harmonize other state water quality requirements, and reduce or eliminate redundancies with state and regional water quality control board requirements .
- 2.4.3 Participate in state and interstate efforts to promote water quality protection policies and practices in the areas of Low Impact Development, hydromodification, watershed-based stormwater planning, marinas and recreational boating activities, marine protected areas, harmful algal blooms, and ocean acidification.
- 2.4.4 Assess impacts of recent or proposed development on coastal waters adjacent to Critical Coastal Areas and California’s Marine Protected Areas and recommend policies to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

Objective 2.5 – Protect Coastal Agriculture and Maximize Agriculture Production on Prime Agricultural Lands by Developing Updated LCP Guidance and Conducting Public Workshops

Actions:

- 2.5.1 Update LCP guidance on coastal agriculture to address changing agricultural economies, demographics and development pressures, climate change impacts and the need to maximize agricultural production on prime agricultural lands.
- 2.5.2 Assess and inventory potential impacts that agriculture-related development may have on coastal resources to support coastal planning. Explore streamlined or expedited permit review for appropriate agricultural development.
- 2.5.3 Conduct one or more Commission workshops with local governments, stakeholders and the public to discuss coastal agriculture.
- 2.5.4 Further explore agricultural land protection approaches and mechanisms that may be facilitated through Commission planning and regulatory actions to maximize the availability of agricultural lands to willing farmers.

GOAL 3: Address Climate Change through LCP Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education

Global sea level rise is accelerating and extreme storm events are increasing in intensity, both of which are exacerbating coastal shoreline hazards that the Commission must address, including coastal erosion and flooding. Public beaches and public access will be placed at increased risk in urban areas where there may be significant coastal armoring and little opportunity for natural retreat of the beach. Wetland protection and restoration decisions will need to account for changes in sea level rise. Coastal terrestrial and marine habitats are already changing with shifts in climate patterns. Hazards related to the frequency and severity of storms, floods, and wild fires will also change and potentially increase as the climate changes. Therefore, efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are important and the Commission can take action to support reductions in greenhouse gases through its planning and regulatory decisions.

Objectives 3.1 – 3.3 establish a broad set of tasks to systematically address the challenges of climate change. The Commission’s first priority will be to prepare and provide updated guidance to local governments and permit applicants to address sea level rise and extreme storm events in both LCP planning and project design. The Commission will also identify other areas affected by climate change where updated policy guidance is needed such as wildfires, wetland and ESHA migration/location.

More broadly, the Commission will pursue strategies to work closely with local governments to update LCPs to address coastal adaptation, including providing for resilient community development and infrastructure and ensuring the long term protection of public coastal resources such as vulnerable coastal habitats, recreational beach environments, and public access. And while the immediate implications of climate change cannot be reversed, Objective 3.3 includes

actions to implement smart growth and other strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow climate change over the long term. Overall, climate change affects nearly every coastal policy area that the Commission addresses; thus, Goal 3 is a high priority for strategic action.

Objective 3.1 – Develop Planning and Permitting Policy Guidance for Addressing the Effects of Climate Change on Coastal Resources

Actions:

- 3.1.1 Adopt general sea level rise (SLR) policy guidance for use in coastal permitting and LCP planning and amendment based on best available science, including the final report from the Natural Research Council of the National Academy of Science entitled, *Sea-Level Rise for the Coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington* (released June 2012)
- 3.1.2 Based on the general SLR policy guidance, identify and develop specific regulatory guidance for addressing coastal hazards, including recommendations for analytic methods for accounting for SLR and increased storm events in project analysis, standards for redevelopment and development in hazard zones (e.g. bluff top and flood zones), buffers for coastal wetlands, and policies for shoreline structure design and impact mitigation.
- 3.1.3 Develop work program to produce policy guidance for coastal permitting and LCPs to account for other climate change related impacts and adaptation planning including wetland, marine and terrestrial habitat protection, habitat migration, risk of wildfires, water supply and groundwater protection, etc.
- 3.1.4 Provide public information and guidance through workshops, presentations to local government, etc. Assist local governments with interpretation of scientific or other technical information related to climate change and sea level rise that could be of use in adaptation planning.
- 3.1.5 Contribute to relevant state-wide efforts on climate change and adaptation as a member of the State's Climate Action Team – Coast and Ocean Working Group.
- 3.1.6 Coordinate with Natural Resources Agency, Office of Planning and Research, California Emergency Management Agency and others to provide consistent guidance on climate change in updating general plans, hazard mitigation plans and other planning documents used by local governments
- 3.1.7 Coordinate with the State Lands Commission to address sea level rise and shoreline change and implications for the management of public trust resources.

Objective 3.2 – Assess Coastal Resource Vulnerabilities to Guide Development of Priority Coastal Adaptation Planning Strategies

Actions:

- 3.2.1 Conduct a broad vulnerability assessment of urban and rural areas to identify priority areas for adaptation planning, such as community development, public infrastructure,

public accessways, open space or public beaches at risk from sea level rise. Identify and participate in on-going vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning efforts as feasible.

- 3.2.2 Work with Caltrans and other public agency partners to assess and address roadway, rail, and other transportation infrastructure vulnerabilities, particularly along Highway One and other coastal roads and highways.
- 3.2.3 Work with the Department of Water Resources, SWRCB and local agencies to assess and address water and wastewater treatment plant vulnerabilities along the coast.
- 3.2.4 Work with the Conservancy, CDFG, US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) and other partners to assess the vulnerability of wetlands and other sensitive habitat areas. Identify habitats that are particularly vulnerable climate change and/or habitats that may be important for future habitat migration (e.g. wetland transitional areas).
- 3.2.5 Work with the Coastal Observing Systems, researchers, and others to identify and develop baseline monitoring elements to better understand and monitor changes in coastal conditions related to sea level rise and other climate change impacts.
- 3.2.6 With the Conservancy and OPC, develop and implement a competitive grant program to provide funding to selected local governments to conduct vulnerability assessments and/or technical studies that can be used to assess a community's risks from climate change and inform updates to LCPs.

Objective 3.3 – Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHGs) Emissions by Implementing Smart Growth, Other Mitigation Strategies, and Public Education

Actions:

- 3.3.1 Collaborate with other state agencies to evaluate policy options to promote Smart Growth strategies, green building, and other GHG emission reduction strategies, such as mixed-use and higher density development where appropriate, transit-oriented development, Blueprint Planning (SB 375), transportation demand management, and low-impact development strategies.
- 3.3.2 Prepare policy guidance to facilitate expedited permitting of small-scale alternative energy projects as appropriate such as solar and wind.
- 3.3.3 Provide information and resources to educators and to the general public to increase understanding and encourage action related to coastal development planning and development to reduce GHGs.
- 3.3.4 Identify and implement feasible measures to reduce the carbon footprint of the Commission's business operations.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

The Agency also has four priority organizational goals that will strengthen its ability to achieve the program policy goals. These are to: Strengthen the LCP Program; Improve the Regulatory Process, Compliance and Enforcement; Enhance Information Management and E-Government; and Build Agency Capacity (including public communications and program funding, and addressing human resources concerns).

GOAL 4: Strengthen the LCP Planning Program

While the Commission has achieved much through the Coastal Act's state-local partnership, the stresses of inadequate resources for on-going coastal planning have exacerbated conflict surrounding the LCP amendment process. There is a need to reinvest in LCP planning and comprehensive LCP updates to address on-going and dynamic coastal resource management challenges. There is also a need to consider changes in process at both the Commission and local level that may facilitate improved communication and collaboration, notwithstanding inadequate resources. The continued success of the coastal program is directly tied to the state-local partnership and the program's ability to keep LCPs current and responsive to on-going and emerging resource management challenges. Furthermore, many of the actions defined in Goals 1, 2 and 3 compliment the objectives and actions of Goal 4.

One of the important LCP strategies explained below concerns completing the certification of LCPs. While most of the coast (approximately 85% of the geographic area) is governed by a certified LCP, the remaining uncertified areas continue to pose a significant coastal permit workload for the Commission that should be the responsibility of local government. Actions are identified to pursue priority LCP certification targets, which should free up Commission resources over the long run to address on-going LCP planning needs in already-certified jurisdictions.

Other LCP objectives and actions are identified that will improve LCP program implementation. These include actions to support the updating of LCPs, to provide LCP documents in digital form and make them available online. Given the central role of LCPs in implementing the Coastal Act, it is critically important that they be up-to-date and available to the public. Objective 4.4 provides for continuing the Commission's on-going efforts to improve communication with local government and to improve Commission oversight and collaboration with local government concerning the coastal development process at the local level.

Objective 4.1 – Pursue Completion of LCP Certification for uncertified segments and Areas of Deferred Certification (ADC) Where Feasible

Actions:

- 4.1.1 Evaluate uncertified jurisdictions and ADCs; identify priority areas for LCP and ADC certification.
- 4.1.2 Conduct outreach and feasibility analysis for LCP and ADC certification(s) in identified priority areas.

- 4.1.3 Where local jurisdictions are willing, work together to identify funding and workload management strategies to support development and certification of LCPs and ADCs.

Objective 4.2 – Work with Local Governments to Update LCPs Where Feasible

Actions:

- 4.2.1 Identify LCPs most in need of a comprehensive update, and prioritize these LCPs by ongoing or potential impacts to coastal resources. Consider alternatives to full periodic reviews to identify issues that need addressing in certified LCPs.
- 4.2.2 For priority LCPS, work with local governments to evaluate feasibility of updates.
- 4.2.3 Provide and update online guidance to local governments for updating LCPs to improve the transmittal of key planning and policy information related to:
- (a) Climate change impacts, adaptation, and mitigation;
 - (b) Shoreline protective options and mitigation strategies;
 - (c) Evaluation of ESHA;
 - (d) Wetland delineations; and
 - (e) Protection of agricultural lands.
- 4.2.4 Identify and implement management strategies to allocate more staff time to LCP planning, coordination and updates.

Objective 4.3 – Provide and Maintain Certified LCPs Online

Actions:

- 4.3.1 Develop a phased strategy to acquire and provide LCPs in a digital library format, as resources allow.
- 4.3.2 Implement a pilot project to identify issues and draft protocols and procedures related to acquiring and maintaining digital LCPs.
- 4.3.3 Under the phased strategy in 4.3.1, secure resources to support acquisition and review accuracy of existing LCPs. Identify and correct any discrepancies between certified versions and those in use by the affected jurisdictions.
- 4.3.4 Integrate the digital LCP library with Coastal Data Management System Design (see also Action 6.4.3).

Objective 4.4 – Continue to Improve Communication and Planning with Local Government

Actions:

- 4.4.1 Work with League of Cities and California State Association of Counties to hold periodic Commission-local officials and/or local staff LCP workshops.

- 4.4.2 Continue to convene District-level meetings as feasible with local government staffs on a regular or as-needed basis to enhance coordination and communication.
- 4.4.3 Work with local government staff to establish regular working sessions/meetings on significant or comprehensive LCP updates prior to local approval of the LCP amendment. Conduct pre-submittal conferences on major LCP Amendments (see also Objective 4.2).
- 4.4.4 Provide information regarding the status of LCP Amendments online (see also Action 5.2.4).
- 4.4.5 Increase training on the LCP program and key coastal zone policy issues for local staff and officials as requested and feasible. Present background information on the Coastal Act and LCP implementation to local governments as requested and feasible.
- 4.4.6 Pursue joint LCP funding strategy with local government (see Action 7.4.2).

Objective 4.5 – Improve LCP Implementation through Monitoring of Locally-issued Coastal Develop Permits and Instituting Feedback Mechanisms

Actions:

- 4.5.1 Evaluate post-certification monitoring procedures and requirements; develop recommendations for improved final local action noticing, tracking, review, evaluation, reporting, and feedback to local governments.
- 4.5.2 Implement an online Final Local Action Notice (FLAN) posting system for locally-issued CDPs.
- 4.5.3 Provide guidance and staff training to improve and streamline post-certification monitoring as appropriate.
- 4.5.4 Evaluate the feasibility and consider implementing periodic LCP reviews to support LCP updates.

GOAL 5: Improve the Regulatory Process, Compliance and Enforcement

This goal identifies various objectives to improve the Commission's regulatory processes ranging from updating the Commission's regulations to building condition compliance and enforcement capacity. A variety of improvements and updates could be made to reflect the Commission's experience and to facilitate streamlining of the permit process. This goal also includes actions to improve the accessibility, clarity, and relevance of information and services to the public, such as improvements to the Commission's website and an online permit application system.

Condition compliance continues to be a major workload issue for the Commission and Objective 5.3 lays out actions to improve the condition compliance work of staff, including efforts to evaluate and consider changes that may improve the efficiency of reviews of recorded

documents that the Commission may require. Adequate review is time-consuming, though critical to the effectiveness of the Commission's program. Improvements that don't sacrifice levels of protection could be beneficial to both the program's resource protection goals and applicant desires for a stream-lined process. Objective 5.4 identifies a variety of actions needed to enhance the Commission's Enforcement program, including the need to increase program capacity through additional staffing, training and development of new tools. There are also actions to focus on program improvements, such as securing administrative penalty authority and using public information and outreach strategies to educate the public about the Commission's program and Coastal Act requirements. Finally, Objective 5.5 outlines actions for improving the federal consistency review process.

Objective 5.1 – Update the Commission's Code of Regulations

Actions:

- 5.1.1 Identify staff and workload management issues to perform an update of regulations. Assess feasibility of update.
- 5.1.2 Review regulations and identify needed changes, additions, corrections, deletions, etc. to provide for improved procedures, e-government, changed circumstances and improved and clarified compliance with Coastal Act and enforcement processes.
- 5.1.3 Initiate update of regulations with Office of Administrative Law (OAL).

Objective 5.2 – Improve Public Information and Services to the Public

Actions:

- 5.2.1 Update the Commission's website to make it more user-friendly and transmit relevant information clearly.
- 5.2.2 Develop an on-line permit application system (See also Objective 6.4).
- 5.2.3 Conduct stakeholder feedback surveys on provision of public services.
- 5.2.4 Explore providing permit and LCP status information online.

Objective 5.3 – Ensure Compliance with Coastal Development Permit Condition

Actions:

- 5.3.1 Evaluate, based on targeted review, status of compliance with CDP conditions, review and update special condition language, and develop recommendations for to improve special condition implementation, including recommendations concerning necessary condition compliance staffing and implementation

- 5.3.2 Implement improvements to condition compliance monitoring and enforcement, such as using mapping tools for data collection and data entry, conducting tracking and priority-setting, and coordinating with local governments.
- 5.3.3 Evaluate options to streamline the review of required recorded documents required as conditions of permits.

Objective 5.4 —Increase Compliance With and Enforcement of the Coastal Act

Actions:

- 5.4.1 Evaluate and implement enforcement options for reducing unpermitted development, including potential legislative and regulatory changes to address administrative penalties, information collection, and emergency authority; identify strategies and funding as required.
- 5.4.2 Develop outreach strategies and pursue increased staffing to educate the public on what requires a permit, how to report violations, and to make the CCC permit requirements and enforcement programs more visible, in order to avoid and deter violations.
- 5.4.3 Improve public outreach tools, including the following: increase web presence; issue periodic reports on the enforcement program; develop and use outreach and education materials working with other state and local government entities, private parties including development community and environmental organizations.
- 5.4.4 Encourage efficiency and coordination between state, federal, and local agencies involved in enforcement by the establishment of government task forces to resolve Coastal Act violations. Reach out to locations without a task force program and work to establish such programs.
- 5.4.5 Secure Administrative Penalty Authority to address Coastal Act violations and identify and work with other potential legislative changes to strengthen the enforcement program.
- 5.4.6 Seek program changes to require applicants to resolve violations on their property before they can submit a permit application for new development.
- 5.4.7 Seek increased funding for Enforcement Program staff, including establishing a North Coast enforcement officer position (7.4.3).
- 5.4.8 Enhance Enforcement Program including through increased staff training (7.7.3); public information (7.1.3); e-government tools (Goal 6, 6.2.5, 6.2.6, 6.4.6); and public and social media communications strategies (7.1.2).

Objective 5.5 – Improve Efficiency and Efficacy of the Commission’s Federal Consistency Program

Actions:

- 5.5.1 Update the list of federal permits that automatically fall under the category of review under federal consistency by the Coastal Commission.
- 5.5.2 Develop geographic location descriptions (GLDs) for federally permitted activities to provide more clear notice, shorten review times and reduce staff work load in reviewing federal consistency.

GOAL 6: Enhance Information Management and E-Government

Information management and e-government are critically-important to improving the Commission’s implementation effectiveness of the Coastal Act. The highest priority is successful implementation of a new Coastal Data Management System for the LCP planning and coastal development permitting programs. This project is largely funded and implementation is underway. The new system is anticipated to provide the Commission an enhanced capability to manage pending projects and provide current information to the Commission and the public to support program implementation.

Upgraded Information Technology (IT) capacity and new technologies to support the public process will also improve the Commission’s integration of geographic and project related information; provide for more transparent, digital processing of permit and LCP amendment applications; support digital delivery and archiving of Commission staff reports; and improve other aspects of information management. Ultimately the Commission seeks to maximize its use of digital technologies in support of program implementation. Long term goals include providing online permit application and use of digital media for noticing and other regulatory communications.

Objective 6.1 - Integrate existing Commission databases into the Coastal Data Management System (CDMS) (see also Objective 6.4).

Actions:

- 6.1.1 Consolidate multiple stand-alone databases with information on permits, LCPs and other agency work.
- 6.1.2 Develop a web-based user interface for staff to have easy access to information.
- 6.1.3 Move historic data into the CDMS.
- 6.1.4 Train Commission staff on the use and support of the CDMS.
- 6.1.5 Create and deploy an online web-interface to support public access to the CDMS.

- 6.1.6 Make the Commission’s permit and planning records, including final Commission actions and reports available to the public via the Internet.

Objective 6.2 – Improve integration of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other Mapping Resources into Planning, Permit Analysis and Enforcement

Actions:

- 6.2.1 Integrate the Commission’s GIS with the CDMS.
- 6.2.2 Develop datasets, tools and access for Commission staff and local governments to cadastral (parcel) detail digital boundaries for the Coastal Commission’s jurisdiction, including original permit, geographic appeal areas, categorical exclusion area and coastal zone boundary. Make the digital boundary maps and data available to the public.
- 6.2.3 Enhance tools, maps and imagery for staff reports and staff presentations.
- 6.2.4 Enhance staff use of digital tools and imagery in conducting spatial analysis of locations of proposed projects, permits, LCPs and enforcement cases.
- 6.2.5 Acquire aerial photo data of inland coastal areas within the coastal zone to assist with detection and monitoring of Coastal Act violations.
- 6.2.6 Train staff in GIS use and incorporate into investigation process. Acquire capability to use GPS systems in the field that can link to planning, permit, and enforcement information systems.

Objective 6.3 – Strengthen Information Technology (IT) Services Support and Availability of Those Support Services in the District Offices

Actions:

- 6.3.1 Conduct on-going training for all staff for use and support of new technologies and data systems deployed by the Commission.
- 6.3.2 Establish regional meetings with IT staff at each District office to go over technical issues and improvements.

Objective 6.4 – Develop and Implement E-Government Systems

Actions:

- 6.4.1 Update Commission’s Internet site using current state standards.
- 6.4.2 Evaluate, test and implement systems to support online filing of applications, noticing and related regulatory actions.

- 6.4.3 Complete the Commission's digital document library for all Commission actions from 1973 to the present, including converting paper records to a searchable digital format, linking to the Commission's final adopted reports, and linking all records to the CDMS. Make CDMS data available online as appropriate and as feasible.
- 6.4.4 Convert the Commission's monthly meeting agenda and staff reports to an e-packet format.
- 6.4.5 Standardize staff report templates.
- 6.4.6 Develop an online violation reporting system or other electronic means for the public to report potential violations.

Objective 6.5 – Improve Business Services by Upgrading Accounting, Business Services, and Human Resources (HR) Data Management

Actions:

- 6.5.1 Assess Accounting and Business Service needs for managing data. Use this information to identify, procure and deploy an appropriate software and/or database package to support integration of the business services and accounting systems.
- 6.5.2 Institute a staff-accessible online staff time tracking and reporting system.
- 6.5.3 Produce and maintain an up-to-date online staff directory for all Commission offices for easier access to staff contact information.

GOAL 7: Build Agency Capacity

Goal 7 outlines eight objectives to build the Commission's organizational capacity for the future. For example, the Commission has long lacked a formal public information program capacity to support communication with the public about the Commission's program. In the digital media age of today, the Commission must take advantage of these new opportunities to communicate information about the Commission's program, including its accomplishments and challenges, to the public. Similarly, Objective 7.3 identifies priorities for the Commission's Public Education Program that will engage new audiences and build program capacity in support of efforts to foster coastal awareness and stewardship.

Building the agency's capacity also involves boosting program funding and support, staffing and training, and addressing key personnel issues like succession planning, staff retention and recruitment. The area of staff training and capacity is perhaps most fundamental to the future success of the Commission, particularly with the anticipated level of retirements and necessary succession in the agency. Finally, this goal includes actions to improve internal communications, collaboration and coordination within the agency and with others.

Objective 7.1 – Improve Public Relations by Establishing a Public Information Program

Actions:

- 7.1.1 Pursue the establishment of a Public Information Officer/Social Media position.
- 7.1.2 Establish a Social Media Task Force to develop a strategy for using social media to implement agency programs and educate the public about the Commission, the coastal program and agency activities and accomplishments.
- 7.1.3 Work proactively with the media to provide information about Commission programs and decisions. Develop a press protocol, outreach strategy and model press releases to assist in providing information about planning, permitting, enforcement and other Commission actions.

Objective 7.2 - Revitalize the Coastal Program through Evaluation, Promotion, and Public Participation

Actions:

- 7.2.1 Prepare Program Report to celebrate and highlight Coastal Commission accomplishments since the passage of Proposition 20 in 1972.
- 7.2.2 Evaluate the feasibility of preparing a bi-annual program assessment report. If feasible, develop an implementation strategy that includes funding and a work plan for completing the work.
- 7.2.3 Identify strategies for improving and/or integrating existing federal reporting requirements with desired program evaluation goals to provide for more effective and efficient program evaluation.
- 7.2.4 Develop a public outreach, communication, and education strategy regarding Commission policy issues and regulatory activities that considers the following: a) a regular newsletter/highlights publication, b) Commission briefings or workshops, and c) reporting significant Commission accomplishments and decisions.
- 7.2.5 Raise awareness about the Coastal Act and Commission accomplishments through Commission-led programs that engage the public in coastal stewardship activities (i.e. Coastal Clean-up Day, Adopt-A-Beach).
- 7.2.6 Participate in the Assembly Select Committee on Coastal Protection, including providing information, evaluation, and other input concerning the California Coastal Management Program, implementation and emerging issues, and needed enhancements to support protection of coastal resources.
- 7.2.7 Evaluate the Commission's program and opportunities to enhance the protection of cultural resources, including in relation to the Natural Resource Agency's Tribal Consultation policy.

Objective 7.3 – Improve and Expand the Commission’s Public Education Programs through Increased Public Participation and Improved Educational Materials

Actions:

- 7.3.1 Increase public participation in programs such as Adopt-A-Beach and Coastal Cleanup Day through on-line registration; expand programs into new geographic areas throughout California watersheds.
- 7.3.2 Expand the “bring your own” campaign, which encourages participants to bring reusable supplies to beach cleanups, and create new initiatives to reduce the environmental footprint of Coastal Commission-led events and activities.
- 7.3.3 Update and increase educational resources offered to teachers, non-formal educators, and the public.

Objective 7.4 – Increase Program Funding and Support through Program Evaluation and Information Sharing

Actions:

- 7.4.1 Evaluate funding opportunities and constraints within current funding streams (i.e. General Fund, Special Funds, federal fund, fees) and authorities; evaluate potential additional non-general fund revenue sources; examine budget allocations within existing funding streams and opportunities for streamlining.
- 7.4.2 Prepare a Budget Change Proposal (BCP) to request enhanced support for LCP planning. Work with partners, including local governments, on a joint budget enhancement strategy to secure additional funds.
- 7.4.3 Seek to increase staffing in core program responsibilities, including LCP planning, coastal permitting, enforcement, energy and ocean resources and federal consistency, statewide planning, and policy coordination on climate change and marine resource management issues.
- 7.4.4 Update the public information “fact sheets” used to inform the Legislature, Governor and their staff during the annual budget process.
- 7.4.5 Research and pursue opportunities for technical assistance from federal or other agency partners that could assist the Commission in achieving its goals (i.e. technical assistance available from NOAA).
- 7.4.6 Promote the Whale Tail License Plate and cultivate other funding sources to increase the Public Education Program’s capacity.

Objective 7.5 – Develop a Succession Plan to Prepare for Pending Retirements

Actions:

- 7.5.1 Evaluate retirement projections and program implications for the next three to five years.
- 7.5.2 Identify and implement succession planning strategies/mechanisms.

Objective 7.6 – Develop a Staff Recruitment Strategy

Actions:

- 7.6.1 Identify program areas where staffing needs are most critical; develop strategies to acquire necessary staff in core program areas
- 7.6.2 Identify opportunities and strategies for enhanced outreach to recruit a diverse and highly qualified applicant pool for needed positions.
- 7.6.3 Expand the Commission's Internship Program.
- 7.6.4 Continue to take full advantage of fellowship opportunities offered by the NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship Program, California Sea Grant and others.

Objective 7.7 – Increase Staff Satisfaction and Retention through Mentoring, Training and Professional Development Opportunities

Actions:

- 7.7.1 Define, develop and implement a mentoring program.
- 7.7.2 Develop Staff Training and Professional Development Program
- 7.7.3 Conduct regular staff training including technical services, legal/real estate, and enforcement.
- 7.7.4 Update and disseminate staff training materials.
- 7.7.5 Seek approval from California Human Resources (CalHR) to establish a new Senior Coastal Program Analyst (CPA) position (non-supervisory) to increase professional growth and development opportunities within the CPA job classification series.
- 7.7.6 Pursue structural salary increases for CPA and other job classifications.
- 7.7.7 Acknowledge staff accomplishments and years of service at Commission meetings and/or other opportunities.

Objective 7.8 – Improve Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration

Actions:

- 7.8.1 Establish internal communication and coordination mechanisms to improve staff-to-staff communication and coordination; evaluate as needed to determine efficacy.
- 7.8.2 Consider establishing new staff task forces or work groups to implement strategic actions.
- 7.8.3 Improve communication and coordination with other state agencies on relevant policy issues related to the Commission’s regulatory and planning work.
- 7.8.4 Work with Ocean Science Trust and other state or academic research institutions to ensure Commission decisions are informed by the best available science and to inform state agency and academic research needs.

Appendix A. Coastal Commission Strategic Plan Action Implementation Schedule

Objective/Actions		Short-term (1-2 yrs)	Mid-term (2-3 yrs)	Long-term (4-5 yrs)	Funding/Staff Needed?
Public Access 1.1. Updated Assessment					(\$ - \$\$\$)
1.1.1	Document and Assess Existing Access Resources				\$\$
1.1.2	Prepare Public Access Management LCP Guidance				\$
1.1.3	Coordinate with California State Parks				
1.1.4	Assess and Open Unsecured OTDs				\$
1.1.5	Conduct PA Vulnerability Assessment (also 1.4.4; 3.2.1)				\$\$
Public Access 1.2. Implement Mitigation Strategies					
1.2.1	Develop Beach Rec and Eco. Guidance				\$
1.2.2	Identify In Lieu Fee Mitigation Projects (incorporates former 1.2.3)				\$\$
1.2.3	<i>Enhance Sediment Management Planning and Programs</i>				\$\$
Public Access 1.3. Improve Public Information					
1.3.1	Update Coastal Access Guide				
1.3.2	Create County Access Guide Maps				\$\$
1.3.3	Develop Web/Mobile Public Access Mapping Resources and Tools				\$
1.3.4	Increase Outreach/Access to Inland/Underserved Communities				\$\$
1.3.5	Integrate Access Inventory into new Data Management System				
1.3.6	Develop Signage Guidance for CCC-related Projects				
Public Access 1.4. Expand the California Coastal Trail System					
1.4.1	Evaluate/Update LCP CCT Planning and Policies				\$\$
1.4.2	Enhance the Joint Coastal Access Program with the Conservancy				
1.4.3	Enhance Inter-agency Coordination				
1.4.4	Conduct CCT Vulnerability Assessment (also 1.1.5; 3.2.1)				\$\$
Coastal Resources 2.1. Provided Updated ESHA & Wetlands Protection Guidance					
2.1.1	Develop Coastal Habitats Compendium				\$
2.1.2	Collaborate with DFW and USFWS on Mitigation Methodologies				\$\$
2.1.3	Update ESHA LCP Guidance				
2.1.4	Provide Wetland Protection Guidance				
2.1.5	Develop Guidance to Facilitate Restoration Projects				\$
2.1.6	Identify Priority Restoration Projects/Opportunities				\$\$
Coastal Resources 2.2. Protect Marine and Ocean Resources					
2.2.1	Develop Guidance for Desal, Renewable Energy, Aquaculture				\$\$
2.2.2	Support Development of CA Ocean & Marine Data Portal				\$
2.2.3	Participate in Development of SWRCB Desalination Policy				\$\$
2.2.4	Participate in Implementation of SWRCB OTC Policy				\$\$
2.2.5	Assist NMFS with Development of Eelgrass Mitigation Policy				
2.2.6	Participate as Member of OPC Work Groups				
2.2.7	Participate in CDFW Aquaculture Development Committee				\$\$
2.2.8	Participate in Development of NOAA Aquaculture Plan				
2.2.9	Participate in WCGA Work Groups/Marine Spatial Planning				\$\$
2.2.10	<i>Participate in WCGA Marine Debris and Climate Change Work Groups</i>				
2.2.11	<i>Develop Guidance to Address Marine Protected Areas</i>				\$\$
2.2.12	<i>Develop Guidance to Address Beach Management & Dredging</i>				\$\$
Coastal Resources 2.3. Improve Oil Spill Prevention and Response					
2.3.1	Provide Public Education Materials				

Appendix A. Coastal Commission Strategic Plan Action Implementation Schedule

2.3.2	Facilitate Improved Communication among Responders				
Coastal Resources 2.4. Improve Water Quality Protection and Impact Mitigation					
2.4.1	Evaluate Effectiveness of Permit Conditions and LCP Amds				
2.4.2	Update LCP Water Quality Protection Guidance				
2.4.3	Promote WQ Protection Policies and Practices				
2.4.4	Develop tools and policies to track and address MPA impacts				\$\$
Coastal Resources 2.5. Protect and Maximize Agriculture					
2.5.1	Update Agriculture LCP Guidance				
2.5.2	Explore Options for Expedited Permit Review for Agriculture				\$\$
2.5.3	Conduct Agricultural Workshop				
2.5.4	Explore use of Agricultural land protection mechanisms				\$\$
Climate Change 3.1. Develop LCP & Permitting Guidance					
3.1.1	Adopt LCP & Permitting Sea Level Rise Guidance				
3.1.2	Develop Coastal Hazards LCP & Permitting Guidance				\$\$
3.1.3	Develop Climate Change LCP and Permitting				\$\$
3.1.4	Provide Public Information on Adaptation Planning				\$\$
3.1.5	Participate in Climate Action Team				\$
3.1.6	Coordinate with NRA/OPR/CEMA re Hazard Mitigation Plans				\$\$
3.1.7	Coordinate with State Lands Commission re SLR & Public Trust				\$\$
Climate Change 3.2. Assess Coastal Resource Vulnerabilities					
3.2.1	Conduct Assessment of Urban/Rural Areas				\$\$
3.2.2	Work with Partners to Assess Transportation Infrastructure				\$\$
3.2.3	Work with DWR/SWRCB to Assess Water/Wastewater Infrastructure				\$\$\$
3.2.4	Work with Partners to Assess Natural Resources				\$\$\$
3.2.5	Work with Coastal Observing System re Monitoring Baseline				\$
3.2.6	Implement Grant Program with SCC/OPC to support LCP Updates				
Climate Change 3.3. Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions					
3.3.1	Evaluate Policy Options to Promote Smart/Sustainable Growth				\$\$
3.3.2	Develop Policy Guidance to Expedite Alternative Energy				\$
3.3.3	Provide Public Information re GHG Reduction				\$\$
3.3.4	Reduce GHG Footprint of Commission's Operations				
Local Coastal Programs 4.1. Pursue LCP Certification					
4.1.1	Evaluate Uncertified Jurisdictions & ADCs				
4.1.2	Conduct Outreach/Feasibility Analysis for LCP Certification				
4.1.3	Implement LCP Certification Strategy				\$\$\$
Local Coastal Programs 4.2 Update LCPs					
4.2.1	Identify Priority LCP Update Needs				
4.2.2	Evaluate Feasibility of Updates				
4.2.3	Update Online LCP Guidance				
4.2.4	Implement Staff Management Strategies to Support LCP work				
Local Coastal Programs 4.3. Develop "Digital" LCPs					
4.3.1	Develop Strategy to Provide Digital LCPs				
4.3.2	Implement Pilot Project				
4.3.3	Implement Digital LCP Acquisition Strategy				\$\$
4.3.4	Integrate Digital LCPs with Data Management System				\$\$
Local Coastal Programs 4.4. Improve Local Government Communication					
4.4.1	Conduct Periodic Local Government Workshops				\$

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4.4.2	Convene District-level Coordination Meetings				\$\$\$
4.4.3	Conduct Early Coordination on Major LCP Amds/Updates				\$\$\$
4.4.4	Provide LCP Amendment Status Information Online				\$\$
4.4.5	Increase LCP Training/coordination for Local Government				\$\$\$
4.4.6	Pursue Joint LCP Funding Strategy with Local Government				
Local Coastal Programs 4.5. Improve LCP Implementation					
4.5.1	Evaluate and Improve Post-certification Monitoring				\$\$
4.5.2	Implement Online Posting of Final Local Action Notices				
4.5.3	Provide Training on Post-certification Monitoring				
4.5.4	Evaluate Feasibility of Implementing LCP Periodic Reviews				\$\$\$
Regulatory Programs 5.1. Update Code of Regulations					
5.1.1	Assess Feasibility of Update				
5.1.2	Identify Priority Regulation Updates				\$
5.1.3	Initiate Update of Regulations				\$\$
Regulatory Programs 5.2. Improve Public Information and Service					
5.2.1	Update Commission Website				\$\$
5.2.2	Develop Online Permit Application System				\$\$
5.2.3	Conduct Stakeholder Surveys on Public Services				\$\$
5.2.4	Provide Permit/LCP Status Information Online				\$\$
Regulatory Programs 5.3. Ensure Condition Compliance					
5.3.1	Evaluate Status of Condition Compliance				\$\$
5.3.2	Improve Condition Compliance Monitoring				\$\$
5.3.3	Evaluate Options to Streamline Recorded Documents Protocols				\$
Regulatory Programs 5.4. Increase Compliance with Coastal Act					
5.4.1	Evaluate Enforcement Options to Reduce Unpermitted Development				\$\$
5.4.2	Develop Enforcement Public Information Outreach Strategy				\$\$
5.4.3	Enhance Enforcement Tools for Public Outreach				\$\$
5.4.4	Establish Interagency Enforcement Task Forces				\$\$\$
5.4.5	Secure Administrative Penalty Authority to address Violations				
5.4.6	Seek Program Changes to address Violations through Permitting				
5.4.7	Seek Increased Staffing for Enforcement Program				
5.4.8	Enhance Enforcement Program through Cross-cutting strategies				
Regulatory Programs 5.5. Improve Federal Consistency Program					
5.5.1	Update List of Federal Permits				
5.5.2	Develop Geographic Location for Federal Activities				\$\$
Information & E-Government 6.1. Integrate Databases					
6.1.1	Consolidate/integrate Commission Databases				
6.1.2	Develop web interface for CDMS				
6.1.3	Move Historical Data into CDMS				
6.1.4	Train Commission Staff to use CDMS				
6.1.5	Deploy Public web interface for CDMS				\$
6.1.6	Provide CDMS Permit and LCP Data to Public via Internet				\$
Information & E-Government 6.2. Integrate GIS into Planning and Permitting					
6.2.1	Integrate GIS with CDMS				
6.2.2	Develop digital CCC boundary maps				
6.2.3	Enhance GIS tools to support staff reports and presentations				
6.2.4	Provide Staff Training on GIS Analysis				

Appendix A. Coastal Commission Strategic Plan Action Implementation Schedule

6.2.5	Acquire Photo Data of Inland Coastal Zone Areas				\$\$
6.2.6	Implement GIS Field Tools				\$\$
Information & E-Government 6.3. Strengthen IT Support in District Offices					
6.3.1	Conduct Ongoing Training on Information Systems				
6.3.2	Establish Regular Regional IT Training Sessions				\$\$
Information & E-Government 6.4. Implement E-Govt Systems					
6.4.1	Update Commission's Website				\$\$
6.4.2	Implement Online Permit Application System				
6.4.3	Complete Digital Archive of Commission Actions				\$\$
6.4.4	Implement Digital Meeting Materials				
6.4.5	Standardize Staff Report Templates				
6.4.6	Develop Online Violation Reporting System				
Information & E-Government 6.5. Improve Business Services Information Systems					
6.5.1	Assess Business Services Data Management Needs				\$
6.5.2	Implement Online Timesheet and Reporting System				\$\$
6.5.3	Develop and Maintain Online in-house staff directory				
Agency Capacity 7.1. Improve Public Relations					
7.1.1	Establish Public Information Officer Position				\$\$
7.1.2	Establish Social Media Task Force				
7.1.3	Develop Press Protocol and Outreach Strategy				\$\$
Agency Capacity 7.2. Program Evaluation and Promotion					
7.2.1	Prepare Program Report				\$\$
7.2.2	Evaluate Feasibility of Bi-annual Program Assessment				
7.2.3	Identify Strategies to Streamline/integrate Reporting				
7.2.4	Implement Communication Strategy for Commission Activities				\$\$
7.2.5	Raise Awareness about Coastal Commission Programs (PE)				\$\$\$
7.2.6	Participate in the Select Committee on Coastal Protection				
7.2.7	Enhance Protection of Cultural Resources and Consultation				
Agency Capacity 7.3. Expand Public Education Programs					
7.3.1	Increase Public Participation in PE Programs				\$
7.3.2	Expand "Bring your own" and other resource reduction programs				\$
7.3.3	Update Resources for Educators				
Agency Capacity 7.4. Increase Program Funding					
7.4.1	Evaluate Funding Opportunities and Strategies				
7.4.2	Prepare BCP to support LCP Planning				
7.4.3	Pursue Increased staffing in Core Program				
7.4.4	Update Commission "Fact Sheets"				
7.4.5	Research Technical Assistance Opportunities				
7.4.6	Continue Promoting Whale Tail Program and Seek More Funding				
Agency Capacity 7.5. Develop Succession Plan					
7.5.1	Evaluate Retirement Projections and Program Impacts				
7.5.2	Implement Succession Planning Strategies				
Agency Capacity 7.6. Develop Staff Recruitment Strategy					
7.6.1	Identify and Pursue Critical Staffing Needs				\$
7.6.2	Improve Staff Recruitment				\$\$
7.6.3	Expand Commission Internship Program				\$
7.6.4	Continue NOAA, Sea Grant, and other fellow programs				

Appendix A. Coastal Commission Strategic Plan Action Implementation Schedule

Agency Capacity 7.7. Strengthen Staff Capacity				
7.7.1	Develop Mentoring Program			
7.7.2	<i>Develop Staff Training and Professional Development Program</i>			\$
7.7.3	Conduct Regular Staff Training			\$\$
7.7.4	Update Staff Training Materials			\$
7.7.5	Pursue Establishing Senior Coastal Analyst Position			\$
7.7.6	Pursue Structural Salary Increases			\$
7.7.7	Establish Staff Recognition Program			
Agency Capacity 7.8. Improve Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration				
7.8.1	Establish new internal communication mechanisms			
7.8.2	Consider establishing new intra-agency task forces			
7.8.3	<i>Enhance Inter-agency Coordination and Communication</i>			\$
7.8.4	<i>Coordinate with Ocean Science Trust and Academic Institutions</i>			\$\$

Exhibit 1

Draft Strategic Plan

Public Comment Received

Draft Strategic Plan Public Comments Received

- 1) Axelson & Corn Attorneys at Law (page 1)
- 2) California Coastal Protection Network (page 4)
- 3) City of Coronado (page 11)
- 4) City of Half Moon Bay (page 12)
- 5) City of Newport Beach (page 15)
- 6) City of Santa Barbara (page 18)
- 7) Coastside Land Trust, Half Moon Bay (page 20)
- 8) Coastwalk (page 21)
- 9) Del Norte County Board of Supervisors (page 25)
- 10) Environmental Health Coalition (page 29)
- 11) Member of the Public (page 30)
- 12) Friends of Del Norte (page 33)
- 13) Heal the Bay (page 35)
- 14) Member of the Public (page 41)
- 15) Member of the Public (page 45)
- 16) Member of the Public (page 47)
- 17) NRDC and Ocean Conservancy (page 48)
- 18) NOAA (page 51)
- 19) Coastal Conservancy (page 53)
- 20) Sierra Club (page 56)
- 21) Southern California Edison (page 60)
- 22) Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (page 63)
- 23) Surfrider Foundation (page 65)
- 24) Ventura County Board of Supervisors (page 82)
- 25) Weseloh & Young Real Estate (page 87)
- 26) City of Ventura (page 88)
- 27) Marian Saldo (page 91)
- 28) County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development Department (page 92)

February 22, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Comments on Strategic Plan 2013 - 2018

Dear Coastal Commission:

We write to provide comments on the Commission's Draft Strategic Plan submitted on behalf of the Beach & Bluff Conservancy (BBC), the Condominium Owners of South Sierra Avenue (COOSSA), the HOAs for the most of the oceanfront condominium projects in Solana Beach, numerous individuals, and the undersigned. Together, these organizations and my firm represent more than 1,400 coastal property owners in Solana Beach, Encinitas, and Carlsbad, California.

1. Sand Replenishment

We urge you to include proactive sand replenishment programs as a high priority goal to the Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan.

In Southern California especially, intensive development within the upland watershed blocks more than 95% of natural sediment flow to the beach. This highly unnatural condition, caused by the collective actions of society over many years, causes beach erosion, access problems, safety problems, and it endangers coastal development giving rise to the need for seawalls.

In highly urbanized areas, especially at beaches backed with coastal bluffs, it is critically important to replenish the sand that development within the upland watershed has removed from the littoral system. Sand on the beach has many proven benefits including:

1. Increased public safety;
2. Improved vertical and lateral access;
3. Increased property values and property tax base;
4. Enhanced tourism opportunities and desirability;
5. Enhanced beach quality making the beach more enjoyable;
6. Enhanced surf break quality and other beach recreation opportunities;
7. Enhanced habitat for seabirds, aquatic animals, and marine plants;
8. Protects coastal dependent facilities and coastal structures; and,

Santa Cruz

San Diego

Las Vegas

9. Reduces the need for seawalls and similar coastal protection devices.

In short, sand replenishment will help the Commission achieve its core mandate of maximizing public access and recreation and protecting coastal resources. We request that the Coastal Commission play a proactive role in the development of programs and initiatives to place sand on the beach, and that such programs be included as a HIGH PRIORITY goal of the Commission's Strategic Plan. The Commission expends virtually all of its resources in a quasi-judicial capacity presiding over CDP applications and CDP appeals. All citizens would benefit if the Commission used its considerable power and influence to proactively bring sand to our state's beaches. The developments of mankind have interrupted natural sand flow and it is now up to our government to restore this balance to the littoral system.

2. Acknowledge Need for Seawalls in Urbanized Beach Areas Backed by Coastal Bluffs

We urge to you recognize that public access implies safe access and use of the beach by beachgoers. Given coastal erosion, beachgoers have no choice but to recreate closer and closer to dangerous and unstable coastal bluffs. Five beachgoers have been killed in North San Diego County alone by sudden bluff collapses since 1995. We believe that protecting beachgoers with seawalls should be a high priority. Coupled with sand replenishment, seawalls (many of which will be paid for by private property owners along with mitigation fees) represent the best chance to protect the public in California's urban beaches. We do not advocate for seawalls in California's wild lands and rural areas. However, popular and crowded beaches backed by coastal bluffs should be stabilized.

Seawalls protect the public and thereby increase lateral access and recreational opportunities. Coupled with sand replenishment (which could be paid for or subsidized by mitigation fees), seawalls will not cause passive erosion, but will instead eliminate the danger zone that often times extends 30 to 40 feet from the toe of an unprotected bluff.

For these reasons, we urge you to include as a high priority goal a proactive policy to encourage shoreline armoring on coastal bluffs on California's urban beaches.

3. Acknowledge Importance of Protecting Private Property Rights

We urge you to expressly acknowledge the importance of establishing a fair balance between protecting coastal resources and constitutionally guaranteed property rights.

Article 1, Section 1 the California Constitution provides:

All people are by nature free and independent and have inalienable rights. Among these are enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining safety, happiness, and privacy. (emphasis added).

The Coastal Act acknowledges this important balance at §30001.5(c), §30235, and other provisions.

The Strategic Plan, as currently written, does not recognize or give any priority to these constitutional and legislative mandates. Private property owners, at their cost, are increasing safe, public access to, on and along the beach; are protecting public infrastructure; and are preserving property tax bases. Our mitigation fees pay for sand replenishment and increased recreational opportunities.

3. Improved Due Process for CDP Applicants

We urge you to increase as a high priority goal, improvements to your CDP application and hearing process. Currently, applicants do not see the 50 or 100-page staff report until just a few days before their scheduled hearings when there is little or no time to fully digest their contents, work with staff to answer questions or resolve discrepancies, or adequately prepare for their hearing. When it comes to the hearing, applicants are given just 15 minutes to make their case before the public hearing closes. Applicants can then only sit and watch while the Commissioners discuss their applications with Coastal staff for an unlimited amount of time.

We urge to you look for ways to improve the fairness within your CDP application and hearing process. This should be a high priority goal as well.

Respectfully submitted,

AXELSON & CORN, P.C.



Jon Corn



CALIFORNIA COASTAL PROTECTION NETWORK
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WWW.COASTALADVOCATES.COM

February 22, 2013

Mary Shallenberger, Chair
California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Comments on the California Coastal Commission Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Dear Chair Shallenberger and Members of the Commission,

The California Coastal Protection Network (CCPN) hereby submits comments on the California Coastal Commission's Draft Strategic Plan for the period 2013-2018. The Strategic Plan presents an important opportunity: by outlining a clear vision and priorities for the coming years, the Commission can enhance California's ability to protect its world-class coastal resources and ensure the health and sustainability of the communities who depend on them. CCPN commends the Commission for taking this important step.

In this letter, CCPN respectfully suggests ways to further clarify and prioritize the Commission's goals and to strengthen its ability to obtain support for priority activities.

Background

Since its inception, the Coastal Commission has built an accomplished track record of using policy, planning, and regulatory tools to protect California's coastal and marine ecosystems, expand public access to the shore and ocean, and guide sustainable development. With dedicated staff and a strong legal mandate, the Commission has continued to succeed in its mission in the face of budgetary challenges that have repeatedly impacted its capacity and resources since the 1980s.

Today, the Coastal Commission faces new challenges in addition to the old. Changes in energy policy and technology are bringing ocean renewables such as wind and wave to the brink of feasibility, even as they renew interest in fossil fuels offshore and along the coast. The unwise siting and regulation of ocean desalination facilities may undercut the ecological benefits promised by the pending retirement of California's coastal power plant fleet – a promise made by the Legislature when it required all new and expanded coastal facilities to adopt the best technologies to minimize impacts on marine resources. The need to prepare for sea level rise and extreme events exacerbates the already pressing need to update local coastal plans (LCPs). Meanwhile, a new network of marine

protected areas (MPAs) has laid the foundation for innovative ways of thinking about coastal and ocean ecosystem protection, community stewardship of the coast, and climate change adaptation.

The need to reinvigorate California's Coastal Management Program (CCMP) to address these complex issues was highlighted in 2010, when the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in the course of a periodic evaluation, required the Commission to update its Strategic Plan. OCRM noted that the Strategic Plan had not been updated since 1997 and needed to be revised to reflect current and emerging priorities in light of significant resource constraints. In response, the Commission's staff prepared a Draft Strategic Plan to cover the period from 2013-2018. In the December 2012 version of that document, the Commission identified 7 goals, 35 objectives and 155 specific potential actions it hoped to undertake during that period. CCPN is writing in response to that draft and to the Commission discussion that ensued at the January hearing in Pismo Beach.

Recommendations:

Below are CCPN's recommendations for priorities to be addressed in the Commission's Strategic Plan for 2013-2018. We urge the Commission to adopt a visionary approach, focus on finding additional funding to rebuild and expand the program, prioritize the completion of LCP updates and certifications, and evaluate how to best incorporate needed policy adjustments into Coastal Act requirements.

- ***View the Strategic Plan as a Blueprint for Advancing Coastal Policy in California***

The Strategic Plan provides the Commission with a unique opportunity to lay out its vision of the challenges facing the coast and the resources and actions that are necessary for the Commission to fulfill its mission to protect coastal resources over the long term. In this sense, the Commission may want to consider that the audience for this Strategic Plan will not be limited to NOAA, but is likely to include decision-makers in Sacramento, sister state agencies including the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the State Lands Commission, the Ocean Protection Council and others, local governments, and other stakeholders with whom the Commission can coordinate and partner to advance coastal protection statewide. As such, the Strategic Plan should not be framed simply as a 'reaction' to NOAA's evaluation, but should embrace a bold vision of how the Commission can rebuild core programs and work with partners to address the challenges that have emerged since the Coastal Initiative was passed in 1972.

- ***Identify and Prioritize Additional Funding as Key to Future Success of the Program***

The Draft Strategic Plan identifies an extensive scope of work. It will be literally impossible for the Commission to rebuild the program and carry out a significant portion of the priorities identified in this draft without a substantial infusion of additional stable, year-to-year funding. Yet the Commission's critical need for funding is not addressed until Objective 7.4, on page 36 of 38 pages, and then only in a limited way.

If the Commission is to be successful in receiving additional funding, regardless of the source, it should make a strong case up front in this Strategic Plan by detailing the losses in funding and positions it has sustained over the last decades and the resulting challenges to effectiveness and efficiency.

To keep its focus on obtaining additional sustainable funding, the Commission should consider the creation of a working group that includes stakeholders from local government and NGOs and is solely dedicated to pursuing creative funding options for the Commission. The Commission should receive an update on progress towards additional funding as a regular part of its monthly agenda.

- ***Consider a two-track analysis that identifies what the Commission will be able to accomplish with its existing resources vs. what is achievable with additional funding.***

In preparing its Strategic Plan, the State Coastal Conservancy set goals and objectives and clearly identified what it could expect to achieve if (a) it were not able to obtain funding beyond current levels and (b) what projects and activities it would pursue if it was able to obtain additional funding. The Commission should consider undertaking a similar analysis for inclusion in its strategic plan so that decision-makers and potential funders are fully aware of the risks associated with a flat or declining budget in the years ahead, versus what could be achieved if additional funding were secured.

- ***Updating Local Coastal Plans and Certifying Uncertified Areas (e.g. Los Angeles County, Santa Monica Mountains) must be at the top of the Commission's priorities.***

Most of the certified LCPs, which provide the dominant form of guidance for development throughout the coastal zone, are out of date. Efforts to update them are hamstrung by the lack of a regulatory requirement or penalty in the Coastal Act for failure to do so, as well as a lack of funding to enable even willing local governments to proceed. One direct result is that localities have developed a practice of proposing project-specific LCP amendments that leave the outdated plans in place and move coastal development forward on a case-by-case basis, while using valuable Commission staff time for review. More often than not, project-specific amendments seek to remove regulatory barriers in existing LCPs. Removal of these requirements, in turn, sets negative precedents that can be further used to weaken requirements for subsequent applicants. In short, the lack of resources and requirements to update LCPs leads to practices that undermine the policy goals the Coastal Act was enacted to promote.

Further, while only 15% of the coastal zone remains without a certified LCP, the areas that do remain, such as the Los Angeles County Santa Monica Mountains, are significant in size and coastal use. Maintaining a front-line regulatory presence in this uncertified area presents an undue and continuing drain on Commission resources. As an example, when the City of Malibu refused to prepare its Local Coastal Plan, the State Legislature stepped in and had the Commission write the LCP for it. While this is an extreme and controversial example of how to get an LCP certified, one significant benefit was that the Commission was freed from having to deal with numerous applications and was able to address other pressing work. At a time when staff time is at a premium, certification of these uncertified areas by one means or another must be a priority.

To address these gaps, the Commission should engage in a strategic assessment to determine where LCP updates and certifications will address the most pressing risks and provide the greatest benefits to coastal resources and communities. The Commission should then forge coalitions with local governments and non-governmental organizations to design incentives and pursue additional resources to complete the updates and certifications in the most efficient manner possible. Targeted LCP updates that address critical coastal issues (e.g. sea level rise) without requiring a full update should be considered a viable option.

- ***The Strategic Plan should review and prioritize those policy areas that require immediate attention and decide whether they are best addressed via updates to the Coastal Act, new regulations, or regulatory “guidance.”***

It goes without saying that many stakeholders fear tampering with any aspect of the Coastal Act, viewing it as inviolate and any effort to modify it as an attempt to weaken it. However, the converse can also be true. The Act was constructed 40 years ago and while it wears its age extremely well, it is missing policies that directly address serious challenges and priorities including climate change, sea level rise, marine protected areas, and renewable ocean energy. Further, the Act contains some policies that can be at cross-purposes or insufficient to address those same challenges. Some examples include:

- ***Definition of “Coastal Dependent” Facilities:*** The Coastal Act provides for the siting of coastal dependent industrial facilities, but the understanding of what constitutes a coastal dependent facility has evolved due to advances in policy, technology, and circumstances. For instance, new power plants are no longer coastal dependent facilities because “dry cooling” technology has become a standard aspect of their design and construction. The Commission might consider adopting criteria that would enable more consistent determinations as to what constitutes a “coastal dependent” facility.

In addition, the Act gives an “override” to coastal dependent industrial uses and allows them to violate other policies of the Act under certain conditions. It is essential that the specific provisions of this policy be revisited in light of emerging uses and challenges, such as desalination, to determine if it still provides the right level of protection for the coast.

- ***Seawalls/Coastal Hardening to Protect ‘Existing’ Development:*** NOAA’s 2010 program assessment identified ‘shoreline protection’ as a ‘dichotomy’ that the Commission must always balance. But given the problem of sea level rise and its likely impact on existing infrastructure and development, habitat, and coastal access, the policies in the Act that refer to coastal hardening and require seawalls to protect existing infrastructure should be re-visited. If addressing sea level rise is a priority for the Commission, as it should be, then its policies need to address the fact that coastal hardening (which carries its own negative impacts to adjacent infrastructure and habitat) is a significant impediment to managed retreat as one adaptation to sea level rise.

• ***Lack of Cumulative Impacts Analysis as a Function of Project Review:*** The Commission is obligated to conduct a cumulative impacts analysis when reviewing projects, but it is rarely implemented in the way the Act defines the elements of that analysis. As pointed out in the Center for Ocean Solutions report *Incorporating Ecological Principles into California Ocean and Coastal Management: Examples from Practice*, under Public Resources Code 30105.5 “incremental effects of projects shall be reviewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of current projects and the effects of probable future projects.” Yet, projects are rarely reviewed within this context – a situation that must be remedied if the Commission is to coherently plan for future development along an increasingly constrained and stressed coastline.

• ***Uncertainty on How to Address Newly Designated Sensitive Marine Habitats and Protected Areas:*** In the time since the Coastal Act was passed, new stressors and critical deficiencies in the coastal environment have been identified. As one important example, in response to the decline of the state’s fisheries, California moved forward with the designation of a network of marine protected areas (MPAs), which is designed to alleviate key stressors and provide for the long-term sustainability of California’s marine ecosystems and species. While it is true that MPAs themselves fall under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Coastal Commission has significant authority over a broad range of development projects that may negatively impact the health and productivity of the ecosystems, habitats, and marine species within the MPAs. A case in point was the proposed Diablo Canyon Seismic Testing that was to be conducted either within or directly adjacent to two MPAs on the Central Coast. The project marked the first time the Commission had to consider how to incorporate protection of these areas into its project review, but it will not be the last. The Commission will need to adopt a consistent approach for future permitting situations.

• ***Prioritize Inter-Agency Cooperation to Advance Statewide Coastal Protection Policy and Consider a Formal Agency Consultation Process in Key Areas:***

One important way for the Commission to impact existing and evolving statewide coastal policy is to have a seat at the table when that policy is being made. While the Commission participates in numerous working groups (as detailed in the strategic plan), it often does not have a seat at the table when important policy decisions are being made.

A case in point would involve standards for future ocean desalination projects – an issue that has highlighted the current siloed nature of coastal agency decision-making. The SWRCB has jurisdiction over facility intakes and discharges and already has a process in place for the phase out of Once-Through Cooling (OTC) for coastal power plants. Presently, the SWRCB is working on an Ocean Plan Amendment that will address how to apply state law to ocean desalination proposals, most of which intend to co-locate with power plant infrastructure. This new policy will set standards for intake mitigation and brine disposal. But the Commission will retain its traditional jurisdiction over

desalination facilities for compliance with the Coastal Act, including siting, operation, and mitigation measures. Despite this key regulatory role, the Commission's input on the SWRCB's proposed mitigation formula has been largely ignored and concerns regarding overlapping jurisdiction remain unaddressed. It would be unfortunate if potential differences of opinion were not addressed at the policy and planning stage, only to arise at the eleventh hour when specific facilities are being permitted. A request for the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to coordinate a working group to work on these issues could be one priority for the Commission to pursue.

Further, if one is to take a holistic view of strengthening coastal protection in California, there currently appears to be a disconnect between the three agencies that constitute California's Coastal Management Program: the Coastal Commission, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and the State Coastal Conservancy. The NOAA evaluation speaks to how the BCDC is transforming itself into an international leader on climate change and sea level rise and how the SCC recently obtained explicit authority from the Legislature to provide funding for projects that address climate change and sea level rise. There may be some synergy to joining forces with BCDC and the SCC on advancing coastal policies that address these long-term challenges; for instance, the agencies could produce a joint strategic statement that addresses how they might work together to advance policies on climate change, sea level rise, and other priority issues.

The benefits of inter-agency cooperation are clearly visible in the working partnership that the Commission has formed with Caltrans in recent years. This emphasis on the importance of interagency cooperation is also addressed in the Center for Oceans Solutions (COS) Report on Incorporating Ecological Principles (cited above). COS suggests that regardless of mandatory requirements for agency interaction, that agencies can and should proactively communicate with other agencies involved in the permitting process. While lack of funding will pose constraints, early and often interagency cooperation on coastal policies and projects should be a priority goal for the Commission. It can also be a mechanism for the Commission to assert and argue for its legal authority early in the process. As an example to follow, the COS report pointed to an MOU that the CCC and the California Energy Commission formalized to govern their interagency communication and data procurement process for coastal power plant permitting.

One important venue for cooperation is California's development of information-sharing resources that will improve the availability of ocean and coastal data for a wide range of planning and permitting activities. Legislation enacted in 2010 directs the Ocean Protection Council to assist the Coastal Commission and other agencies in making ocean and coastal data available online; it also directs state agencies to assist the Council to the extent funding is available. Coastal Commission staff have been working with OPC and other agencies over the last two years to meet this goal; the result will be that the Coastal Commission can more readily access information about marine areas, species, habitats, and existing activities. With additional contributions, the Commission can integrate this information with its own permit tracking systems and make sure its sister agencies are all looking at the same information when they make decisions. The Commission should

continue to support this collaborative effort, which will yield significant dividends in the form of staff resources, decision-making accuracy, and transparency.

• ***Examine Ways to Increase Compliance with and Enforcement of Coastal Act Violations:***

Through repeated staff reductions and budget cuts, the enforcement staff has been reduced to seven positions with no enforcement officer for the North Coast. Violations of the Coastal Act are all too common and, in most cases, once the damage is done, repair is hard to achieve. The Commission cannot administer civil penalties and must resort to litigation and court ordered judgments to collect penalties – a burdensome and time-consuming process that limits the Commission’s ability to enforce the Act in a timely and effective fashion. Compliance with the Coastal Act suffers as a result. Legislation to correct this legal deficiency should be pursued so that the Commission is no longer hamstrung in its mandate to implement the Coastal Act. Further, the Commission should pursue legislation that requires any entity seeking a permit to resolve all prior outstanding violations.

• ***Consider Refocusing on the Critical Coastal Areas Program as a Way to Prioritize Protection of Coastal Water Quality and LCP Updates:***

The NOAA Evaluation commended the Coastal Commission for its work improving coastal water quality and cited its coordination of the Critical Coastal Areas Program (CCAP). The program consisted of representatives of 15 state agencies, NOAA, U.S. EPA, and two NGOs. The purpose was to foster collaboration among local stakeholders and federal, state and local agencies to better focus efforts on coastal watersheds in critical need of protection from polluted runoff. As part of its work, the CCAP identified 101 coastal watersheds as Critical Coastal Areas (CCAs) and selected 5 as pilots for focused action. The draft strategic plan did not identify this program as a priority or identify any actions related to it over the next five years. The Commission should request an update on the status of the CCAP program and evaluate whether it is useful to revisit those watersheds in need of focused action and where it may be possible to address that need in the course of LCP updates.

Thank you for giving CCPN the opportunity to comment on the Commission’s Draft Strategic Plan and for extending the original timeline for comments to February 22, 2013. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or inquiries regarding our recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Jordan", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Susan Jordan, Director



CITY OF CORONADO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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February 20, 2013

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Sara Rounds, Assoc. Regional Public Affairs Manager
Redwood Empire Division
League of California Cities
1400 K Street
Sacramento CA 95814

Re: Comments on Draft California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan

Dear Ms. Rounds:

The City of Coronado appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft document. It is apparent a lot of time and effort has been put into the Strategic Plan and the City applauds those individuals involved with the development of this document.

Cities within the State of California are keenly aware of the shortage of resources. Within the past several years, Coronado has enjoyed a very positive and responsive relationship with the staff at the local San Diego Regional office. General inquiries to the Commission staff have been handled in a timely manner with critical direction or input provided on merits of a project when queried. The City has appreciated this early dialogue because it has allowed the City to make decisions on how to proceed with projects or elements of projects without spending unnecessary time on projects that may or may not be supported by the Commission.

Given the shortage of resources and unlikelihood that State funding will be increasing, the City would caution expanding the duties and responsibilities of Commission staff, and rather encourage the continued focus of Commission staff on the core duties and responsibilities to carry out the Coastal Act. For example, the timely processing of coastal permit applications; the timely processing of Local Coastal Program Amendments; and pre-meetings with staff on upcoming projects or LCP amendments are areas we feel benefit both the local communities and Commission staff and result in more efficient project applications and overall better projects. There are many desirable strategies identified within the plan; however, at this time, the City encourages the Commission to concentrate on its existing responsibilities rather than expand its areas of oversight where resources do not presently exist nor are likely to in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments, and please contact our office should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rachel A. Hurst
Community Development Director

cc: Blair King, City Manager
Ann McCaull, Senior Planner



CITY OF HALF MOON BAY

City Hall • 501 Main Street • Half Moon Bay • CA • 94019

January 30, 2013

Mr. Charles Lester, Executive Director
Ms. Susan Hansch, Chief Deputy Director
Ms. Michelle Jespersen, Federal Programs Manager
California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

SUBJECT: Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018 Comments from the City of Half Moon Bay

Dear Mr. Lester et.al:

The City of Half Moon Bay has reviewed the California Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan 2013-2018 and very much wishes to support the Commission's efforts implementing the California Coastal Act. In support of this, we offer the following comments and suggestions:

- When reviewing the document, we were particularly struck by the breadth and length of the document, but more importantly by the work that would be required to implement each of the items. While the introductory section includes a brief mention of limited budgets and staff, the document itself does not reflect these constraints. We would like to see more specificity regarding which items will become the priority as well as the timeframe for implementation. A technique that we have successfully used is the creation of a summary chart that identifies the specific year and specific project manager for implementation of each item. Many of the following comments are in support of this effort to clarify and prioritize the Commission's intent so that cities can better focus our efforts to support yours.
- We believe that, given the Commission's limited resources, identifying and prioritizing the items that clearly fall within the parameters of the California Coastal Act will enable your efforts to be the most impactful. Scope creep is something we all must be wary of if we are to be effective in meeting our most basic mandates with limited resources. Otherwise our efforts can become fragmented and may dilute our efforts to achieve our goals and objectives.
- Sustainability is something we are all working toward. We take a comprehensive view of this term in Half Moon Bay and encourage the Commission to do the same. Sustainability has three major goals including, a vibrant economy, a socially equitable community, and a healthy environment. Each goal is only achieved when the others are met as well. Coastal Cities work very hard to preserve and sustain environmental elements on the coast but these efforts often come with large economic impacts. We believe that the Coastal Commission should also be aware of these elements. Environmental sustainability cannot be met without economic or fiscal sustainability along with a socially equitable community. The impact of some of the Commission's policies on local government should be considered. We all understand what is meant by environmental and economic sustainability, but having a socially equitable community requires among other things, a plan for affordable housing to meet the needs of our residents. This is required by the State Housing and Community Development Dept.

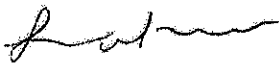
and must be included in our certified Housing Element. To implement these requirements, the City must make adjustments to the Land Use element of our General Plan, our Local Coastal Program (LCP), and zoning ordinances. These changes are all subject to review by the Coastal Commission. Your supports for our efforts in this area are most needed particularly in a timely fashion.

- To address the Commission's current limited staff, we urge you to consider and include a priority for increasing fiscal resources. One approach would be to establish cost-recovery methods similar to what most local communities now do. We suggest including as a separate goal to the Strategic Plan regarding the implementation of a cost recovery mechanism even if it is not 100%. Two options could include: charging for appeals to the Coastal Commission and providing an option for an applicant to pay full cost recovery to receive dedicated time from a staff planner.
- The Coastal Commission should adhere to the same Permit Streamlining Act standards by which all local jurisdictions must abide. A clear process and timeline should be provided to local jurisdictions and to applicants with regard to appeals. A long delay in processing appeals of local approvals and amendments to Local Coastal Plans drains staff time and is unfair to the public as well. While we acknowledge the staffing issues that the Coastal Commission has faced over the years, along with the local jurisdictions, there are many projects that are routed to the Coastal Commission staff very early on in the permitting process but comments are not received until just before the Planning Commission hearing, and in some cases during the 10-day appeal period for the Coastal Commission. For example, many projects have biological reports that are routed to multiple agencies for comments, including the Coastal Commission, for a 45-day review period that is required per Half Moon Bay Municipal Code Section 18.38.035. In some cases, the projects are also then routed again for comment during the CEQA circulation period, which ranges between 20-30 days. However, we do not receive any comments from the Coastal Commission during these periods.
- Avoid duplicative regulation. Do not be redundant/contradictory. For example, policy 3.3.1, there should not be any Coastal Commission regulations around greenhouse gas emissions as this is not part of the Coastal Act purview. If another agency already provides guidance or regulations, do not duplicate the efforts; for example regulating GHG's, the States Air Resources Board already regulates this. The CEQA checklist was revised in 2010 to include a section for analysis of greenhouse gas emissions. If a local jurisdiction has analyzed impacts from GHG emissions as part of the entitlement process and CEQA review, it is redundant for additional, duplicative review by the Coastal Commission.
- Please revisit the proposed policies to ensure that they are not in conflict and or more aggressive with other State Agencies policies. Concern with policies such as 2.4.2 that speak to "*evolving* storm water requirements" should be examined so that the Coastal Commission does not have anything different than what the State Water Resources Board issues. This is currently a significant problem with the Coastal Commission's review of the City's LCP Amendment which contains several revisions to the zoning code that are a result of changes that are required as part of the implementation plan included in the Housing Element, that was certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).
- The City is excited about the incorporation of item 3.3.1 that will evaluate policy options to promote Smart Growth strategies including mixed-use and higher density development, such as transit oriented development (TODs).

- In regards to item 3.3.4 some feasible measures to reduce the carbon footprint would be to accept electronic documents rather than making jurisdictions make large amounts of copies (wasting paper) and mailing them to the Commission.
- Please provide a definition of scenic vistas/scenic resources.
- Policies set forth in Objective 3.1 (pg. 24) are not clear. What does this mean? CEQA analysis includes GHG analysis which covers this; please do not add an additional layer. Any future SLR (sea level rise) policy guidance that is considered for adoption for use in coastal permitting and LCP planning and amendments should be published for public input and should include a peer review for such studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the public review process for the Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 650-726-8270.

Sincerely,



Laura Snideman
City Manager



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

February 22, 2013

Dr. Charles Lester, Executive Director
California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Draft California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Dear Dr. Lester:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Public Review Draft of the California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018. The City of Newport Beach applauds the statement of the Commission's vision, mission, and core values and the strategic goals, objectives, and actions set forth in this document.

The City of Newport Beach supports the seven priority goals identified in this document. They are all laudable goals, both in terms of carrying out the fundamental principles of the Coastal Act and the long-term administration of the Coastal Commission. We are particularly heartened by the calls for greater coordination and cooperation with local agencies that echoes throughout this plan.

GOAL 1: Maximize Public Access and Recreation

The provision of public access and the protection of priority uses is, of course, one of the fundamental goals of the Coastal Act. Newport Beach is one of the most accessible communities in California. With a land area of only 26 square miles, Newport Beach has over 34 miles of shoreline that provide abundant public access opportunities. Although the City is virtually built out, we continue to expand public access and recreation opportunities, as evidenced by the recent Sunset Ridge Park and Marina Park projects.

The Strategic Plan calls for coordination with local governments to develop guidelines regarding beach curfews, parking, hours of operation, and other access and management issues. It is our hope that such coordination in the development of such guidelines includes true collaboration with local governments, as opposed to a "top-down" approach. Any such guidelines need to provide flexibility to allow solutions that reflect local conditions.

GOAL 2: Protect Coastal Resources

Newport Beach is blessed with diverse terrestrial and marine habitats. The City has protected vast sensitive habitat areas, including the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve, the Upper Newport Bay Regional Park, Big Canyon, Upper Buck Gully, Semeniuk Slough, and the Los Trancos, Muddy Canyon, and Pelican Hill coastal canyons of Newport Coast. The City is also approaching full build-out. There are only a few remaining undeveloped parcels; if any habitat areas still exist, they are often small, degraded, fragmented and/or isolated. Therefore, the recommended action for updated policy guidance for environmentally sensitive habitat areas and wetland delineation should recognize the differences between the large, pristine open natural habitat areas and the degraded, marginal habitats in urban settings. This should reflect current efforts to reform the California Environmental Quality Act by distinguishing between build-out urban settings and rural settings.

GOAL 3: Address Climate Change through LCP Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education

With several communities in low-lying areas, including the Balboa Peninsula, Lido Isle, and Balboa Island, the threat of sea level rise is of paramount concern to Newport Beach. We have already taken preliminary steps to studying near-term and long-term solutions to this threat. We look forward to working with the Coastal Commission to address sea level rise through planning and project design. However, we do have concerns that recommended actions to implement smart growth and other strategies could distract Coastal Commission staff from implementing the Coastal Act's core mandates of public access, protection of sensitive coastal resources, and prioritizing coastal dependent development and visitor-serving land uses.

GOAL 4: Strengthen the LCP Planning Program

As one of remaining uncertified jurisdictions, Newport Beach is sensitive to the demands our community places on the workload of Coastal Commission staff. We have a certified Coastal Land Use Plan (CLUP) and are currently working with Coastal Commission staff to bring a draft Implementation Plan before the Coastal Commission in the near future.

Identifying and updating obsolete local coastal programs (LCP) is an important objective. Our CLUP is one of the newer LCP documents; as a winner of both the Orange County Section and State American Planning Association comprehensive planning awards, we hope that it will serve as a model for other jurisdictions. Likewise, we hope that we have similar success with our Implementation Plan.

GOAL 5: Improve the Regulatory Process, Compliance and Enforcement

Updating the Code of Regulations is long overdue. The recommended action of a feasibility study on the updated Code of Regulations must factor in time and resources for extensive outreach and consultation with local agencies, development community, community groups, and the general public. This process should be as transparent as possible.

GOAL 6: Enhance Information Management and E-Government

Improving information management and e-government are worthy goals. Newport Beach has been in the forefront using geographic information systems, digital archives, internet services and other information technologies to make staff more efficient and to disseminate information to the public. We would be happy to work with Coastal Commission staff in this effort.

GOAL 7: Build Agency Capacity

Improving intra-agency communication, coordination, and collaboration is an important objective. We believe that the Strategic Plan should place a greater emphasis with creating a true partnership and collaborative environment with local governments. While the recommended action of increased public education and outreach is laudable, there needs to be a two-way flow of information. Periodic workshops to discuss issues would be beneficial to both Coastal Commission and local government staffs. This would work well with your objective of increased staff satisfaction and retention through mentoring, training, and professional development opportunities.

In conclusion, this is an ambitious plan. We do have some concerns that allocating limited staff resources to this effort could delay the processing of coastal development permits, LCP amendments, and certification of our Implementation Plan. We also believe that it would benefit by setting priorities and specific timelines for implementation.

We look forward to reviewing and commenting of the Strategic Plan as it progresses.

Sincerely,



David Kiff
City Manager



City of Santa Barbara

Community Development Department

www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov

February 4, 2013

Draft Strategic Plan Comments
California Coastal Commission (CCC)

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft CCC Strategic Plan 2013-2018. A plan such as proposed is very important to all Californians who cherish the unique and wonderful coastal resources of our state as expressed in the Coastal Act Vision statement included in the draft plan. In particular, we as city planners also appreciate the effort to improve the regulatory process in which we participate.

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Local Coastal Plans - Priority

That plan outline and content are well organized to cover the wide range of responsibilities and the focus on key areas is good. The plan is very positive and we are encouraged by the effort. Improving the Local Coastal Plan process is a priority for us and in particular, we very much would like to see a schedule for the development of guidelines and regulatory changes necessary to carry out goals and actions related to LCPs.

Requirements vs. Guidelines

We have questions regarding Objective 1.2 for implementation of "improved mitigation strategies." Will there be an expectation that new mitigation programs (including "future in-lieu fees") will be required to be incorporated into updated LCPs? Or is the intent to apply them on permits within retained jurisdiction? In general on this point and many others, we believe that one size does not fit all communities and we prefer the development of guidelines and that such guidelines provide general direction - not to be interpreted as requirements - allowing and respecting local decisions provided they meet the intent of the Act even if in some ways the local actions differ in various details.

Agency Coordination

There is a general concern for any area where there is significant overlap of jurisdiction with other State agencies. Action 2.4.2 regarding "evolving storm water requirements" is a concern because local jurisdictions undergo an extensive plan and permitting process through State Water Quality Control Boards and we suggest that the Coastal Commission avoid duplication of effort or conflicting directions to local agencies after approvals have already been granted. In some instances the changes/modifications offered by Coastal Commission Staff &/or the Commission may be considered minor and yet it could require a re-review and new actions not only at the local level but possibly returning to the Water Board. "Guidance" and "coordination" should be defined in such a way to eliminate duplicative and slightly different requirements. We suggest adding language and emphasizing the point throughout the plan found in Action 3.1.6 for providing consistent guidance from various State agencies when reviewing local plans.

Climate Change

The City is pleased to see the broad interest of the Commission in climate change from emission reductions to adaptation. The City Council adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in September 2012 and provided a copy to the Commission staff in Ventura. It is available on line at:

<http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/14B57AB5-BAAF-49A8-9935-0D80B93ED32E/0/CAPVolume1FinalPlanforprint.pdf>

The CAP includes in its appendices a specifically addressing many of the action items the Commission is interested in as well as information specific to Santa Barbara. The study - *Griggs*,

Gary, and Nicole L. Russell (University of California, Santa Cruz). 2012. **City of Santa Barbara Sea-Level Rise Vulnerability Study**. California Energy Commission. Publication number: CEC-500-2012-XXX. We are hopeful that the policy guidance contained in the CAP will be helpful to the Commission and in particular when it comes time to updates our LCP.

Local Coordination

We have a good relationship with the regional office staff in Ventura and they are very open to working with us – already carrying out Objective 4.4 Action 3. We do see a concern as to the availability of their time and resources to keep pace with our work program and schedule for plan and policy updates. We are somewhat disappointed to see the term “where feasible” in the title of Objective 4.2 about working with local governments to updates LCPs. This term is of course used in many plans, including our own, to reflect various unknowns and limitations that can come into play with long range planning. However, all the good ideas in the plan may be impeded if sufficient effort is not made in the area of supporting Local Coastal Plan processes.

Misc Comments

- Action 1.3.6, we suggest including public education about access below the mean high tide line.
- Action 3.3.2, we would like to see this specify a permit exclusion for solar facilities on roofs of existing buildings, including structures within 50 feet of the coastal bluff.
- Action 7.2.5, we suggest adding California Coastal Trail Hikes to the list of projects and accomplishments to promote.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact:

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

City of Santa Barbara, Community Development Department

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February 18, 2013

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION EXECUTIVE DIVISION
45 FREMONT STREET, SUITE 2000
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Strategic Plan (Plan) for the California Coastal Commission (Commission). The Coastside Land Trust (CLT) strongly supports the Commission's mission to protect and enhance California's coast, and our two, overarching comments on the Plan focus on strengthening some of the objectives and actions to better position the Commission and stakeholders such as ourselves to accomplish this mission.


CLT is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation, protection and enhancement of the open space environment including the natural, scenic, recreational, cultural, historical, and agricultural resources of Half Moon Bay and the San Mateo County coast for present and future generations.

Overall, we felt that the policy and organizational goals in the Plan provide a very good foundation for protecting and enhancing the coast. In light of CLT's mission and work, we are especially supportive of goals 1 and 2 regarding public access and coastal resources. However, goal 2, Protecting Coastal Resources, should have a stronger objective and accompanying actions for protection of coastal habitats. Whereas objective 2.5 and the actions under it lay out the importance of coastal agricultural and policy mechanisms for maximizing production and protecting these lands, objective 2.1 lacks a similarly strong statement. We recognize that the Coastal Act Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas and Wetlands policies provide the Commission's authority for protection and enhancement of coastal habitats, and appropriately the Plan includes detailed actions for strengthening the implementation of these policies. However, we feel that objective 2.1 should also explicitly call out the need to protect and enhance coastal habitats, which play an essential role in the ecological, cultural, societal and economic health of California. Additionally, actions under objective 2.1 should include a commitment to stronger policy mechanisms for implementing protection and restoration of coastal habitat. For example, action 2.1.5 could include a provision for developing streamlined or expedited permit review for projects that facilitate enhanced or restored coastal resources.

Our other major comment on the Plan relates to many of the actions that call for coordination or partnering. For the most part, actions under goals 1, 2 and 3 call for the Commission to work with local and/or state agencies. We strongly recommend broadening the scope of Commission's coordination efforts to include other, non-governmental organizations. Organizations such as CLT bring a wealth of knowledge, experience and perspectives on coastal resource management at the local and regional scales that would be very beneficial to achieving public access and coastal protection resources objectives (e.g., 1.1, 1.4 and 2.1). Non-governmental organizations may even help reduce pressure on our local governments that have been hit hard by budget cuts and lack the resources and capacity to work with the Commission on certain efforts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss these comments further.

Sincerely,


Jo Chamberlain
Executive Director

February 22, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Via email: strategicplancomments@coastal.ca.gov

Dear Coastal Commissioners,

Coastwalk California is a 25 year-old grassroots volunteer organization with members in every coastal county in our state committed to coastal access and the completion of the 1200 mile California Coastal Trail. Thank you for this opportunity to review and comment on this draft of the Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan for 2013-2018. We appreciate the level of open communication between the Commission and the public and look forward to continuing to participate in this process. Coastwalk California is the only statewide non-profit dedicated to the promotion and completion of the CCT. We view this long-distance trail as a guarantee to the people of California they may always exercise their coastal access rights and enjoy one of the world's finest and most diverse coastlines.

Coastwalk applauds the use of measurable goals and objectives in the Commission's five-year strategic plan, several of which are vital to our targeted efforts at Coastwalk.

Goal 1: Maximize Public Access and Recreation

The introduction to this goal discusses parking (third paragraph on page 13) but there is no mention of parking fees and lack of available parking as a barrier to access. Coastwalk believes that parking fees are a very real barrier to public access, particularly to the large population of low income residents living in inland areas. This is a social justice issue. In many counties the only means of arriving at the beach is via automobile - so, charging to park at the beach is, in effect, charging to access the beach.

Parking fees are in reality a very regressive tax. Lower income individuals are paying a much higher proportion of their income to access the beach than those of greater means.

Additionally, those of greater means are more likely to live near the beach and therefore will not need to be using parking facilities. Parking fees are, in effect, ensuring that lower income people are not going to the higher income neighborhoods where beaches are located. The parking fees charged in recent years ensure that the beach is not a "low cost visitor serving facility".

When parking is referred to as a fee it implies that it is offsetting actual costs. It is unlikely that parking fees are actually tied to the cost of capital investment in parking lots and facilities, or to the operation of restrooms or the availability of lifeguards. Fees are being charged indiscriminately regardless of amenities available at a site. Additionally, the few beach-goers who are able to use transit to arrive at the beach are not shouldering the burden of operating any available facilities, so the fees are arbitrary in their nature.

The people of California voted for the Passage of Proposition 20 largely in support of beach access. They did not envision that meaning paying to access their public property.

The introduction to Goal 1 would be strengthened by a discussion about the concept of access in greater depth and defining more clearly the barriers to public access including, costs and fees, unavailability of both parking and access ways, blockage of viewsheds, lack of public information, unsafe conditions, and other access issues.

Coastwalk founder Bill Kortum further comments:

"The introduction to this Goal (Goal 1) could be expanded to more clearly define the destination of access. The primary destination is the publicly owned tidelands up to the line of the mean high tide. That linear piece of public property runs the length of California and is therefore available to all citizens. The common availability defines this strip of publicly owned property. Consider referring to this property as California's Coastal Commons.

The Strategic Plan should introduce the word "Commons" to educate the public about the access destination and further develop an emerging sense of personal ownership of this tidal destination owned by all. This definition would be a powerful tool when the strategic plan recommends development of Social Media.

A strategic plan should address the concept of free parking at the coast of California. After all, since when should the entrance to the Commons require a fee? We should allow the casual visitor the freedom to touch the ocean without an \$8-\$20 fee. Tideland

oil extraction fees would be an appropriate source to underwrite free parking, and the strategic plan should lay the groundwork to implement such a policy."

The public should not be paying to access **their** commonly owned property, other than paying for overnight camping or special events. Undoubtedly many Californians believe that they pay taxes to provide for basic amenities such as roads and parking lots."

Coastwalk suggests addressing the problems and inequity of parking fees under **Goal 1**.

Additionally, Coastwalk believes that curfews and nighttime closures violate the right of public access and should be addressed.

Objectives 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.4.2, and 1.4.3 all refer to working with partners, including the State Coastal Conservancy and Caltrans, to maximize mitigation opportunities etc. Coastwalk believes that expanding monthly communication channels and reporting with partner agencies could leverage mitigation opportunities for the CCT. Sometimes opportunities arise quickly and up to date information is crucial to taking advantage of opportunities for new CCT segments and access ways. Casual information regarding mitigation negotiations or upcoming potential projects shared between staff of partner agencies could maximize the agencies' effectiveness. Coastwalk recommends that the objectives under Goal 1 be more specific in its metrics regarding working with partners.

Objective 1.4.3 - The role of Caltrans, probably the largest holder of real estate along the coast, should be defined more extensively in the Strategic Plan. Caltrans' recent decisions to give people who are walking/hiking more emphasis in Caltrans planning should give opportunity to emphasize their role in California Coastal Trail routing, trail head and coastal access impact of Caltrans property, bridge design including pedestrian and bicycle accommodation, and more interfaces with the Strategic Plan.

Agriculture

Conflicts between the State's goal of completing the CCT and the needs of agriculture are problematic. Coastwalk would recommend that the strategic plan more specifically explore the notion of pursuing ways to identify these problems and develop policies that address them.

Objective 1.4 Coastwalk suggests expanding this objective to mention jurisdiction education and **public** education on citizen participation in the process. This education should also address the RTP process.

Goal 2

Objective 2.2 Coastwalk would recommend a discussion dealing specifically with marine debris and in particular tsunami debris. Outlining a plan for increased training and coordination among groups.

Goal 4

The funding limitations of the Coastal Commission is nowhere more evident than in the degraded status of Local Coastal Programs required by statute to be reviewed every five years. LCPs provide the ground rules for future development and protection of coastal resources and should have timely updates with specific penalties for noncompliance. All LCPs and updates when reviewed should include a CCT planning and designation component as well as estimates of the impact of sea rise on the trail and its maintenance.

Objective 4.2.1, 4.3.1 Coastwalk strongly supports these objective as vital to continuing the LCP program. Coastwalk recommends that these objectives be prioritized and that Objective 4.2.1 be tied into Objective 4.3.1.

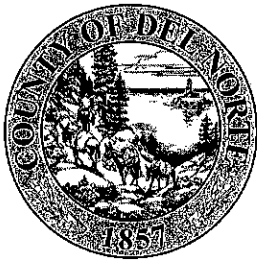
Coastwalk supports **Goal 6** and believes that e-government and information sharing will be the most effective means to move forward with the Commissions extensive goals and objective.

In summary, Coastwalk commends the work of the Commission and staff and the commitment to full public participation in regulatory processes impacting our state's coastal resources. We encourage the agency to keep the CCT and coastal access rights as one of the top priorities of the strategic plan as it moves forward with its review process.

Respectfully submitted,



Una J. M. Glass
Executive Director
COASTWALK CALIFORNIA



COUNTY OF DEL NORTE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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February 19, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
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San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Public Review Draft of the California Coastal Commissions Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Strategic Plan; the Board of Supervisors appreciates the time and effort spent on staff's part to identify actions that would improve the coastal planning process for the Commission, local planning agencies and the public. Furthermore we understand the challenges the Commission and its staff faces in having to prioritize goals, objectives and actions as we face the same challenges in operating with limited resources. We have reviewed the plan and prioritized those goals that we deem would best benefit Del Norte County during the next five years. In particular we offer the following comments as it pertains to each goal.

Goal 1: Maximize Public Access and Recreation

The Board places a high priority on those objectives and actions that will benefit coastal tourism by of improved shoreline access within state parks and through the dissemination of regional guide series and web-based and/or mobile applications. One suggestion would be to expand the coordination dialogue with regard to improving public access to include the National Park Service.

Goal 2: Protect Coastal Resources

As new knowledge and experience about coastal resources is gained by the Commission and its staff, coastal planning and regulatory work often changes creating uncertainty on the part of local jurisdictions when processing development applications. With limited local government staff, it is challenging to keep up on the evolving interpretations of existing coastal policies. While an objective of Goal 2 is to provide updated policy guidance materials to local jurisdictions concerning the protection, enhancement, restoration, and mitigation of wetlands and environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA), it is a concern to the Board that this is a way to further expand the Commission's role in the implementation of the County's LCP especially as outlined in Actions 2.1.1 and 2.1.3. The word "guidance" is used throughout the Strategic Plan but there is an uncertainty as to its implications for local government. A common definition of guidance is that it is "advice or information generally provided by someone of authority with the goal of solving a problem". Will this "guidance" if not followed result in appeals of local projects?

Another concern is the slow creep of the Commission into the jurisdiction of other agencies such State Water Board (Objective 2.4) by adding or expanding on storm water management

regulations. Overlapping and/or duplicative regulations may create potential jurisdictional issues on certain types of development which could potentially make an already complex and costly project no longer practical. The Board is supportive of those actions that suggest "working with", "contributing to", and "participating in" efforts of other agencies or committees on coastal resource concerns. It is good for cooperation to occur to promote the Commission's goals however the Strategic Plan should be cautious not to extend into the realm of regulating the already regulated.

Objective 2.5 aims at protecting and promoting coastal agriculture by developing updated LCP guidance and conducting public workshops. While Del Norte County may not have the same development pressures and changes in agricultural activities occurring in other coastal counties, any actions that can be taken to help our local agribusiness such as streamlined or expedited permit review would be beneficial. The Board would also like to see the Commission hold a workshop in the North Coast District to discuss coastal agriculture constraints.

Goal 3: Address Climate Change through LCP Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration and Public Education

The Board's concern with respect to this goal is that the Commission may, by creating general sea level rise policy guidance, create new impediments to sensible development without regionally appropriate analysis to support the policy. This is not to say that hazard reduction isn't critically important when planning new development or maintaining existing development but there needs to be a step back from the one-size-fits all approach of statewide coastal planning and a focus on regional specifics. Perhaps an action could be added to fund a study on sea level rise impacts based on regional similarities such as the North Coast District counties: Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte.

As discussed earlier, the focus of the Commission's resources should not be spent on pursuing efforts that are also ready being pursued by other regulatory agencies. The actions outlined in Objective 3.3 clearly have the potential to duplicate the efforts of other regulatory agencies as it relates to smart growth strategies (i.e. Caltrans, Air Resources Board), green building (i.e. Air Resources Board, California Building Standards Commission), and alternative energy (i.e. California Energy Commission and California Building Standards Commission).

Goal 4: Strengthen the LCP Planning Program

Del Norte County's LCP was certified in 1984 and has undergone many amendments over the last 29 years. In 2003, the Board of Supervisors approved a major amendment to the County's Local Program which was considered by the Commission in late 2009. The amendment's approval included a multitude of suggested modifications that essentially resulted in a major rewrite of the County's initial submittal. Because it differed so substantially from the original submittal, the Board chose to not accept the modifications which resulted in the amendment expiring. It was no feasible given the short turn around, even with a month extension, for the Board to review the depth of the modifications. While some of the modifications may have been supported, the suggested modifications as a whole presented too many points of disagreement.

The Board completely supports any movement on the part of the Commission to encourage communication between staff and their local counterparts. In particular, establishing a semi-annual or quarterly meeting for planning staff of Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte counties to meet with North Coast District Office staff as a group would be very useful to educate local government on key policy issues. Action 4.4.3 which calls for regular working sessions/meetings with local government staff prior to submittal of major LCP Amendments is also a step in the right direction. The Board suggests that these meetings not be limited to only pending submittals but to allow meaningful discussion between local government staff and Commission staff about any matters that affect the

implementation of the County's LCP.

The LCP Planning Program should only be strengthened to the extent that it does not create additional limitations on local decision making. There is little debate that many issues are omitted from old LCP's that should be brought up to a current standard. The danger is that in opening the dialog when considering a revision to the LCP other issues may be brought into the discussion that detract from local decision making ability. Case in point would be the 2009 review of the County's major amendment to its LCP which resulted in a significant amount of staff time being spent on both ends with no results. Local governments should not be penalized for being willing to entertain improvements to the LCP's. The Board suggests that Action 4.2.1 be a high priority. This action request alternatives to full periodic reviews of LCP's which should result in some hybrid submittal that is less than the current "all or nothing approach".

Goal 5: Improve the Regulatory Process, Compliance, and Enforcement

This goal identifies various objectives to improve the Commission's regulatory processes ranging from improving public information and services to the public to building enforcement capacity. Objective 5.2 outlines four distinct actions that would provide an immediate benefit to the public and local government. They are: updating of the Commission's website, development of an online permit application, conducting feedback surveys about public service and providing permit and LCP status information online. These are long standing requests made by local government to the Commission and it is important that they are a high priority in the Final Plan.

Given the shortage of staffing in the County Planning Division, the assistance of Coastal staff on enforcement and compliance of our LCP and the Coastal Act, more broadly, is often very useful. The resources available to the Commission vastly outmatch the limited resources of the County in terms of pursuing violators through the judicial process and enforcement actions.

Goal 6: Enhance Information Management and E-Government

While the major benefactor to the CDMS falls to the Commission and its staff, an online web-interface made available to local government and the public would be useful. Addressing operational issues such as being able to access clear information relating to the Coastal zone boundaries on a useful scale, digitizing post-certification maps, transmitting local notices of action, and receiving notification of an appealed action would be welcome improvements in the capacity of the Commission.

Goal 7: Build Agency Capacity

There is a common thread throughout the Plan that the Commission must modernize its organization in new ways to effectively carry out its mission. The eight objectives outlined in Goal 7 focus on creating or expanding programs to make the public aware of the Commission's purpose, developing strategies to address succession planning for retiring staff and improving staff satisfaction for the retention of existing and future staff. A component of this goal is also to increase funding to provide additional staffing in core program areas.

For local government, a significant increase in staffing could pose a concern that this already powerful agency grow too quickly and surpass its mandate under the Coastal Act. In many respects the Commission has inherent "advantages" over local government when it comes to considering local decisions on permits, certifications of LCP's, etc. and any significant expansion of agency capacity would serve to increase this disparity. While local permitting is monitored by the Commission for compliance with certified LCP's, post-certification "micromanagement" of any local program could become a concern if Coastal Development Permit monitoring were to be pursued too

strongly. A fundamental tenet of local government is that local jurisdictions do have the authority to undertake consideration of projects pursuant to the certified LCP under the police powers granted by the State and this principle should be respected to the extent that the power is not misused.


Summary

Goals, objectives and actions that do not hinder local government's ability to implement its LCP are generally acceptable. Actions that specifically make access to or knowledge of local coastal resources more available are also helpful to raise awareness to our area's rich coastal assets for tourism. Improvements in technology within the agency will also have a trickle down benefit to local government in having access to records ranging from historical coastal permits to up to date status reports on pending applications.

There are several coastal topics that are of significant importance to the economic growth of our County that are not addressed within the framework of the draft plan and perhaps should be addressed in a different forum. Foremost amongst these is how to balance the conservation of coastal resources with federally mandated safety improvements to the County's public transportation infrastructure. Mitigation for these projects should either be exempted or at a maximum 1:1 ratio. From the County's perspective, competing interests from federal and state agencies with regulatory authority, including the Coastal Commission, only serve to obstruct public safety projects. The second topic deals with rebuilding of our community following natural disasters. In March 2011 our harbor suffered devastating damage that threatened our local fishing industry. While the Coastal Commission was helpful in fast tracking the permitting process, further efforts could be made to expedite permits and provide relief where possible to conditions that limit activities to set periods. The same plea could be made to the myriad of agencies that hold regulatory authority over development activities adjacent to the shoreline.

Thank you for the consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Michael Sullivan
Chairman

From: [Laura Hunter](#)
To: [Coastal Strategic Plan Comments](#)
Subject: EHC comments on Draft Strategic Plan
Date: Monday, February 04, 2013 5:25:33 PM

Dear Coastal Commission

Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) would like to request that the Final Strategic plan also include a commitment to implementing the state's commitments to environmental justice. It will be important for the Commission to ensure that adopted and updated Local Coastal Programs and Port Master Plans reflect the need to ensure and protect community health through mitigation of impacts on residents ranging from toxic pollution emitting coastal uses (such as industrial and marine operations), uses that increase truck traffic through communities, and losses of public access. A commitment to supporting community-based planning that harmonizes with the coastal act would be welcome by communities near and in the coastal zone.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important document.

Laura Hunter

Laura Hunter
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From: [Eva Cicoria](#)
To: [Coastal Strategic Plan Comments](#)
Subject: California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018
Date: Monday, February 18, 2013 2:10:06 AM

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Given where we are in our history and in our understanding of our impacts on our natural environment, the California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018 draft (the “Draft Plan”) should clearly state that one goal is paramount: Protect California’s coastal resources. Within that overarching goal, protecting our natural resources should get top billing as it is the essential prerequisite to assure that a worthwhile environment remains available for future public access and enjoyment. A second overarching goal could cover those objectives that relate to the Commission’s mission to enhance the Coast for present and future generations. Within the realm of enhancements, restoring sensitive habitats, should get top billing. Other “enhancements” by their very nature, will adversely impact natural resources along the Coast and the conflict between the two will necessitate a balancing of interests, so the priority must be clear. With limited resources, the focus should be on 1) protecting what we have—our natural resources and coastal lands acquired to preserve and restore natural habitats, scenic vistas, access ways, etc.—and 2) implementing appropriate enhancements in the context of protecting what we have.

Protect Natural Resources. First among the resources that must be protected are the Coast’s natural resources and yet, in the Draft Plan, the importance of natural resource protection is diluted by being tucked in among a list of various coastal resources, the protection of which itself is listed as the second strategic goal. Limited fiscal resources require that the Commission’s attention be very focused on what will best accomplish its mission and the Coastal Act’s vision. The Draft Plan acknowledges the importance of the California Coast’s natural resources in its text, but this acknowledgement should be up top to indicate that natural resources are the underpinnings of sustained, enjoyable public access and recreational experiences as well as a thriving coastal economy.

The Draft Plan states, “Critical open space and resource areas that provide public access near dense urban areas have been protected. . . . Much of the rich ecological diversity of California’s coastal habitats, wetlands and sensitive coastal and marine waters has been protected and restored.” Yet the fact is that we are even now at risk of losing much of what we have only just begun to protect and restore. Climate disruption is one threat. Recreational interests are another. We can’t be certain that we can prevent climate change from eroding natural resources. We can and should prevent recreational interests from eroding natural resources. Sensitive habitats along the coast that were acquired with an intention to restore at risk species and are in the beginning stages of restoration—wetlands in Playa del Rey, coastal sage scrub on the Palos Verdes Peninsula—are being threatened by human interest in recreational pursuits that bit by bit eat away at what we’ve invested so much in public and private funds to protect. The Coastal Act policy to increase public access itself conflicts at times with its policy to protect natural resources and therefore must be tempered to ensure that natural resources are protected. Budgetary constraints that limit enforcement of rules in place to protect natural resources must be acknowledged when considering increased public access. Protect what we have, first and foremost.

Protect Access and Other Resources. Other resources to be protected include existing

public access to and along the shoreline, cultural resources, scenic vistas, coastal agriculture, and coastal dependent land uses, especially visitor-serving coastal dependent land uses that have minimal adverse impact on natural resources. Continued population growth and development pressures, including development masquerading as altruistic enhancements of the visitor experience along the coast, will necessitate that the Commission hold firm when temptations arise that threaten to eat away at the very resources Californians have endeavored to protect over recent decades through implementation of the Coastal Act and through public and private funding.

Address Climate Change. We agree that climate change and anticipated impacts should be addressed as a separate strategic goal. As indicated in the Draft Plan, “responding to climate change will help protect coastal resources (including natural resources); protecting coastal resources enhances effective climate change response; and both of these goals contribute to a vital public access and recreational experience and a thriving economy along the coast.”

Enhance Coastal Resources. Another strategic goal should be to enhance coastal resources, but, similar to protecting resources, enhancing natural habitats that have been protected from development should take a front seat.

Maximizing public access and recreation should not be listed as the first goal—not in the larger scheme of the Draft Plan, nor within the suggested framework of placing the goal of protecting what we have first and enhancing what we can secondarily. In many cases, maximizing public access and recreation is in direct conflict with protecting natural resources. People’s recreational wants must be evaluated within the context of our natural environment’s sustainability needs, particularly given the limited financial resources we have to restore something once it is damaged, degraded, or lost.

Objectives. A general comment is that objectives should be prioritized per the discussion above. In addition, a few specific comments on particular objectives listed in the Draft Plan follow.

Objective 2.1.6. In cooperation with other agencies and local governments, identify habitat areas in need of restoration and protection in order to direct mitigation monies to projects. Habitat remediation is strongly needed in many coastal open space areas. Enforcement of rules designed to protect natural resources and the public’s enjoyment thereof is underfunded in areas with substantial public access, such as the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve and tide pool areas.

Objective 2.4. Avoid and Mitigate Adverse Impacts of Development on Water Quality through Evaluation, Updated Guidance, and Education

More emphasis should be given to the need to improve water discharge cleanup in both urban and agricultural areas.

Objective 2.5. Protect Coastal Agriculture and Maximize Agriculture Production on Prime Agricultural Lands by Developing Updated LCP Guidance and Conducting Public Workshops.

The objective should not be to maximize agricultural production. It should be to foster sustainable agriculture while minimizing negative environmental impacts. Practices to be encouraged include minimizing or eliminating use of potentially harmful chemicals and preventing introduction of non-native species that spread beyond agricultural areas or that

have adverse effects on natural migratory species or that interfere with pollination in adjacent communities of native plants.

Objective 3.3.1. Collaborate with other state agencies to evaluate policy options to promote Smart Growth strategies and green building, such as mixed-use and higher density development where appropriate, transit-oriented development, Blueprint Planning (SB 375), transportation demand management, and low-impact development strategies.

It will be important to address conflicts between competing concerns—high density development as smart growth shouldn't be construed to mean high density development on the coast to increase access (i.e. upzoning where there are currently private homes). What should be encouraged is the purchase and repurposing of existing private residences on the coast to create public facilities such as nature/interpretive centers, rather than building new buildings on vacant land that has a preferable use as open parkland or a nature preserve.

Objective 3.3.3. Provide information and resources to educators and to the general public to increase understanding and encourage action to reduce GHGs.

Providing information to students, teachers, and the general public regarding the importance of GHG reductions will raise community awareness. An informed public is more likely to understand and accept critical decisions and applications of local, state, and federal regulators and policies that affect the environment.

Objective 5.4. Increase Compliance with and Enforcement of the Coastal Act.

This is an important objective. Consistent with the recommendation that protecting what we have should get priority attention, the need for enforcement of decisions rendered deserves emphasis. Without enforcement, decisions and all the time, money and other resources that went into such decisions are wasted.

6.4.6. Develop an online violation reporting system or other electronic means for the public to report potential violations.

This is a laudable objective, but it's important to be sure that there is in place a way to address the violations reported. Failure to follow through will likely lead to ongoing and/or repeat violations and public frustration at the lack of enforcement and inaction.

Objective 7.2. Revitalize the Coastal Program through Evaluation, Promotion, and Public Participation.

Please consider web-based Coastal Commission hearings that provide a vehicle for public testimony from remote locations to help implement goals of reducing the carbon footprint of Coastal Commission activities as well as increasing public participation.

Finally, the Draft Plan acknowledges that the Commission will not be able to implement all of the objectives and actions because of limited resources. The draft goes on to say, "The Commission will continue to allocate most of its resources to its core statutory work, including reviewing LCPs and amendments, monitoring local coastal program implementation, making determinations on federal consistency matters, and regulating coastal development." I agree that should be the focus of the Commission's attention: Do what only the Commission can do first.

Eva Cicoria
Rancho Palos Verdes

Friends of Del Norte, *Committed to our environment since 1973*

A nonprofit, membership based conservation group, advocating sound environmental policies for our region. PO Box 229, Gasquet, CA 95543

ATT: California Coastal Commission, Charles Lester, submitted by Fax: 415-904-5400 and email *3 pages*

RE: Coastal Commission Draft Strategic Plan, 2012-2018

FROM: Eileen Cooper, Vice President, on behalf of the Friends of Del Norte Board of Directors, Feb 22, 2013

Contact phone: 707 465-8904

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Commission's draft strategic plan. Several issues that were discussed at the Commission's January meeting are key to our concerns.

Summary

Our single greatest issue is that the Eureka office should have and must have a Coastal Commission Enforcement Officer. The admirable staff based in San Francisco is clearly unable to keep up with North Coast enforcement issues that are destroying some of the highest quality ESHA in all of California. This is not the fault of staff.

We are also concerned about unresolved inappropriate paper subdivisions, and urge you to include tsunamis in your planning for the North Coast. Sea level rise in our counties will happen abruptly, with the next big earthquake. The Del Norte LCP does not address tsunami hazards adequately.

ESHA Wetland Impacts from unresolved Paper Subdivisions

Within Del Norte, as a remnant of pre-Coastal and Water Quality Acts, there exist "paper subdivisions" that intrude into valuable extensive wetlands. One notable case is Pacific Shores, which is an unresolved white hole, where small lots linger, entirely within ESHA. This area is currently in a planning crisis, as the property is vitally important for wetland mitigation of an approved airport project.

But there are other notable cases, where valuable wetlands are either subdivided into small lots, or retain inappropriate zoning. These areas include the fringes of Crescent City Marsh, Elk Creek, and Marhoffer Creek. Inappropriate development projects have occasionally emerged on the edges of these wetlands, where compromises that did not provide for adequate wetland or riparian buffers were permitted, so as to accommodate some use, appropriate to the zoning. An attempt should be made to resolve these zoning conflicts, perhaps within the framework of an LCP update.

Allowing these planning conflicts to languish has in part contributed to current circumstances, where ESHA areas become backdoor landfills, rather than recreation sites. Inevitably, without recreational management or enforcement, the proliferation of trash, OHV trails, and invasive plants continue to degrade these wetland habitats, which raises the issue of enforcement.

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Comments from the Friends of Del Norte on the California Coastal Commission's draft strategic plan, submitted by fax and email February 22, 2013.

The Great Need for an Enforcement Officer and Enforcement Action on the North Coast

As you are aware, Del Norte County is home to some of California's most spectacular and extensive wetlands, estuaries, and sensitive dune habitats, supporting many endangered and rare species of plants, birds, fish, amphibians, mammals and even herds of Elk. Unfortunately we are suffering great resource impacts to these ESHA areas because of lack of Coastal Enforcement, as well as other responsible agency oversight.

Within Tolowa Dunes State Park and the Lake Earl Wildlife Area, we have the largest undeveloped dune system north of Pt. Reyes National Seashore and Lake Earl, the largest estuarine coastal lagoon in the West. Yet the Coastal Commission is unable to issue enforcement orders to help protect these areas, and has been unable to follow through with any enforcement actions for about six years now.

First, people continue to live and camp illegally in the paper Pacific Shores subdivision on the shores of Lake Earl, a white hole in the LCP. New violations occurred this past year (2012) as new trailers were plunked down on sandy wet lots. For a few years Coastal enforcement staff was able to pursue a handful (perhaps 20%) of these violations. One or two were successfully brought to conclusion with restoration. But no further action has been taken since CCC-07-CD-07 and CCC-07-RO-05 were before the Commission in 2007. We wrote a letter of support at that time, and have continued to appear at Commission meetings to request action.

Second, OHV activity continues unabated on its destructive path (partially because everyone knows the agencies are powerless): obliterating native dune plants, including CNPS-listed endangered silvery dune phacelia; creating deep ruts within the lagoon estuary that entrap endangered tidewater goby fish; continually disturbing threatened Western snowy plover designated critical habitat, and blatantly blasting through current restoration work of native dune plant areas. Tolowa Dunes State Park continues to have a 2006 policy on their books that allows vehicles on our beaches, although this use policy was established without Coastal Development Permits or any other environmental studies or process. The conditions of this impromptu "OHV Park" would at best be difficult to enforce, and at worst has now resulted in vehicles routinely ignoring the limits of such use, with widespread intrusion into ESHA. California State Parks continues this unpermitted Coastal Policy, which invites OHV degradation of ESHA, although Coastal staff has sent preliminary enforcement notices to correct this situation. Coastal staff issued a preliminary letter in 2010 and have not followed up.

The other OHV issue that Coastal staff attempted to address in 2010 was the adjacent "OHV Park" created within the Pacific Shores subdivision by the Board of Supervisors (absent McClure). In response the County took down the signs but left the posts, and has not been required to do anything to stem the OHV abuses which exploded in 2010 and continue at an elevated level to this day. Threatened Oregon silverspot butterfly habitat was extensively destroyed that year, and continues to be used by OHVs. Other species and wetlands are impacted, as noted in the above paragraph. When Peter Douglas visited the destruction in early 2010, he discussed the need for Coastal enforcement staff to seek damages and restoration. However, your staff has not been able to take any further action since that time, which is three years now.

Both California State Parks and the CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife have inadequate enforcement capability to get the abuses under control. Certainly, with the North Coast having only some small part of one enforcement agent based in San Francisco trying to resolve this difficult situation, the clock ticks slowly while abuses continue to degrade some of the most valuable coastal resources we have.

Finally, the Lake Earl/Tolowa Coastal lagoon has an approved Coastal Management Plan that allows for a specific breaching policy, limiting when and how and at what level the lagoon can be breached. However, illegal breaching continues on a regular basis, unabated, without enforcement surveillance, or any rational plan to deal with this problem. Thus, the lagoon has gone through several years now with inappropriate, very late illegal breaches that leave the lagoon wetlands dry all summer.

Geologic Hazards and update of Del Norte LCP

Adaptive planning to address sea level rise considerations and integration into our LCP geologic hazards chapter is important. Along this line of thinking is adaptive planning to address tsunamis on the North Coast, which are predicted to be one of the most transformative forces on the North Coast within the next fifty years, because of the Cascadia Subduction Zone, relevant to Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. To avoid significant impacts from geologic hazards, appropriate use and building policies need to be added into our outdated LCP.

For Del Norte County, an arduous LCP update attempt involving many staff hours from both the Commission and the County resulted in an abandonment of the LCP update by the County. As was suggested by the Commission, taking up a more focused amendment might be more fruitful. It seems that the County could have lived with many of the Commission's LCP suggestions.

Projects have moved through the Del Norte planning process without adequate consideration of geologic issues. A service life of only 40 years for homes is considered adequate by local engineering, and there is no LCP standard. The high hazard, medium, and low hazard building sites are drawn according to the 40 year standard, along beaches and rivers. During the last winter storm event, recently developed homes were jeopardized along our northern beaches. Some Smith River beach frontage homes now only have a narrow strand of beach grass protecting them from normal storm surge. This winter I walked the northern Smith River beach, and saw long stretches of uprooted beach grass in front of these fairly new expensive homes- little else protects them. This year, one home owner illegally graded and redirected a stream mouth to avoid undercutting of his beach frontage. Clearly this low 40 year standard is inadequate.

Last year the Yuroks built a low income housing project directly adjacent to the Elk Creek corridor near to the harbor on Maiden Lane. This is the most dangerous tsunami inundation area of the County, at a low elevation and within an extensive run up zone. The surrounding use is mixed residential and industrial. These dense apartments are two story buildings, where the lower level is used for housing, rather than more appropriately limiting lower level use for parking, or encouraging the industrial character of the area. When this issue was brought to the County's attention, the only precaution required was posting signs instructing the residents to run for their lives. The Community Development Department rightly proclaimed that there was no policy to require anything more.

Also of great concern is that we continue to store large volumes of highly toxic agricultural chemicals without consideration of likely hazard zones, both within the Smith River flood prone areas and tsunami run up areas. Our County building codes require base flood elevations for residences only, not garages or storage areas, as necessary for insurance purposes. Inappropriate flood prone storage areas for the large quantities of toxic chemicals that are used in the lily bulb industry are a threat to water quality, and endangered/threatened salmonids. The farms in the Smith River estuary grow more Easter lily bulbs than anywhere else in the USA, and they use more herbicides/pesticides per acre than anywhere else as well.

We hope that these comments are helpful guidance for strategic planning.

Thank you,

Eileen Cooper- Vice President
Friends of Del Norte
on behalf of the Board of Directors

3

Comments from the Friends of Del Norte on the California Coastal Commission's draft strategic plan, submitted by fax and email February 22, 2013.



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February 22, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 200
San Francisco, CA 94105

Via email: strategicplancomments@coastal.ca.gov

RE: Comments on California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018 Public Review Draft

Dear Coastal Commissioners:

On behalf of Heal the Bay, a non-profit environmental organization with over 13,000 members dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters and watersheds safe, healthy, and clean, we are writing to provide comments on the Public Review Draft for the California Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan for 2013-2018. We thank the Commission staff for developing this draft strategic plan and for the opportunity to provide input on this important process. We hope that it will become a meaningful document to help structure the Commission's work to protect California's coast for present and future generations.

The protection and stewardship of California's coastal resources are among our state government's most important long-term responsibilities. We believe that this strategic plan provides an important and timely opportunity to help the California Coastal Commission meet this responsibility. To that end, we offer the following comments on the draft plan for further refinement and elaboration:

Objective 2.1: ESHA & Wetland Policies – Encourage the Commission to Develop Policy Guidance on Streambank Hardening

We are pleased to see *Action 2.1.3* proposed in the strategic plan: "review and update as necessary policy guidance for coastal permitting and revising LCPs to address changed circumstances (ESHA definition and identification), habitat mapping, buffer and mitigation policies and emerging issues (e.g. bird safe buildings, beach grooming, fuel modification, native plant landscaping), to protect, enhance, and restore sensitive habitats," as well as *Action 2.1.5*: "Provide guidance to staff and local planners to facilitate projects that propose to enhance or restore coastal areas." Using both of these actions as guidance, we urge the Commission to strengthen its policy on Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) protection in relation to streambank hardening.

ESHA and ESHA buffer zones are areas that need to be protected from development and activities that cause degradation.¹ Streams and riparian habitat are frequently characterized as ESHA. Yet, the presence of concrete rip-rap in stream and riparian ecosystems negatively impacts and changes a stream's natural morphology, hydrologic balance, sediment regime, habitat provision, species composition, and natural chemical and biological processes. Streambank hardening often causes accelerated stream flow, downstream scour, and excessive sediment loading to streams and waterways. Through our Stream Team mapping efforts in the Malibu Creek Watershed, we have identified armored

¹ California Coastal Act, 2010, section 30240, available at: <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/coastact.pdf>



streambanks as one of three major causes of downstream bank erosion and sedimentation. About 30% of the streambanks in this watershed are negatively affected by modifications or instability. Of the 73 miles of the Malibu Creek Watershed that we mapped, there are 20.9 miles of hardened stream banks and 19.5 miles of associated downstream scour.

We have seen streambank hardening occur in ESHA through emergency permits that later become permanent, causing significant degradation. For example, in lower Malibu Creek, a private landowner armored the streambank with riprap in 1998 for stabilization due to flooding. This emergency measure eventually became permanent 14 years later, despite the landowner being required to remove the work or apply for a permanent permit within 60 days. This hardening occurred in ESHA and ESHA buffer zones and has caused downstream scour and erosion, increased sedimentation, and loss of habitat.

Streambank hardening is known to cause water quality and habitat degradation and we urge the Commission to specifically address the threat of streambank armoring to ESHA. To reduce the continued permitting of hardened streambanks and associated habitat degradation, we encourage the Commission to develop a policy or policy guidance prioritizing bioengineered approaches to streambank stabilization over hardening approaches (riprap, concrete, etc.).

Objective 2.2: Marine & Ocean Resources – A Need for Policy Guidance on MPAs, and Inclusion of Additional Actions and Agency Coordination to Protect Ocean and Marine Resources

Although marine protected areas (MPAs) are mentioned in another section in the draft strategic plan (under *Action 2.4.4*, which is focused on avoiding impacts to water quality), it seems amiss to not include an action item on MPAs under **Objective 2.2**. California's MPAs were implemented to protect and restore marine life and associated habitat, therefore including an action addressing these new protected places within **Objective 2.2** (which focuses on protecting marine life and ocean resources), is critical. A suggested action under this objective should include developing guidance on how to address the activities listed under *Action 2.2.1*, and other proposed activities and projects for approval by the Commission, that are proposed to occur within an MPA, and how to prevent negative impacts to and degradation of marine species and resources within these MPAs. The Commission is already facing situations where guidance is needed for proposed activities within or adjacent to MPAs. For example, the seismic testing issue at Diablo Canyon (within Point Buchon State Marine Reserve) that was heard by the Commission in 2012, and the proposed dredging and beach nourishment activities at Broad Beach (within Point Dume State Marine Conservation Area) which will likely come before the Commission in 2013 would greatly benefit from such guidance.

Under Action 2.2.1, we suggest that dredging be included in the list of issues that are in need of guidance for review by the Commission. We are aware that the Commission currently reviews coastal dredging projects for consistency determination, and that Commission staff participate in the Contaminated Sediment Task Force (CSTF) and Dredge Materials Management Team meetings that occur monthly. We believe these efforts should be reflected in this plan. In addition, the plan should reiterate the goal of meeting 100% beneficial reuse of contaminated sediment and the goal of creating a regional facility capable of processing dredged sediment in order to avoid use of the offshore sediment disposal sites, as outlined in the CSTF Long Term Management Strategy.

We are encouraged to see a focus on inter-agency coordination under **Objective 2.2**, as this is essential for holistic protection of marine and ocean resources in California. Although the California State Lands Commission is listed as a coordinating agency under **Objective 3.1: Climate Change, Action 3.17**, we



suggest that this agency and associated inter-agency communications and collaboration also be identified and included in an additional action under **Objective 2.2**. Furthermore, we urge the Commission to include an action under **Objective 2.2** that directs coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Fish and Game Commission on issues beyond aquaculture. Although coordination on aquaculture is important, there are many other areas that could benefit from coordination between this agencies and Commission, such as special status species, MPAs, and others. Lastly, we also encourage coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board on policies beyond once-through cooling and desalination. While coordinating on these issues is important, we believe coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board on other policies, such as the trash policy, toxicity policy, AB 885 (septic system regulations) implementation, and others, would better ensure thorough implementation of these policies across permitting agencies.

Objective 2.4: Water Quality – Encourage Stronger Collaboration with Local and State Water Quality Protection Efforts

Action 2.4.2 should include other water quality regulations such as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). As a part of this action, the Coastal Commission could require local governments to include applicable TMDLs, and incorporate implementation actions to meet these TMDLs into plans. As mentioned above, interagency coordination is critical for ensuring the protection of ocean resources. Coordination with the Water Boards on the implementation of TMDLs will provide further incentive for responsible parties to meet these important water quality standards, which in most cases both directly and indirectly effect coastal areas.

We are supportive of *Action 2.4.3*; however, in order to be consistent with Objective 2.4, which states that staff will be “working with other state **and local** partners,” the Coastal Commission should also participate in local regional efforts address these issues. For instance, many local entities and cities are moving forward with adopting and implementing Low Impact Development ordinances, such as Los Angeles County and City of Los Angeles. These efforts would benefit from having input and support from the Coastal Commission. Commission participation in these efforts would also help make sure the latest requirements and recommendations associated with these water quality protection measures and elements are translated back into Coastal Commission permitting efforts.

We are encouraged to see *Action 2.4.4*, which will enhance protection of California’s MPAs. We further encourage the Coastal Commission to participate in identification of State Water Quality Protection Areas (which would be designated by the State Water Resources Control Board) to protect habitats off the coast that are sensitive to effluent discharges and face other water quality challenges.

Objective 2.5: Agricultural Land Use

We understand that there are areas where coastal agricultural protection is needed, and that such protection is an element of the Coastal Act. Yet, we are concerned that agriculture is promoted and incentivized too broadly, and may result in some unintended consequences. Agriculture can be beneficial in protecting coastal areas from habitat-compromising development; however, agricultural uses can also cause negative impacts to natural resources, such as loss of habitat, and degradation of water quality and habitat.



Coastal agriculture and its impacts differ based on the specific region in which it is occurring. For instance, the current agricultural uses of the Santa Monica Mountains are quite different than the historic uses of this region. For example, recently, viticulture appears to be expanding in this area and there is concern about the loss of unique Mediterranean chaparral habitat. Further, many of the new vineyards occur on steep slopes and there is concern about sediment and pollutant runoff to nearby streams and degradation of water quality and in-stream habitat. Many of the streams in this area are impaired for nutrients, bacteria, sedimentation. It is important that a Local Coastal Plan (LCP) be developed for the Santa Monica Mountains that establishes provisions for agricultural use that are protective of natural resources. We recommend that it include provisions regarding agricultural use in the watershed that requires implementation, monitoring, and maintenance of best management practices (BMPs) that capture, treat, and infiltrate runoff from equestrian facilities, livestock areas, vineyards, and golf courses to address both nutrients and bacterial pollution. Additionally, The LCP should prohibit any agriculture or livestock use on properties with slopes that are steeper than 3 to 1. In the absence of this LCP, we encourage the Commission to look closely at agricultural use in the Santa Monica Mountains, and evaluate any proposals or projects in a way that is most protective of ESHA and natural resources.

Objective 3.1: Climate Change- Support for Completion of Sea Level Rise Policy as Priority

We applaud the Commission for including climate change as a strong component of the draft strategic plan. Investing time and resources into identifying and working towards environmentally-sound adaptation solutions is imperative, as climate change could be one of the biggest challenges we face. As the draft plan acknowledges, some of the ongoing and expected climate change impacts in coastal California include sea level rise, increased storm intensity, ocean temperature increases, changing currents, species range shifts, coastal erosion, and ocean acidification. To make matters worse, when a combination of impacts collide—such as high tides, sea level rise, storm surges, and inland flooding—projected inundation could severely impact our freshwater supplies, wastewater treatment plants, power plants, and other infrastructure. Climate change impacts may also threaten public health and the environment. Therefore, addressing climate change is one of the most important and urgent actions the Coastal Commission must take in the coming years.

We strongly support *Action 3.1.1* as a priority and commend the Commission's commitment to addressing climate change and hope to see action on this priority immediately. The Commission has the expertise to provide robust guidance for climate change adaptation for local governments, other state agencies, and permit applicants- and we hope to see the Commission's sea level rise policy that addresses many of the threats addressed in this letter completed by the end of 2013. We urge the Commission to prioritize environmentally-sound, nature-based adaptation strategies, such as wetland restoration, as they will help buffer communities from sea level rise and storm surges while enhancing coastal resources. More sustainable and environmentally-sensitive strategies should be identified, prioritized, and pursued in the policy and coordinated with the Coastal Conservancy, Ocean Protection Council, and other state agencies and local governments.

In addition, we look forward to the policy adoption process including strong public participation and a public education component. Updating and disseminating the Commission's sea level rise guidance is an important opportunity to educate the public and elevate our public discourse about sea level rise. Under *Action 3.1.2*, we would like to see the Commission expand the action by sharing and collaborating not just with permit applicants, but with other state and federal agencies, as well as the general public.



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Objective 4.1: Uncertified area –Support Development of LCPs for Areas Currently Uncertified, Including the Santa Monica Mountains

We strongly support the development of LCPs in areas that are currently uncertified. We are particularly interested in and supportive of the development of a LCP for the Santa Monica Mountains. As stated previously, we recommend that the LCP include strong provisions on agricultural use in the watershed. We also suggest that this plan should include riparian habitat setback requirements for development consistent with the City of Malibu LCP (a minimum buffer of 100 ft. from the outer edge of the riparian canopy). It should also include a prohibition of grading during the rainy season on slopes of 3:1 or greater. Additionally, it should prioritize bioengineered solutions over concrete or riprap for streambank stabilization. Culverts and stream crossings should also be designed in a way that maintains the natural streambank and floor. Further, the LCP should call for the proper installation of drainage pipes to reduce sediment loading to streams, such as installing flow dissipation devices that reflect the natural geomorphology of the area, such as step pools to dissipate scouring energy from flow. This LCP has been in development for several years, and we hope that progress is made to finalize it soon.

We look forward to working with the Commission through the completion of the strategic plan adoption process. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Sarah Abramson Sikich, MESM
Coastal Resources Director

Katherine Pease, PhD
Watershed Scientist

Dana Roeber Murray, MESM
Marine & Coastal Scientist

From: foglark@mcn.org
To: [Coastal Strategic Plan Comments](#)
Subject: Comments on Coastal Commission Draft Strategic Plan
Date: Friday, February 22, 2013 4:34:58 PM

Comments on Coastal Commission Draft Strategic Plan, Feb. 22, 2013

Dear Executive Director Charles Lester and Staff;

Thank you for giving the public an opportunity to comment. The issues addressed here will be: inequities between urban and rural areas, confusing and redundant appeal procedures, public participation, and press relations.

These comments are based on my experiences as a journalist based on the North Coast for the past 30 years. This work included attending Coastal Commission meetings, visiting coastal locations, and reading local newspapers all the way from Redwood National Park to Imperial Beach. In addition, I appealed several projects as an individual, spoke before the Commission as a representative of local or statewide groups, or presented neutral facts as a journalist.

A surprising observation was that proponents and opponents of projects have a core series of complaints. The NOAA periodic review that led to the Draft Strategic Plan called out many of them. The Commission and staff have made many improvements since the 2008 review. More disclosure; since 2001 I have served as "M-30", a trained NOAA Severe Weather Spotter for the Eureka office of NWS.

NOAA could offer the Coastal Commission more help in carrying out its responsibilities during a period of reduced funding. Examples: NOAA is currently offering funding for improvement of Coho Salmon habitat in coastal watersheds. Is this something the CCC could recruit citizen scientists to do? Could CCC volunteers test North Coast beaches for water safety?

NOAA is said to have custody of a series of detailed maps of the California Coast surveyed for the 1876 U.S. Centennial. I have copies for the Sea Ranch to Manchester coast, but have not been able to find out how present-day public agencies can get copies from NOAA for the coastline of the state. If NOAA could make these maps available to CCC digitally, they could be very useful in determining sea-level rise and shoreline retreat.

The CCC is doing good work with coastal cities and counties on LCPs. With the ongoing help of these groups, CCC could simplify its staff reports and appeal procedures to be easier to compare with local planning department CDPs. This could reduce paperwork while freeing up staff time. Current staff report format is harsh, repetitive and confusing. A gentler process is needed for Appeals of permits granted under certified LCPs.

Here's what happens in Mendocino County, on one of the most beautiful and storm-ridden coasts in the world. Before the Commission, before the Planning Department, coastal building was regulated by the County Engineer, who required a 125-foot setback from the Mean High Tide Line, which is hard to measure even today. Here, it usually means the back of

the beach, since most beaches are covered by water at high tide much of the year.

Rows of pre-Commission houses set back 125 feet, including mine, still exist. Ignoring the Coastal Act's goal of preserving coastal community character, the Commission has allowed setbacks of 25 feet from the bluff top, or from the nebulous "break in the slope." Some of these structures are three or four times the square footage of the average pre-Commission houses ranged above them.

The 125-foot setback may have been statewide, or regional. At Gleasons Beach in Sonoma County, the houses now gone or undermined are said to have had 125-foot back yards with a beach below. In Humboldt County, a subdivision also lost houses originally set back 125 feet. Both these multiple property losses happened well within the Commission's 75-year economic life span for structures. Is it time for the Commission to require 150-foot or greater setbacks statewide?

Mendocino County has an LCP dating from ca. 1992. Their CDP application form is on their Planning and Building Dept.'s website. At the top is a list of recipients asked to review and comment on the application. These are public agencies and private groups, some of which have public partnership roles, such as the California Native Plant Society.

The entities which most often comment at length and propose permit conditions are those with public safety responsibilities, such as water and sewer districts, the roads department and fire departments. Local government agencies such as the City of Point Arena, the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council, and community services districts also submit permit conditions and concerns, as does the Native American Heritage Commission.

In the event of an appeal, whether by citizens or the Commission, the first step is determination of "Substantial Issue". This step could be eliminated. Under current rates of sea level rise and shoreline retreat there is always a substantial issue, even if appellants do not know the legal trigger language. Usually these are geological, drainage, and shoreline retreat concerns.

Determination of "Substantial Issue" completely wipes away all local government conditions and public input. Such local review under LCPs is costly, extensive and often multi-layered; involving two or more public hearings. Once "substantial issue" is found, the CDP never goes back to local jurisdiction, but becomes a Commission burden, subject to multiple "time extensions," and "immaterial amendments."

In Mendocino County, CDPs from the 1980's are still being extended. Unbuilt CDPs more than five years old could be sunsetted without prejudice. This would better conform to the Coastal Act's goal of preserving coastal community character.

For the same real-world reasons that there is always a substantial issue for an appeal, proposed permit amendments are never immaterial. They could go back to the local government for review.

"Commissioner appeals" could be eliminated. In practice, they are staff appeals, using blank appeal forms signed by one commissioner and another asked to go along. When staff sees problems with a permit, a Regional Director could originate the appeal and assign staff to carry it through. Most of the local permit conditions would be retained,

especially those with a public health and safety component.

Conditions that were left out could be added, and those too harsh or too weak could be altered on appeal. Oversight, amendment powers and implementation would go back to the entity with an approved LCP.

Commission courtesy to the public has improved greatly since the 2008 NOAA review. An inequity remains in the practice of allowing people to sign up to speak, and "give their time" to others who have a prepared presentation. Such presentations could be reviewed by staff who would recommend a time frame to the Chair.

People who sign up to speak should do so, even if only to say, "Thank you, it's been said." Otherwise, our public expression rights are being eroded. All that speaker slip shuffling is too much to ask of a Commission Chair.

The idea of hiring or assigning a Commission public information officer is excellent. The PIO could write and distribute press releases to newspapers, tv and radio to publicize Commission projects including meetings and hearings. This person and staff could also recruit reporters to cover such events, and welcome them when they arrive.

Public meeting venues such as city halls and county supervisors chambers usually have press rooms where reporters can write and file their stories, as well as tables near the front the hearing room set up with device docks. PIO staff could orient reporters and make it easy for them to use such facilities. Hotels often have business rooms which reporters could use.

Postponement of hearings on issues of interest to the media could be discouraged by setting each postponement requested by an applicant closer to the subject project location, and charging rising fees.

The bigger the media outlet, the higher reporters are paid, and the less likely their editors are to let them out the door on spec. Bettina Boxall of the L.A. times once finessed a last-minute postponement by cornering a commissioner in a stairwell to get her story.

A column the Commission could emulate is Carrie Wilson's Q. and A. for the CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Most of the Q.s she answers are from people asking about regulations. For the Commission, a similar column could help counter common misinformation like, "The Coastal Commission will not allow you to build there."

There is currently an urban bias in siting Commission meetings, to the detriment of the environment and community character of scenic rural counties. The Commission could resolve to meet within five miles of the coast.

With 15 coastal counties, meetings could rotate among the nine urban counties and the six more rural ones with each urban county hosting one meeting per year, and each rural county hosting a meeting every other year. A procedure could be established for localities within counties to apply to host meetings.

In summary, the Draft Strategic Plan carries forward many improvements already made since the last NOAA review, and it could include additional measures to improve equity and public involvement.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Verran, P.O. Box 382, Gualala, CA 95445; voice and FAX 707
884-3740; e-mail foglark@mcn.org

Marilee Hyman
PO Box 3028
Pismo Beach, CA 93448

February 21, 2013

California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Honorable Chair and Members of the Commission,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on your Strategic Plan.

Over the last twenty years I have watched your actions, decisions and policies you have adopted to implement the Coastal Act. Your commitment to protecting the California coast is commendable. Nevertheless, while you have enjoyed many successes in making the Coast more accessible to the people, you have also created a strange interpretation of what constitutes coastal protection, one that is pretty much the opposite of the rest of the world, one that is anti-property rights.

You say the way to protect the coast is to "let it fall," erode as nature intended. That is not protection; it is the opposite. The Commission does not generally allow protection measures. No other nation in the world, which has valuable coastal real estate to protect, would consider this non-protection approach as rational.

Obviously, no one holds that a coastline can be permanently protected from erosion; but property owners, public or private, still have a right to protect their property from the ravages of nature. Inland owners have that right, be it a roof or a retaining wall. Coastal owners should also have that right and not be deprived of it.

The California Coastal Commission should direct their efforts towards safe, sound engineering and design standards of seawall protection devices instead of the efforts spent disallowing seawalls.

There is generally no objection to supporting the 'let it fall' naturally to the majority of the California coastline that is open space, public or undeveloped land. It should definitely not be the standard in developed areas.

The Commission should also follow the intent of the Coastal Act which called for the creation of Local Coastal Plans to execute the day to day management within city and county boundaries. Instead you have used your resources to micromanage local governments, even appealing decisions to yourself to gain control. In so doing you have alienated the governments and the people who live on the coast and who lovingly care for it.

You need to reaffirm the Coastal Act which charges you to respect private property rights. Further, you have an obligation to the Coastal Act to return management to the local governments.

Few Californians would give up the Coastal Act. But the interpretations by the Commissioners over time have led constituents to disavow the Coastal Commission.

I ask that you re-evaluate some of the past directions you have taken which are not in synch with the spirit and the letter of the Coastal Act and de-emphasize them in favor of new goals that emphasize cooperation, local governance through LCP's and respect for private property rights.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours,

Marilee Hyman

From: [Jack Mariani](#)
To: [Coastal Strategic Plan Comments](#)
Subject: Fwd:
Date: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 1:01:59 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: <Jack@MarianiNut.com>
Date: February 20, 2013 12:49:06 PM PST
To: "<strategicplancomnents@coastal.ca.gov>"
<strategicplancomnents@coastal.ca.gov>

Please recognize Home owners rights along the bluff. They have constructed seawalls that protect beachgoers. There was a fatality near our house where there was no seawall.
Jack & Marjorie Mariani

Sent from my iPhone

By Electronic Mail

February 22, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

E-mail: StrategicPlanComments@coastal.ca.gov

Re: Comments on California Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan 2013-2018: Protecting California's Coast for Present and Future Generations

Dear Chair Shallenberger and Members of the Commission:

On behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council and Ocean Conservancy and our over one million members and activists—more than 250,000 of whom reside in California— we are writing to submit comments on the Commission's Draft Strategic Plan for 2013-2018 (Draft Plan). The Draft Plan provides a good foundation, and we appreciate the considerable effort and staff time that went into its development, the focus on improving integration of mapping resources into planning and other Commission activities, the emphasis on developing coastal adaptation strategies, and many other aspects of the draft.

The Coastal Commission plays a crucial role in the ongoing protection and restoration of California's coastal resources. The strategic plan will provide a framework to address existing and emerging issues that could affect the long-term health of the State's marine environment. In that context, the state's new network of marine protected areas, established over the past decade under the Marine Life Protection Act, provides an exciting opportunity to advance the Commission's goal of protecting coastal resources (Goal 2 in the Draft Plan). Strategic planning could and should help the Commission take full advantage of that opportunity. **Our main recommendation is to fully integrate our state's marine protected areas and give them more prominence in the Draft Plan. Specifically, we believe it should include relevant actions, like the development of guidance for handling permit requests for activities that could affect those areas.** More detailed suggestions follow.

More Attention to Marine Protected Areas is Necessary

Updated Guidance. As you know, California recently completed the nation's first science-based, statewide network of marine protected areas to help protect and restore marine life, habitat and iconic ocean places for future generations. Coastal Commission staff participated in the

design process in every coastal region to help ensure that the new protections are consistent with Commission goals. Now that protected areas are in place after nearly a decade of work, it is critical to safeguard them from potential threats.

The Draft Plan mentions marine protected areas in relation to marine protection in Objective 2.2 (p. 17) and again in relation to water quality in Objective 2.4.4 (p. 21). We fully support the recommendations in those sections for updated policy guidance. However, the Draft Plan lacks specific actions under Objective 2.2 that would help the Commission protect these areas and take them fully into account in decision making.

We recommend that Objective 2.2 be revised to include a priority action to develop guidance for activities that could affect state marine protected areas, focused on preventing negative impacts to marine species and resources within these areas. Developing updated policy guidance on how to address projects that may impact marine protected areas is critical to protecting coast and ocean resources, and to realizing the full potential of the network Californians have worked so hard to create. We believe guidance for marine protected area impacts is a priority need, given that those areas constitute California's primary program for restoring and safeguarding marine ecosystems. For example, while the Commission ultimately voted correctly against the proposed high-intensity seismic survey offshore from the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant last November, it could have benefitted greatly from having guidance already in place for considering the project's impacts to protected areas. Other projects that impact protected areas—from more seismic studies, to dredging and desalination projects—can be expected in the near future and consistent guidance will be crucial for informing decisions on those projects.

In the Diablo seismic decision, Commission staff rightly found that all three affected marine protected areas supported areas and species of special biological significance, warranting special protection under section 30230 of the Coastal Act (See November 13, 2012 [Addendum to Staff Report](#)). The guidance should acknowledge the special significance of these areas.

Outreach and Education. The new protected areas may draw more people to the coast to enjoy the recreational opportunities provided by these ocean gardens and their thriving marine life. To help ensure the protected area network effectively protects sensitive habitats, people accessing the coast and ocean near those areas must be able to readily find information on what activities are allowed, where the boundaries are and why these areas are special. This information can also be used to encourage responsible recreation within the new underwater parks.

The Coastal Commission is well positioned to help disseminate MPA-related information and should include this effort in its strategic plan. Objective 1.3 (p. 15) focuses on improving public information about public access opportunities through outreach and education. **We recommend revising that objective to include marine protected areas in the objective statement, and to include an action or actions focused on helping inform people about**

marine protected areas. These actions could include the dissemination of Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved information about marine protected area boundaries, rules, goals and recreational opportunities via appropriate outlets (for example, the Coastal Access Guide, social media communications and Commission website), as well as the use of an expedited approval process for protected area signage that has been authorized by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Such activities should be coordinated with DFW.

Inter-agency Coordination. A number of federal, state and local agencies are responsible for managing coastal resources in California. To streamline information exchange and ensure coordinated review of projects that may affect the coast, collaboration amongst these partners is necessary. As such, we appreciate the focus throughout the Draft Plan on the need for agency coordination. However, while the plan addresses a range of issues from aquaculture to climate change, it fails to include specific actions on coordinating coastal issues as they relate to marine protected areas.

The new network of marine protected areas presents an emerging need for cross-agency collaboration to ensure that sensitive resources are protected. They also represent an opportunity for integrated outreach and education campaigns that showcase the value and beauty of California's coastline. **Therefore, we recommend that Objective 2.2 be revised to include an action to collaborate with federal, state and local agencies and tribes on permitting and public outreach activities related to marine protected areas.** This action could include utilization of an existing multi-agency workgroup or the establishment of a new workgroup but should include: DFW, Fish and Game Commission, State Lands Commission, State Water Resources Control Board, State Coastal Conservancy, Ocean Protection Council, and others.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan.

Very truly yours,



Karen Garrison
Co-Director, Oceans Program
NRDC

Samantha Murray
Senior Manager, Pacific Program
Ocean Conservancy



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
OFFICE OF OCEAN AND COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

FEB 25 2013

Mr. Charles Lester
California Coastal Commission
45 Freemont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: OCRM Comments on California Draft Strategic Plan (12/2012 version)

Dear Mr. Lester:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the California Coastal Commission's Draft Strategic Plan. We want to acknowledge the level of effort that has obviously gone into developing this draft plan; it appears very thorough, and it is obvious that you have thought through a breadth of actions for the coming 5-years. We sincerely appreciate the time and effort you and all of the staff have put into this.

As you know, NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management included a necessary action in the Commission's last Section 312 Evaluation Findings and Recommendations, under the Coastal Zone Management Act. This necessary action requires the Commission to revise its strategic plan to provide a framework for decision-making and to prioritize the functions, programs, and processes the Commission undertakes each year.

In reviewing this draft plan, we agree that the seven goals you have selected represent appropriate, high-priority goals for the Commission. The balance of goals between core Commission concerns and organizational needs is appreciated. We feel it brings emphasis to the important work and actions that need to occur organizationally (e.g. LCP program implementation, regulatory processes, agency capacity and information management), while still integrating core concerns around resource management issues into your daily work. In particular, we are pleased to see the emphasis on addressing climate change through the LCP process. Coastal community climate adaptation is an increasing priority nationwide, and being able to incorporate adaption efforts into existing work is an efficient and logical approach.

We note that on page 6 you explain that the final strategic plan will include some prioritization amongst all of the actions. We want to emphasize that this is a critically important component



that needs to be included in your final strategic plan. With the breadth of actions you have identified, we expect that it is unlikely all of these actions are achievable in the 5-year period. We would like to see you prioritize or rank the actions in some way. One option may be to provide an indication of which actions are the highest priority that you definitely will work on, which are a more moderate priority that you still hope to achieve, and which are a lower priority that may only be achieved through some influx of new resources, partnering, or leveraging opportunities.

Lastly, we note that you have indicated this is a 5-year plan, but there is no discussion of how or when you would conduct updates to this plan. We encourage you to include something about your plans on when and how this plan will be updated and maintained.

If you have any questions concerning our comments, please feel free to contact me at 301-713-3155 x160 or bill.obeirne@noaa.gov, or contact Kris Wall at 503-231-2221 or kris.wall@noaa.gov. We would be happy to discuss our comments or provide you any assistance you may need in preparing the final draft of your plan. We would appreciate the opportunity to see the final draft before it goes to your Commission for approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. O'Beirne', with a stylized, flowing script.

Bill O'Beirne
West Coast Regional Team Lead

Cc: Susan Hansch
Michelle Jespersen
Kris Wall, NOAA/OCRM



February 22, 2013

Dr. Charles Lester
Executive Director
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105
sent via email: STRATEGICPLANCOMMENTS@COASTAL.CA.GOV

RE: Coastal Conservancy staff comments on the Coastal Commission's Draft Strategic Plan

Dear Charles,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Coastal Commission's draft strategic plan. Having just completed a strategic plan, we know the strategic planning process takes a lot of effort and applaud the Commission for undertaking it.

The Commission's draft plan lays out a very broad vision of things the Commission could do, so it is good to see that you intend to prioritize the objectives in the final version. We would encourage you to focus your limited staff resources on work that the Commission is uniquely positioned to achieve and to continue or expand efforts to work in partnership with others to achieve some of the broader objectives. The Commission is an incredibly important regulatory agency and should focus its effort on the core functions that are so valuable to the state. There are many objectives identified in the draft plan, especially under Goals 1 and 2 that could be led by other partners.

It is great to see an emphasis on impacts of climate change, but we would encourage you to make even more explicit the importance of planning for climate change in all of your goals and objectives. For example, the narrative for both goals 1 and 2 should include discussion of the future challenges posed by climate change. We encourage to release and adopt general sea level rise (SLR) guidance (3.1.1) as soon as possible.

1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, California 94612-2512
510-286-1015 Fax: 510-286-0470



Specific comments on the goals and objectives are below:

Goal 1: Maximize Public Access and Recreation

Comment 1: Recommend a more explicit identification of the threats of SLR and climate change on public access and recreation. This will be a critical issue and the commission will play a critical role in helping protect public recreation resources.

Comment 2, final paragraph on the CCT: add language that describes the CCT as more than just the lateral north-south spine, e.g. “encompasses all of the vertical accessways and support facilities such as parking lots and restrooms that serve to connect the public to the state’s bluffs and beaches.”

Action 1.3.3 Develop a web-based and/or mobile web application that provides maps and descriptions of coastal access and recreation resources.

Comment: Development of a web-based and/or mobile application should be done in coordination with Coastal Conservancy. We are also working on this, our staff has begun coordinating and we hope that continues so we do not duplicate work.

Action 1.4.1 Evaluate the public access component of LCPs proposed for update to identify trail gaps, potential alignments, and policies and programs to establish and enhance CCT segments.

Comment: We support Commission’s role in identifying the Coastal Trail through LCPs. Please add an objective to streamline process the process for approving signage of completed coastal trail segments, the current process is very time consuming and cumbersome.

Action 1.4.2 Coordinate with partners including the Conservancy, State Parks, and local governments to plan for and implement new CCT segments through an updated joint coastal access program.

Comment: Revise as follows ”Coordinate with partners including the Conservancy, State Parks, and local governments to plan for and implement new CCT segments through an updated joint coastal access program that adopts a practical, common sense approach.”

The Coastal Conservancy is happy to be a partner with the Commission and look forward to continuing to work with your staff to improve public access to the coast, is there a specific concept of what the updated joint coastal access program will involve? Does it only relate to the Coastal Trail or to other access objectives as well?

Goal 2: Protect Coastal Resources

Objective 2.1 – Strengthen Implementation of Coastal Act ESHA and Wetland Policies with Updated Policy Guidance

Comment: Add an action (or clarify Action 2.1.5 to include) for the Commission to participate in interagency efforts to streamline implementation of restoration projects, including permit coordination programs.

Action 2.1.4 Provide guidance on wetland identification, delineation, protection, enhancement, restoration and mitigation in the coastal zone for use by project applicants and local government.

Comment: Both the US Army Corps and California Dept of Fish and Wildlife set standards for wetland identification and delineation. The Commission should defer to these agencies policies rather than adding a third into the mix. This should not be a priority with limited resources.

Action 2.1.6 In cooperation with other agencies and local governments, identify habitat areas in need of restoration and protection in order to direct mitigation monies to projects.

Comment: Reword the action to focus on directing mitigation money to priority habitat restoration and protection projects. Many local and regional planning efforts along the coast have already identified habitat restoration and protection priorities.

Action 2.5.4 Promote agricultural land protection and mechanisms to make these lands available to willing farmers.

Comment: It is not clear what this action means or what the Commission would do. Both the Coastal Conservancy and the Department of Conservation have robust agricultural conservation programs.

Goal 3: Address Climate Change through LCP Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education

Objective 3.1 – Develop Planning and Permitting Policy Guidance for Addressing the Effects of Climate Change on Coastal Resources

Comment: These objectives should be a very high priority for the Commission.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the draft plan, if you have any questions about these comments, please feel free to give me a call at 510-286-0523.

Sincerely,



Sam Schuchat
Executive Officer



February 22, 2013

Mary Shallenberger, Chair
California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Dear Chair Shallenberger:

On behalf of Sierra Club California and our more than 150,000 members throughout the state, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the California Coastal Commission's (Commission) Strategic Plan for 2013-2018.

The Commission has prepared a very good first draft. It is ambitious and addresses the broad range of issues in the Coastal Act, and finds ways for the Commission to address new challenges facing our coast effectively and sustainably.

The Strategic Plan offers up strategies to approach twenty-first century challenges like climate change, that have not been adequately addressed, and puts forward a plan to modernize the Commission and make it more accessible through the use of new technology. We support these efforts to strengthen the core goals of the Coastal Act and encourage the Commission to take further steps to prioritize natural resource protection and climate change adaptation.

Climate Change

Addressing climate change is one of the most important and urgent actions the Coastal Commission must take in the coming years. California's 1,100 miles of coastline will be one of the regions of our state hardest hit by climate change. Throughout the country, we are already beginning to see many of the effects of unconstrained climate change and action to address these changes is long overdue.

We cannot wait any longer to address the issue of sea-level rise along the California coast. Despite what we know about climate change impacts, developers continue to fill California's remaining coastal wetlands and build on top of eroding bluffs. With over 1,900 miles of

roadways already threatened by sea-level rise, we must be thinking about how to set back and protect existing infrastructure, not continue to build in areas that we know are vulnerable.

The Strategic Plan states that “The Commission’s first priority will be to prepare and provide updated guidance to local governments and permit applicants to address sea level rise in both LCP planning and project design.” We commend this commitment to addressing climate change and hope to see action on this priority immediately. Sierra Club would like to see the Commission’s sea level rise guidance completed, with a strong public process and public education component, by the end of 2013. Furthermore, the Commission should expand on action 3.1.2 by sharing and collaborating not just with permit applicants, but with other state and federal agencies, and with the general public. Updating the Commission’s sea-level rise guidance is an important opportunity to educate the public and elevate our public discourse about sea-level rise.

The Commission is uniquely situated to provide a robust guidance for climate change adaptation and we hope you seize this opportunity to lead the state toward proactive and environmentally-sound climate adaptation strategies. Moving forward, the Commission can play an important role in prioritizing nature-based adaptation strategies. For example, wetland restoration is an adaptation strategy that will help buffer communities from sea-level rise and storm surges and enhance coastal resources. This and other nature-based strategies should be identified, prioritized, and pursued with the help of the Coastal Conservancy, Ocean Protection Council, and other state agencies and local governments.

Priorities

We understand that the current version of the Strategic Plan does not represent how the Commission will prioritize its goals and objectives over the next five years. We urge the Commission to clearly articulate how the items in the Strategic Plan will be prioritized and offer the following suggestions:

1. As stated previously, addressing climate change must be a top priority and the Commission should begin implementing the Actions in Goal 3 immediately.
2. Protecting coastal resources, currently Goal 2 in the Strategic Plan, must remain a top priority for the Commission. The Commission is the most important line of defense for the California coast. Protection of natural resources is core to the Coastal Act and the Commission must continue to fulfill its role as a protector of our unique coastal resources.

3. The Commission should put increased resources into strengthening our Local Coastal Programs (LCP) up and down the coast. The Strategic Plan correctly identifies the need to focus on areas which are not currently covered by a LCP. Additionally, the Commission should prioritize Action 4.2.1 and identify and make public a list of LCPs which are most in need of a comprehensive update. Making this list public will enable coastal activists to focus their efforts on coastal communities which are most in need of updates to their LCP.

The Strategic Plan recognizes – and in fact was drafted in response to – the limitations of the current Commission budget. However, the current plan does not go far enough to identify how the Commission will address these limitations and prioritize their work moving forward. The Strategic Plan must address this and must also lay out how the Commission will increase their capacity over the next five years in order to accomplish the laundry list of action items in the Strategic Plan.

Actions not deemed a top priority are still worth pursuing and could lead to a much more robust and effective coastal program. The Strategic Plan should include and prioritize actions to find additional revenues to fund the entire Plan.

Making the Coastal Commission a More Open and Accessible Agency

The actions outlined in Goal 6 to enhance information management and e-government are important steps toward making the Commission more accessible to the public and more efficient. These upgrades will enable both staff and members of the public the public to interact with the Commission more quickly and efficiently using new technology. In addition to the actions outlined in Section 6.4, we recommend:

1. Website updates should include online access to status of work in progress on appeals, LCPA's, permits, etc. (to help the public plan for participation) and online access to ex parte communication reports.
2. Allow Commissioners to file their ex parte reports electronically. This step would both simplify the reporting process and lead to more complete reports of ex parte communications at Coastal Commission hearings.
3. As the Commission begins to define and implement online “e-packets” for agenda items, the format should be easily accessible and include past agendas and results. This would allow for search and analysis of previous Commission meetings: For example, it should

be easy to get a list of all substantial issue determinations that have not had a de novo hearing if all items were in a searchable form.

Thank you for taking the time to review these comments. Sierra Club looks forward to continuing to work with you through the adoption and implementation of the strategic plan and we welcome any questions you may have on the above comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Wallner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Amanda Wallner
Organizer, Sierra Club California

February 22, 2013

VIA E-MAIL & U.S. MAIL

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105
StrategicPlanComments@coastal.ca.gov

**RE: Southern California Edison (SCE) Comment Letter
California Coastal Commission (CCC)
Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018**

Dear Commissioners,

In response to your request for public input on the 2013-2018 Draft Strategic Plan (herein referred to as the “Plan”), SCE respectfully submits this letter detailing our comments on specific sections of the Plan.

In general, SCE supports the goals, objectives, and actions outlined in the Plan. However, as discussed below, there are subject areas contained in the Plan that may have the potential for jurisdictional complexity and confusion with other California state agencies. SCE’s comments are provided in a manner that follows the structure of the Plan.

SCE agrees with the Plan’s Proposal to Apply Resources to the Highest Priority Objectives

SCE recognizes that the challenges facing the CCC with respect to budget constraints, inadequate staffing, retirements leading to loss of institutional knowledge, and insufficient resources for information technology upgrades may have significant impacts on the CCC’s ability to meet its regulatory role in an efficient, effective, and timely manner. SCE notes that state and local agencies across the state of California are dealing with similar issues. There may be an opportunity for the CCC to benchmark with other California state agencies to identify solutions that have been implemented to overcome challenges. SCE believes that the CCC’s strategy to apply resources to the highest priority objectives is imperative to meet all challenges that the CCC is facing.

Additionally, SCE agrees that the CCC should continue to allocate most of its resources to its core statutory work which includes reviewing Local Coastal Plans (LCPs), monitoring coastal program implementation, making determinations on federal consistency matters, and regulating coastal development.

The Coastal Commission Should Align Interagency Policies Where Appropriate

SCE notes that opportunities exist for the CCC to address its goals of increasing interagency collaboration, as well as utilizing limited staff resources, by collaborating with other state agencies on similar subject areas.

SCE is pleased to see action items under Objective 2.2, *Protect Marine and Ocean Resources through Inter-Agency Coordination, Policy Review, and Updated Guidance* that include participation through interagency work groups. SCE believes that one potential solution to the CCC's challenge of limited staffing is to leverage pooled resources from other state agencies to increase efficiency and output. Inter-agency working groups such as the Statewide Advisory Committee on Cooling Water Intake Structures (SACCWIS), which the SWRCB convened with the California Independent System Operator (CAISO), California Energy Commission (CEC), and the Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), to address the complexities of the Once-Through Cooling Policy are an example of an effective way to accomplish major policy objectives.

In several locations within the Plan the CCC refers to "...provide guidance..." in subject matter areas that are the purview of other state agencies such as the SWRCB, CARB, or the State Lands Commission. SCE strongly encourages the CCC to collaborate with these lead agencies to ensure that any guidance provided clearly and succinctly allows the regulated community to comply with one set of requirements and not multiple, sometimes conflicting requirements. An added benefit of this type of collaboration is that it offers the ability to cross-train CCC employees in other subject matter areas.

SCE Supports the CCC Actions to Improve the Regulatory, Compliance and Enforcement Process

For Goal 5, the Plan states that the CCC should "Improve the Regulatory Process, Compliance, and Enforcement." SCE supports updates and improvements to streamline the permitting process. We agree that adequate review can be a time-consuming process though it is critical for the effectiveness of the CCC's programs. To that end, improvements to the CCC's website and an online permitting application system would be very helpful.

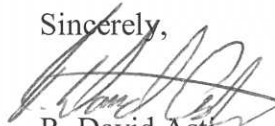
SCE believes the greatest potential for increased efficacy and efficiency with limited staff resources lies within Goal 6 of the Plan. Enhancing information management and e-government should be a key component of getting more work done with limited resources. SCE is pleased to see that the highest priority within this goal is successful implementation of the new Coastal Data Management System for LCP planning and the coastal development permitting programs. Updating the CCC's information management system through digital delivery, archiving of reports, and standardizing staff report templates will also expedite the permitting process. Furthermore, standardized GIS mapping technology in use by other state agencies like the Department of Fish and Wildlife, should be the platform for all LCPs, jurisdiction maps and project staff reports.

In summary, SCE agrees with much of the CCC's Draft Strategic Plan and offers the following suggestions:

- The organizational challenges facing the CCC are being experienced in other state agencies. CCC management should look at other state agencies to identify effective strategies to mitigate these challenges and tailor them to their specific needs;
- The CCC should strive to develop consistent regulatory guidance across subject matters that overlap with other state agencies. These collaborative efforts can help the CCC leverage its limited resources, cross-train employees, and build upon the CCC value of teamwork.
- Maximize the use of available and/or accessible technology to increase efficacy and efficiency given the CCC's limited staff resources;
- Where practical, standardize requirements and reports to increase efficiency while still providing protection to the state's coastal resources.

If you have any questions regarding this submittal, please do not hesitate to contact me at (626) 302-9732 or David Kay of our Corporate Environmental Services Division at (626) 462-8639.

Sincerely,



R. David Asti

Principal

Corporate Environmental Policy

Cc (electronic): Mary K. Shallenberger, Chair, California Coastal Commission
Steve Kinsey, Vice-Chair, California Coastal Commission
David Kay, SCE Principal Manager, Corporate Environmental Services
Michael Hertel, SCE Director, Corporate Environmental Policy
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February 19, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Attn.: Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Comments on California Coastal Commission Draft Strategic Plan

Dear Ms. Jespersen:

On behalf of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, please accept this letter and attachment as our comments on the California Coastal Commissions Draft Strategic Plan. We appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback and have queried our multiple departments and county agencies in order to provide a comprehensive set of comments.

The attachment has been produced by the Sonoma County Water Agency which the Board of Supervisors also serves as the Board of Directors. There are specific comments directed to the Strategic Plan for your review.

If we can provide any additional information, please let me know at your convenience.

Sincerely,

DAVID RABBITT,
Chair and Second District Supervisor
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Attachment: Sonoma County water Agency comments on Coastal Commission Strategic Plan

CC: Board of Supervisors
Paul Yoder, Peterson Consulting, Inc.

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Coastal Commission's draft Strategic Plan. The Water Agency supports the seven priority goals identified in the Strategic Plan. We offer the following comments on specific objectives identified in the

Strategic Plan:

Objective 2.1.2 identifies collaborating with state and federal partners such as Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to improve understanding and implementation of best methods for avoiding and mitigating impacts to sensitive habitats. Objective 3.2.4 identifies working with the Coastal Conservancy, USFWS, and other partners to assess the vulnerability of wetlands and other sensitive habitats to climate change. The Water Agency suggests including the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in these collaborative partnerships. NMFS is responsible for managing anadromous fish resources which rely on sensitive coastal resources, including lagoons, bays and estuaries, for important migration and rearing habitats. NMFS and CDFW have a direct role in the enhancement of steelhead rearing habitat and management of flood risk in the Russian River estuary here in Sonoma County through the Russian River Biological Opinion and Consistency Determination issued to the Water Agency.

Objective 2.4.5 identifies educating marina operators and the boating community on potential adverse water quality impacts of their activities and providing guidance to reduce or eliminate those impacts as an action for the Coastal Commission. The Water Agency suggests including invasive species concerns, specifically quagga and zebra mussels, in this effort. The Water Agency and County of Sonoma are members of the North Coast Zebra and Quagga Mussel Consortium. The consortium of North Coast and North Bay local governments and stakeholders have joined together to prevent the spread of invasive quagga and zebra mussels into our local waterways. The Consortium is working together to develop and implement a regional prevention plan, public service announcements, generate state and federal funding support and collaborate with regulators on how to best prevent and manage the mussels. More information is by contacting Brad Sherwood, Water Agency Principal Program Specialist, at brad.sherwood@scwa.ca.gov or at the Consortium's web page, <http://dontmoveamussel.com/>. The Water Agency supports Goal 3, Address Climate Change through LCP Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education. We suggest including within this goal an action to collaborate with local government and special districts on existing efforts to identify effects of climate change on coastal resources. The Water Agency is working with partners, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Weather Service and River Forecast Center, as well as the U.S. Geological Survey, to develop tools to better understand climate change effects on local precipitation patterns that could affect future river flows, water supply and flood protection.

The Water Agency strongly supports Objectives 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 to continue to improve communication and planning with local governments and special districts on Local Coastal Plans (LCP), as well as regional coastal issues such as beach access and coastal habitat management.

Please feel free to contact Jessica Martini-Lamb, Environmental Resources Coordinator, at (707) 547-1903 or jessicam@scwa.ca.gov to discuss our comments or for further information on the local efforts described above.

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February 6, 2013

Via email: STRATEGICPLANCOMMENTS@COASTAL.CA.GOV

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Dear Dr. Lester and Honorable Coastal Commissioners:

On behalf of Surfrider Foundation's 20 local Chapters throughout California and our 250,000 supporters, activists and members worldwide, we submit the following comments for the Draft California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018. The Surfrider Foundation (Surfrider) is a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world's oceans, waves and beaches. Surfrider now maintains over 90 chapters worldwide and is fueled by a powerful network of activists.

FORWARD

Surfrider applauds the California Coastal Commission (CCC) for drafting a Strategic Plan that identifies salient coastal issues, requiring long-term planning. Considering the Strategic Plan is still draft, we are pleased with the content and approach and we hope to provide recommendations that will bolster the overall plan and improve long-term success. Surfrider understands the CCC operates on a limited budget and has restricted resources. Therefore, we tried to put forth realistic recommendations given your current budget, yet we also tried to provide more lofty goals because we believe the CCC is such a dynamic agency that you have the ability to achieve some of the recommendations that might seem out of reach. Of course, if CCC had more Staff, some of the recommendations put forth could be achieved more efficiently and quickly. Having said that, we encourage the CCC to actively pursue additional funds for your operating budget and Surfrider offers our support to help identify innovative measures that would increase your budget.

Before delving into specific recommendations we want to highlight the need for improved inter-agency planning. The CCC is in a unique position to work with other state agencies to implement important policies. We urge the CCC to create a specific plan of action to better cooperatively work with other agencies (specifically, the Ocean Protection Council, Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Land Commission, State Water Resources Control Board, and other entities) where there is overlap with implementing coastal policy. We understand that the California Department of Water Resources is currently updating their Water Management Plan, and including a section on "Near Coastal Issues" for the first time. We think the Coastal Commission could provide relevant and important information in that section of the Plan and encourage you to contact DWR.

In sum, we are generally supportive of immediate action to address the issues identified and prioritized in the Draft Strategic Plan. Our coast and ocean are under numerous threats and we strongly believe that the time to reverse past degradation of California's most precious assets is now. We want to assure the CCC that we are committed to assisting in achieving the goals set out in the Strategic Plan and look forward to cooperating on actions that will collectively result in holistic reforms of coastal and ocean management to protect this natural legacy for generations to come.

We offer our recommended edits, additions, and clarifications that will strengthen the Strategic Plan in the following areas:

- Maximize Public Access and Recreation
- Protect Coastal Resources
- Address Climate Change through Local Coastal Program Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education
- Strengthen the LCP Program
- Improve the Regulatory Process, Compliance, and Enforcement

GOAL ONE: MAXIMIZE PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

Beach access is sacred in California. Through the established common law Public Trust Doctrine,¹ the government is charged with acting in its sovereign capacity as trustee for the beneficial use and enjoyment of the public coastal lands. Furthermore, the California Constitution and Coastal Act ensure that the beach is held in trust for the public benefit and that the public has ample access to these coastal resources. There should be no such thing as a private beach in California.

Specifically, the California Coastal Commission is charged with upholding Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, which guarantees "maximum" beach access for all residents and visitors to our beloved California coastline.² Additionally, some of the strongest beach access laws in the nation are codified in the California Coastal Act of 1976 (Public Resources Code §30000, *et seq.*), Chapter 3, article 2. The Coastal Act was enacted, in part, to "maximize public access to and along the coast and maximize public recreational opportunities in the coastal zone consistent with sound resources conservation principles and constitutionally protected rights of private property owners." Pub. Res. Code §30001.5(e). As the comprehensive program governing land use for the entire coast, the Commission must ensure universal access is uniformly protected along California's 1,100 miles of invaluable coastline.

It is the role of the California Coastal Commission to ensure that private actors and corrupt local government are not allowed to disparage or limit the inalienable rights of California

¹ Commenting on the Public Trust Doctrine, California jurisprudence cites to "[t]he approach with the greatest historical support holds that certain interests are so intrinsically important to every citizen that their free availability tends to mark the society as one of citizens rather than serfs...An allied principle holds that certain interests are so particularly the gifts of nature's bounty that they ought to be reserved for the whole of the populace." *Center for Biological Diversity v. FPL Group*, 166 Cal. App. 4th 1349 at fn 12 (2008).

² Article X, Section 4 of the California Constitution guarantees that "[n]o individual, partnership, or corporation, claiming or possessing the frontage or tidal lands of a harbor, bay, inlet, estuary or other navigable water in this State, shall be permitted to exclude the right of way to such water whenever it is required for any public purpose, nor to destroy or obstruct the free navigation of such water; and the Legislature shall enact such laws as will give the most liberal construction to this provision, so that access to navigable waters of this State shall always be attainable for the people thereof."

citizens and visitors to utilize the coast. The California Civil Code § 3479 defines a “public nuisance” as “anything which...obstructs passage or use, in the customary manner, of any navigable lake, or river, bay, stream, canal, or basin, or any public park, square, street or highway.” Ironically, local municipalities have used the term “public nuisance” in attempts to characterize and limit public access to the beach. The CCC must work diligently to thwart these and any efforts to limit and deny public beach access in a timely manner and should specifically address this duty of the CCC in the Strategic Plan.

The CCC should also be explicit in their commitment to prevent large developers and wealthy property owners from cutting off slices of the coast from public access. Public beach access opportunities are being shut down and gated off repeatedly up and down the coast. What was once a public trail to an otherwise inaccessible beach in San Mateo County is now a gated private driveway. In another example, a wealthy developer in Orange County erected locked gates on a central access in contravention of the specific requirement of the Coastal Development Permit. In order to uphold the Coastal Act’s beach access mandate, the Commission must act upon and enforce the public’s access rights in these vulnerable areas.

Specifically, the current CCC Strategic Plan is lacking in its failure to address rights to public viewshed of coastal resources. Surfrider Foundation promotes the rights of the public, including all recreational user groups, and members of the community to enjoy low-impact beach access, including the enjoyment of coastal aesthetics. The coastal viewsheds available in the state of California are part of what comprises the majesty of the coast; they are a highlight of the California Coastal Trail; and they should be addressed explicitly as an important resource to be protected for future generations of visitors to the California coast.

The CCC Strategic Plan should fully address meaningful beach access through necessary infrastructure such as parking, open beach access hours, and amenities that allow for enjoyment of the coast. In regards to public parking opportunities, the Commission must focus on offering meaningful and fair access opportunities for all segments of society. For example, many students and underprivileged citizens cannot afford \$20 for a one-day coastal parking pass that has been proposed in some instances. By having prohibitively high costs for coastal access, the Commission may, in fact, “price out” a significant portion of the population and deprive them of their day at the beach. Where fees are collected, the recovered funds should be used for purposes which are directly related to local coastal access, management, restoration, conservation, and preservation efforts.

Specifically, in regards to fees at State Beaches, the CCC should urge the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to create a statewide plan that methodically lays out when and where fees will be instituted. It is concerning that the DPR has done a poor job of informing the public about fee increases and has implemented parking stations without proper LCP permits (as is the case in Mendocino). In addition to lack of public involvement, DPR’s plan to install numerous parking fees in Sonoma is lopsided. DPR would be installing 15 parking meters that would cover nearly 80% of state beaches in Sonoma. That means only 20% of parking at State Beach would be free. Clearly this is inconsistent with the Coastal Act’s goal of providing maximum public access.

Surfrider is sympathetic to the difficult economic situation of DPR and believe reasonable park fees may be necessary to maintain our parks and keep them open. However, Surfrider wants to ensure that all impacts associated with installing pay stations

are thoroughly evaluated, including, but not limited to: environmental impacts, signage, traffic analysis, socioeconomic implications, *maximum public access*, and other community concerns that are raised during a public process. *We urge the CCC to encourage the DPR to create a strategic plan for fee implementation that is equitable and ensures maximum public access to the coast.*

In terms balancing coastal ecological protection and beach access activity, we recommend the Strategic Plan provide clear measures to avoid potential tension between protection and access. For instance, the CCC Strategic Plan should describe the policy and guidelines for when these two values may become at odds. How will the Commission look for and encourage low-impact beach access? When are these scenarios possible?

In accordance with Coastal Act §30220 entitled “Protection of certain water-oriented activities”, the CCC Strategic Plan should articulate the policy and guidelines for protection of water-oriented recreational activities and the beaches that provide for such uses. For instance, beaches that provide access for water-oriented recreational activities should be protected for such uses, including waves for surfing, sustainable fisheries, swimming, environmental study, and general beach going.

In terms of public education, Surfrider Foundation agrees that the Coastal Commission has done an admirable job of making public beach access resources available on their website. This can be improved upon through additional resources procured through public involvement and the use of social media in such efforts. The Commission should strive to catalogue the existence and use of lesser known, informal, and other prescriptive use trails. This data could be used to protect access. The information stream can also be utilized to inform the public of access closures or limited recreation use.

Finally, the reality of climate change and sea level rise also threatens California’s beach access opportunities due to our eroding beaches and increasingly armored coasts. Beach access and recreation opportunities should be intensely protected, but when there is no opportunity to salvage beach access and recreation in the face of shoreline armoring, the Commission should devise a standardized and comprehensive mitigation plan for lost opportunities. In valuing the beach access and recreation opportunities, the Commission should fully account for and calculate all coastal tourism dollars that flow into local communities as a result of these opportunities. Additionally, the success of these proposed mitigation strategies should be evaluated and improved upon on a continuous basis.

In addition to these specific recommendations, we would like to share Surfrider’s policy on beach access.³

GOAL 2: PROTECT COASTAL RESOURCES

We strongly support many of the objectives in the draft Goal 2, and believe they qualify as some of the Commission’s highest priorities. However, the draft Strategic Plan could be greatly improved by language in the introductory section articulating how many of the goals are inter-connected. Management and protection of coastal resources through a multi-benefit set of objectives would ensure a more holistic and efficient approach to updated LCPs and guidance on CDPs issued by the Commission. Examples of objectives under Goal 2

³ <http://www.surfrider.org/pages/policy-on-beach-access>

that should be considered more holistically are included in the recommendations of the discrete Goal 2 objectives below.

Objectives 2.2.1-2.2.5

- **Integrated Water Management**

Many of the discrete goals listed under Goal 2 and Goal 3 can be best achieved through defining “integrated water management” in a manner that is consistent with numerous Coastal Act policies. While many of the elements of multi-benefit integrated water management are identified in the draft Strategic Plan, it fails to adequately identify the principles of integrated water management and how its practices could be implemented simultaneously to a site to achieve several of the Plan’s objectives, regardless of scale.

Comprehensive integrated water management is a multi-benefit set of practices that will achieve many of the goals articulated in the Strategic Plan. These “green infrastructure” practices should be included in updated LCPs, as well as implemented through CDPs issued by the Commission. Consistent with numerous goals in the Strategic Plan, the benefits of integrated water management projects include:

- Resolving otherwise intractable point and non-point source pollution;
- Critical habitat restoration (both on a micro and macro scale);
- Reducing unnecessary and wasted “embedded energy” in our current water management system;
- Dramatically reducing Southern California’s dependence on unsustainable imported water;
- Increasing sediment transport and natural beach replenishment;
- Introducing numerous climate adaptation benefits;
- Ensuring sustainable water supplies for human use and guaranteed in-stream flows for native wildlife (many of the listed species are threatened because of the loss of aquatic habitat).

First, Surfrider acknowledges that there has been a dramatic decrease in point source coastal water pollution over the past decades through the construction of improved treatment plants and implementation of water quality regulations. Despite these gains, there is the potential for additional significant environmental improvement by encouraging increased recycling of wastewater for both non-potable and potable use.

Further, support for, and development of, de-centralized recycled wastewater facilities would simultaneously address ocean pollution issues, water supply issues and the ecosystem impacts from over-drafting local and remote water sources. Locating package wastewater reclamation facilities higher in the watershed, adjacent to areas of high-demand, may allow a cumulative benefit of reducing the need for large gravity-fed coastal treatment plants, facilitating “managed retreat” and removing critical infrastructure from threats of sea level rise.

We can no longer afford to discharge partially treated wastewater into coastal

streams and the ocean. We desperately need to further develop wastewater recycling and reclamation. And it is important to note that we can dramatically reduce the “embedded energy” in our water through recycling wastewater – meeting the goals of climate change mitigation and adaptation. We need to capture wastewater in the watershed where it can be treated for specific re-use purposes, and located near-by the demand.

We believe these changes to our wastewater management can be implemented in Coastal Development Permits for development of new wastewater treatment capacity or repair of existing wastewater infrastructure.

Second, we are unaware of any data documenting a significant decrease in pollution from nonpoint sources – dry- and wet-weather urban and agricultural runoff. This remains a significant problem. Addressing these problems will require the implementation of a wide variety of pollution source controls and innovative new treatment solutions.

Some of these measures are beginning to be implemented through the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permits issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards or because of prohibitions on discharges to Areas of Special Biological Significance or other coastal areas deserving protection – such as the recently designated network of Marine Protected Areas. *The Coastal Commission can facilitate progress in the implementation of multi-benefit water management efforts through implementation of “integrated water management.”*

Further, Surfrider agrees that ongoing and future updates to LCPs, and enforcement of the Coastal Act, will help ensure that impacts to ocean and coastal resources from both point and non-point sources are adequately addressed.

Surfrider urges the CCC to analyze best management practices that could be addressed at a small and large scale to capture and treat the volume of water deposited on a property by a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch storm event, at a minimum:

1. **(Small development projects)** For any CDP application that increases impervious surfaces, CCC should require landscape retrofits that use native plants to provide habitat, and retention devices to absorb and filter runoff. This has the added benefits of watering plants with rainwater and thus decreasing potable water use, while increasing wildlife habitat. (The same practices can apply to mitigating dry-weather runoff.) *For sample criteria, please see Surfrider Foundation’s Ocean Friendly Gardens “Criteria”, under the “Resources” tab.*⁴
2. **(Large developments and public works projects)** For larger development projects with limited area for on-site landscape retrofits, CCC should require additional conditions be incorporated into CDPs to ensure that run off from the property be diverted into permeable bio-swales or other landscape features on public or private lands adjacent to streets (parkways), parking lots, etc. Also consider cutting parkway curbs and creating “bulb-outs” where parkways are not available (generally referred to as “green streets” projects).
3. **(Regional scale projects)** We encourage the CCC to work with local, State and

⁴ <http://www.surfrider.org/programs/entry/ocean-friendly-gardens>

federal flood control agencies to prioritize stormwater retention and treatment of water that is not absorbed and/or filtered through the systems noted above. Future flood control strategies should include stormwater capture, natural treatment, absorption and/or release back to a river or creek in a network of treatment wetlands before it reaches the ocean. We believe current Coastal Act policies, and federal consistency authority, allows the Commission to implement constructed wetlands and other solutions in lieu of maintenance and future addition of impervious flood channels that arguably violate Coastal Act policies regarding improvement of water quality, marine biological productivity and more.

This multi-stage, and multi-benefit strategy mimics the ecosystem services that have been lost to urban development, loss of open space and historical wetlands, as well as outdated flood control strategies. Integrated Water Management will, over time, restore and protect the natural resources that attract people to live, work and visit California – a critical part of California’s economic stability and quality of life envisioned in the Coastal Act.

We look forward to working with the Coastal Commission to better define the reforms needed to achieve the multiple benefits of integrated water management. As part of that commitment, we are interested in offering professional training and hands-on workshops for Commission staff to learn more about the practices and programs listed above.

- **Coastal Power Plants and Ocean Desalination**

First, it is important for us to recognize and express our appreciation for the Coastal Commission’s engagement and action to assist the State Water Resources Control Board adoption of the “Policy on Once-Through Cooling” (OTC Policy), and your continued participation in the implementation process. We believe the successful adoption of the OTC Policy allows the Coastal Commission to more strictly enforce Coastal Act policies on protection and restoration of marine life, as well as restoring water quality in the marine environment.

And importantly, we think the result of the OTC Policy may open opportunities for “managed retreat” of these otherwise coastal infrastructure projects. We are currently seeing opportunities where existing power plants located adjacent to the coast and estuaries are proposing to re-power their facilities with high-efficiency generators that no longer require “once-through cooling.” This means these critical infrastructure projects are no longer “coastal dependent” under the Coastal Act definition, and consequently provide an opportunity to relocate the facilities inland. **We strongly believe the State must take every opportunity to move structures in harm’s way off the coast if we are to simultaneously adapt to sea level rise and maintain our sandy beaches.** Difficult choices await us in the near future over what structures will require armoring and what will have to be moved out of harm’s way.

Large infrastructure facilities like power plants, wastewater treatment plants and highways will be the most difficult to protect without armoring large swaths of the coast – at the cost of losing sandy beaches. The Coastal Commission should clarify a

strong policy for moving these facilities off the coast whenever the opportunity arises.

Also, many of these facilities are located near existing wetlands and ESHA, presenting an opportunity for restoration and/or expansion of these critical habitats. In contrast, but equally important, moving existing power plants from urbanized areas offers similar opportunities for wetlands and other habitat construction in areas where limited natural resources still exist, and access to these natural places has long since been destroyed.

Nonetheless, ocean desalination proposals are already moving through the permitting process without similar guidance from the SWRCB.

Unfortunately, the two large facilities closest to completing not only the final permits, but also binding Water Purchase Agreements, are not designed to minimize the intake and mortality of marine life – as mandated in the Water Code section 13142.5(b) and several Chapter 3 policies in the Coastal Act. In fact, both these facilities plan to utilize the existing intake structures that are being abandoned by the adjacent power plant in compliance with the Policy on Cooling Water Intakes. These two facilities' proposals have not made any changes in site selection, design, technology or any other mitigation measures to minimize the intake and mortality of marine life in response to the Policy on Cooling Water adoption. Obviously, this undermines the goals and benefits of the Policy on Cooling Water Intakes.

But worse yet, these proposed desalination facilities will operate on a constant basis and withdraw massive volumes of water 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Just these two facilities alone, as proposed, would collectively withdraw over 430 million gallons every day – more than doubling the average daily withdrawal of the adjacent power plants' recent cooling water intake volumes. So they will not only reintroduce the marine life mortality from entrainment and impingement that was just prohibited from operation of the power plant, it is likely the long-term intake and mortality of marine life at these sites will dramatically increase. And given the proposal of approximately 20 desalination facilities on the California coast being developed, in comparison to the re-powering or retrofitting of 18 sporadically operated power plants – it is reasonable to predict that the cumulative intake and mortality of marine life statewide will increase despite the full enforcement of the Policy on Cooling Water Intakes. That cannot be interpreted as fair nor sound public policy.

A strict interpretation of the law, that was the basis for the Policy on Cooling Water Intakes, needs to be equally strict when developing performance standards for ocean desalination. In fact, because in the case of ocean desalination proposals we are not confronting the expense of retrofitting existing facilities, nor timing the implementation of the rules to avoid disrupting the public's reliance on the proposed facilities (as was the case with the power plants) – sound public policy dictates ensuring the best site, design, and technology be clearly articulated in enforceable statewide guidance before any facilities are constructed. But unfortunately, that's not what is currently happening.

Further, the science on the impacts from discharged brine on benthic habitats and marine life communities is not well known. The introduction of brine into the

marine environment has certain toxic effects on marine life. And the potential accumulation of brine on the seafloor can create hypoxia and dead zones in certain bathymetric depressions or areas of limited slope and current.

Finally, these facilities are being promoted without a thorough analysis of preferred alternatives for achieving a long-term sustainable balance of freshwater supply and demand that achieves multiple benefits to restoring and protecting our coast and ocean ecosystems, as well as coastal communities and economic stability.

As we noted above, taking immediate steps towards defining and implementing the reforms necessary to achieve “Integrated Water Management” will ensure multiple benefits to our coast and ocean and resolve some intractable problems like unabated non-point source pollution, flood attenuation, coastal habitat restoration, “embedded energy” reduction – while simultaneously ensuring local sustainable water supplies.

We strongly encourage the CCC to articulate a policy that ocean desalination will be considered an option of last resort before the Commission issues a CDP or reviews an appeal of a CDP issued by a local jurisdiction. A project proponent must be compelled to show that all other preferred alternatives for supplementing local water supplies have been fully implemented before an ocean desalination facility application is considered complete. And we encourage local jurisdictions to incorporate similar policies into their LCPs.

In conclusion, the current draft of the Strategic Plan includes information that, when viewed from a holistic reform perspective, silently advocates for multi-benefit integrated water management. As stated above, we encourage language in the introduction to Goal 2 and Goal 3 to make the linkage between numerous Objectives, and how elements on holistic “integrated water management” can best achieve those goals and objectives.

- **Beach fill/nourishment**

Beach fill projects are continuously evaluated on a case-by-case basis, though many of their impacts are similar, justifying the need for guidance. As experienced during the recent SANDAG project review CCC staff had unintentionally left out monitoring and protection of surfing resources from their analysis and recommendations. Standardized guidance for determining and minimizing potential surfing impacts from placed sand along beaches with both sandy and rocky nearshore environments should be established. Working with the surfing community, CCC should develop standard programs for monitoring impacts, similar to those utilized by Surfrider Foundation at the SANDAG project, and monitoring should be required of project applicants to ensure that all projects do not have unintentional negative repercussions.

Beach fill has several potential ecosystem impacts: burying existing habitat, changing the sand composition of the beach and clouding nearshore waters as the beach fill settles. By placing new fill material on the beach, beach fill buries existing ecosystems on the beach and in nearshore areas. This can disturb both the sand-

based ecological communities on the beach and the ecosystems immediately offshore, such as eel and surf grass and hardbottom reefs.

Several researchers have evaluated the short- and long-term impacts of beach fill projects on sandy shore and intertidal habitat, yet project reviews almost never include references to these studies or discussion of their implications, particularly those of Charles Peterson (see attached). In particular there is no standard for evaluating cumulative impacts to determine how repeated and widespread nourishments are altering natural systems.

Further, watershed mis-management impacts the coast and ocean from both increases in negative constituents (urban runoff, non-point pollutants, etc) and in reduction of positive constituents (sediment for beaches, etc.) Ironically, even sediment runoff can be listed as a pollutant if it is not properly managed.

Restoration of watershed ecosystem services through Integrated Water Management⁵ practices promote the resumption of natural sediment transport to the coast, and should be included or referenced in this section of the Strategic Plan. In addition, policies that reduce further impacts to sediment supply can be utilized. For example, the removal of dams in coastal watersheds that have starved our beaches of sand to the point where the reservoir no longer serves an important part of our water supply portfolio, will dramatically improve natural beach replenishment. Further, “managed retreat” will allow a more natural cycle of beach erosion and replenishment.

- **Beach Grooming**

Beach grooming may remove trash such as plastics and fishing gear that can be detrimental to wildlife, and may improve aesthetics for beachgoers and shoreline property owners. In particular, the removal of seaweeds may reduce unpleasant smells and various "pests" associated with these macrophytes. Nevertheless, recent studies have indicated that beach grooming may also be ecologically damaging. When seaweeds and seagrasses (wrack) are removed from the beach, an important component of the food chain is lost. Numerous species of crabs, crustaceans, and shorebirds all depend on these deposited 'macrophytes' for their food supply. Accordingly, regular grooming tends to reduce the biodiversity and biomass found on sandy beaches.

Additionally, beach grooming can remove significant quantities of sand and alter grain size. Because seaweeds help prevent the loss of finer sediments to the wind, groomed beaches tend to have a slightly coarser texture. Beach grooming can also repress natural features such as coastal dunes and the perennial grasses associated with them.

Dr. Jenifer Dugan of University of California, Santa Barbara has studied the effects of beach grooming on sandy beach habitats. Her studies have indicated that groomed beaches exhibit the following characteristics, as compared to natural beaches:

⁵ See above comments on “integrated water management”.

- Significantly lower diversity and abundance of wrack-associated animals
- Lower abundance of shorebirds
- Higher relative numbers of flies
- Lower numbers of native plants
- Coarser sand

Given the potential impacts associated with grooming, beach maintenance policies should be given prudent consideration by managers and the public. In many cases, it may be feasible to remove debris through hand raking and other less disruptive methods. And, in places where beach grooming programs are in place, 'wildlife friendly protocols' should be established to ensure that important ecological functions are not disrupted. An example is in San Diego, where beach grooming is only performed above the high tide line during grunion season so as not to disturb or kill grunion eggs deposited in the wet sand.

- **Marine renewable energy**

In recent years, numerous permit applications for wave energy projects off California have exposed the many challenges of accommodating a new use of the ocean while still ensuring protection of the nearshore ecosystem and existing human uses. Specific issues include the lack of coordination mechanisms between relevant agencies, communities, and stakeholder groups, as well as the absence of marine spatial planning for California's waters to effectively address trade-offs and minimize conflicts between sectors.

Surfrider encourages the CCC to work closely with other agencies to provide policy guidance on renewable ocean energy. We would like to stress that the focus of wave energy should be on smaller pilot projects, rather than commercial scale projects. It is imperative that the State takes a prudent approach until we learn more about the potential of various technologies and their associated impacts to the environment. We also urge the CCC to work with the OPC to ensure that renewable ocean energy development complies with the State's laws and legislative intent, and sufficiently addresses the perspectives of ocean stakeholders and coastal communities. Finally, we stress that the CCC urge the OPC and other agencies to include not only "commercial values", but also *spatial and economic data collection on intrinsic values of healthy ecosystems and non-consumptive recreational ocean use values when planning ocean energy projects*.

- **Marine Protected Areas**

California is the first state in the nation to implement a statewide network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Surfrider urges the CCC to amend section 2.4.4 of the Strategic Plan to include policy guidance on avoiding impacts to MPAs and to develop tracking tools for projects that may have impacts on MPAs. We believe these tracking tools can help CCC identify foreseeable impacts from onshore and offshore projects—which in turn will allow CCC to investigate mitigation or deny projects that cause irreparable harm to MPAs. For example, the CCC recently reviewed a project to conduct seismic testing off the Central Coast near a complex of MPAs. While Surfrider is pleased the CCC denied the project, the process of identifying impacts to the MPA was time consuming for the environmental

community and we would have benefited from some type of tool or matrix that would have easily identified impacts to MPAs.

Another component of MPA management that we hope the CCC will analyze is the need to coordinate permitted uses in and around MPAs. During the establishment of MPAs, several issues regarding permit and regulatory requirements for activities in or around MPAs unfolded during the process. For example, beach nourishment, sediment management activities, and operation and maintenance of artificial structures were identified. We recommend the CCC urge the Department of Fish and Wildlife to create a timeline and guidance for potential maintenance activities, and also ensure that the Department authorizes any required federal, state, and local permits in a timely manner. The CCC, Department of Fish and Wildlife and other agencies should ensure that these maintenance activities are minimized and done with little to no impact on nearshore ecosystems.

Surfrider was pleased to see the CCC identified impacts to MPAs in relation to water quality and coastal development. Surfrider, in conjunction with other organizations, provided recommendations to State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to initiate the process of designating Water Quality Protection Area status for MPAs. Surfrider suggests the CCC write a Resolution supporting the State Water Resources Control Board's adoption of a comprehensive designation of Water Quality Protection Area status for MPAs, under the authority in the Marine Managed Area Improvement Act. A simple resolution of support would provide additional assurance that this important addition to protection of relatively undisturbed ecosystems in MPAs is realized through an overlay of State Water Quality Protected Area status.

GOAL 3: ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

The Coastal Commission is in a particularly strong position to assist and guide other state agencies in responding to climate change and sea level rise impacts along the coast. We are pleased that the Commission is pursuing guidance for planning and permitting to address the effects of climate change on coastal resources. It is critical that community planners make informed decisions when deciding how to react to rising sea levels. The wrong choices could lead down a path where beaches disappear, coastal aquifers are rendered un-usable for human consumption from seawater intrusion, coastal tourism and fisheries suffer or where billions of dollars are lost to storm-damaged and flooded properties.

In response to **Executive Order S-13-2008: the Climate Adaptation and Sea Level Rise Planning Directive**, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), working through the state's Climate Action Team (CAT), released the State Climate Change Adaptation Strategy ⁶ in December 2009. Recognizing that climate change is already affecting California, and noting that almost half a million Californians will be at risk from sea level rise along bay and coastal areas, the report both summarizes the most recent science predicting potential climate change impacts and recommends response strategies. Members of the Climate Adaptation Working Group identified six priority strategies in addressing climate adaptation for state agencies, three of which relate specifically to sea-level rise:

⁶ <http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/adaptation/index.html>

- Strategy 3: State Agencies should prepare sea-level rise and adaptation plans to be completed by September 2010 and regularly updated, modified, and refined based on new information.
- Strategy 4: Support Local Planning for Addressing Sea-Level Rise Impacts by 2011, all coastal jurisdictions should begin development of amended Local Coastal Programs and general plans that include climate change impacts.
- Strategy 5: Complete a Statewide Sea-Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment Every Five Years

Guidelines for municipalities to update LCPs are needed in order to assure they fully analyze and plan for community impacts from sea level rise, erosion and coastal flooding. These analyses need to include both public and private infrastructure and determine true risks and costs associated with changing ocean levels for the foreseeable future. It is currently forecast that sea level rise rates will accelerate over the next century, reducing the efficacy of common erosion response actions like shoreline armoring or beach sand replenishment. The costs associated with those actions will soon far outweigh the value of the properties they are intended to protect. CCC guidelines should incorporate methods for fully evaluating all responses, including options for shoreline managed retreat and rolling easements.

It may become necessary to re-evaluate Coastal Act provisions which currently allow for shoreline armoring for any threatened structure, as this could eventually lead to complete loss of sandy beaches. As example the City of Solana Beach is attempting to incorporate sunset clauses and fees for new seawall construction to allow for future removal and return of coastal bluffs to natural processes. Also, see recent work by Dr. David Revell in the southern Monterey Bay, which demonstrated possible procedures for evaluating risks and future costs based on all possible erosion response options.

Some local communities facing especially severe erosion issues have begun to accept the fact that the sea can only be withheld for so long. The beachside community of Pacifica, for example, is in the process of buying up private property along the coast, and relocating coastal structures further inland. The same scenario is being played out at Surfer's Point in Ventura, with a managed retreat plan already in progress that will effectively relocate a parking lot and bike path. And maybe more significantly, the plan in Morro Bay to re-locate their wastewater treatment facility higher in the watershed not only exemplifies a "managed retreat" strategy for critical coastal infrastructure, but also implement wastewater recycling – an important component of "integrated water management." Some other states, namely Texas, Rhode Island, Maine, and South Carolina's coastal zones all benefit from a degree of rolling setbacks, a policy akin to managed retreat that allows private coastal property owners to develop their land, but prohibits the erection of seawalls and barriers once sea levels begin to threaten the structures.

Surfrider Foundation has developed a number of resources and recommendations to help planning efforts at the state and local levels. We recommend that coastal planning efforts focus on adaptation to changing conditions rather than simply "holding the line" and protecting all infrastructure and other development in place. These guidelines can help to drive proper decision-making as Local Coastal Plans are updated in the coming years to reflect science-backed sea level rise and climate change predictions. We strongly urge the CCC to consider the following when addressing climate change adaptation.

Essential Elements of Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Management Plans

1. **Proactive adaptation:** Approach recognizes the need to factor climate change into decisions affecting long-term susceptibility of systems to the impacts of climate change. Process requires assessing the vulnerability of natural and man-made systems, as well as weighing the costs/benefits of action vs. inaction. Alternatives should then be planned accordingly.
2. **Maximize ecosystem resilience to climate change:** The overall goal of adaptation is to reduce the risk of adverse environmental outcomes through activities that increase the resilience of ecological systems to climate change. EPA has defined resilience in this context as the amount of change or disturbance that a system can absorb without fundamentally shifting to a different set of processes or undergoing ecosystem re-structuring. It is therefore necessary for management plans to incorporate options that protect key ecosystem features, and focus management protections on structural characteristics, organisms, or areas that represent important underpinnings of the overall system.
3. **Dynamic management plans:** The uncertain nature of climate change and climate change impacts necessitates dynamic management systems that can accommodate and address such unpredictability. Management plans must have the ability to be flexible and responsive to sudden, and often times unforeseen, changes. Adaptive policies should therefore allow managers to focus not only on managing adaptation, but further be able to manage *change*. Dynamic management plans will also be able to incorporate new knowledge as it becomes available, and apply it to current management schemes.
4. **Establishment of current baselines, identify thresholds, and monitor for changes:** Understanding where thresholds have been exceeded in the past, and where they may be exceeded in the future, will allow managers to plan accordingly and avoid tipping points where possible. Managers must therefore establish current baseline conditions, model a range of possible climate change impacts and system responses, monitor actions and systems to detect changes in baseline conditions and determine efficacy of adaptive measures, and respond by implementing adaptation actions at appropriate scales and times.
5. **Identification of key vulnerabilities:** Assessment of coastal areas to determine which are most at risk and *why*, using the following criteria;
 - Key vulnerabilities of coastal areas:
 - Differences in exposure to impacts
 - Differences in sensitivity to impacts
 - Differences in adaptive capacity
 - Differences in socio-economic factors
 - Importance (major cultural/natural resource)
 - Factors influencing severity of impact(s):
 - Magnitude of impact(s)
 - Timing (short-term vs. long-term) of impact(s)
 - Persistence vs. reversibility of impact(s)
 - Likelihood vs. certainty of impact(s)
6. **Prioritizing Actions:** Adaptive actions should be prioritized based on the nature of the projected and/or observed impacts, as well as the vulnerability of the coastal area in question. Managers should utilize a systematic framework for priority setting, which would help managers catalog information, design strategies, allocate resources, evaluate progress, and inform the public. Priority setting should occur in

- an ongoing way to address changing ecological conditions and incorporate new information.
7. **Careful assessment of adaptation options:** Adaptation options should be chosen based on a careful assessment of their efficacy, risks, and costs.
 - Various options include: profit/opportunity options, win-win options , low-regret or no-regret options, options averting catastrophic risk, and/or options that avoid unsustainable investments.
 8. **Inclusion of short-term measures:** Management plans should include strategies that address short-term impacts and concerns, while long-term management plans are being developed.
 9. **Collaboration:** Management plans should encourage collaboration between various ecological managers, stakeholders, and levels of government, and include a system that fosters the exchange of ideas, information, resources, best practices, and lessons learned. Expanding collaboration has the potential to broaden both the spatial and ecological scope of potential adaptation options.
 10. **Recognition of potential barriers to implementation:** Management plans must recognize legal and social constraints, restrictive management procedures, limitations on human and financial capital, and information gaps, yet also view these barriers as potential opportunities. Management plans must therefore be flexible enough to work around particular barriers that may arise.
 11. **Outreach & Education:** In order to increase public awareness and expand community involvement, management programs should include outreach and educational tools and considerations.

Additional Resources for Climate Change Adaptation

NOAA's Coastal Resources Center has developed Roadmap for Adapting to Coastal Risk,⁷ an online, three-hour course where participants learn how to characterize community exposure to coastal hazards, and to assess how plans and policies already on the books can be used to jump-start adaptation strategies. Here are examples⁸ of how the Roadmap is being used by communities in New York, Florida and Pennsylvania to address their risk and vulnerability issues associated with hazards and climate change.

The October 2011 report Federal Actions for a Climate Resilient Nation: ⁹*Progress Report of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force* provides an update on actions in key areas of Federal adaptation, including: building resilience in local communities, safeguarding critical natural resources such as freshwater, and providing accessible climate information and tools to help decision-makers manage climate risks. This report follows the Task Force's October 2010 Progress Report¹⁰ to the President that recommended the Federal Government strengthen the Nation's capacity to better understand and manage climate-related risks.

A report The State of Marine and Coastal Adaptation in North America: A Synthesis of Emerging Ideas¹¹ was published by EcoAdapt in January 2011. The report, which is the

⁷ <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/roadmap/training.html>

⁸ <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/roadmap/discover>

⁹ http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/2011_adaptation_progress_report.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/Interagency-Climate-Change-Adaptation-Progress-Report.pdf>

¹¹ <http://ecoadapt.org/documents/marine-adaptation-report.pdf>

culmination of a nearly 18 month survey of marine and coastal climate change adaptation projects and initiatives in North America, summarizes climate impacts and provides summaries and examples of adaptation actions implemented throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN THE LCP PLANNING PROGRAM

LCPs are critical roadmaps for long-term coastal planning, and without them, the Coastal Act is rendered weak. Surfrider readily supports the completion of the LCP program. Not only would LCP completion help with CCC Staff's tight workload, but it would also provide congruity for implementing the Coastal Act on a statewide level—which we believe would increase compliance with the Act as a whole.

For Action 4.1.1 “identifying priority areas for LCP and ADC certification”, Surfrider suggests a clear metric be created to determine how these areas will be ranked and prioritized. We recommend the metric be based on the significance of coastal resources and/or the imminence of threats. For example, if there is an area where coastal erosion is significant, but armoring has not been completed, we recommend that area be prioritized for a LCP before a barrage of permits are filed to build sea walls.

In regards to Objective 4.2 “updating LCPs” Surfrider is aware that a large amount of certified LCP's are out of date and have been amended numerous times without a complete review. We strongly urge CCC to curtail any piecemeal approaches by encouraging municipalities/counties to spend copious time at the “beginning of their update process” to identify **all** areas of the LCP that need updating. We strongly encourage the CCC to ensure that LCPs are not being amended for “specific projects” such as new developments. Once **all** areas of updates have been identified and vetted, we suggest the most urgent updates be prioritized (similar to our recommendations to 4.1.1). Surfrider also recommends the CCC urge local governments to widely advertise LCPs hearings so local citizens have an opportunity to provide input. Finally, we encourage the CCC to explicitly remind local municipalities/counties to limit the influence of special interests while updating LCPs. While this may seem obvious, we believe governments would benefit from having such a reminder.

Surfrider supports objective 4.3 “provide and Maintain Certified LCPs Online”. Until a user-friendly library is created, we suggest the CCC create a webpage that simply links LCPs that are already online; and perhaps the “linked page” would be sufficient enough instead of creating a library of actual files.

GOAL FIVE: IMPROVE THE REGULATORY PROCESS, COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

The Commission is woefully understaffed in the enforcement division and oftentimes is unable to discover or address the plentiful Coastal Act violations occurring up and down the coast. Oftentimes, illegal beach access blockades, unpermitted makeshift seawalls, water quality degradation and other egregious violations are reported by public citizens to the Commission. Even then, the Commission is often unable to effectively address the issue in a timely manner. Due to insufficient personnel and a small enforcement division, the Coastal

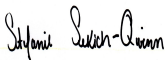
Commission has a backlog of nearly 2,000 cases.¹² All too often, citizens have no choice but to file private enforcement lawsuits for issues that are clearly under Coastal Commission purview. While the alternative of allowing citizen enforcement is an important one that should be sustained, the Coastal Commission is the agency expert on the substance of the Coastal Act and should be more diligent in enforcing its protections.

CONCLUSION

Surfrider greatly appreciates your consideration of our comments and we look forward to working with the CCC on our shared goal of protecting our coast. As outlined above, there are areas of the Strategic Plan where we would like to see more detail and focus. Outside of our policy recommendations, Surfrider strongly believes the CCC has the ability to implement robust policies **and** also bring together other resource agencies to coordinate actions and reform fragmented governance.

Surfrider stands ready to work with the CCC and other agencies to protect coastal resources not only for the sake of economic well-being, but also to ensure future generations inherit a sustainable coast and ocean.

Very truly yours,



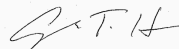
Stefanie Sekich-Quinn
California Policy Manager



Joe Geever
Water Programs Manager



Mark Rauscher
Coastal Preservation Manager



Angela Howe
Legal Director

¹² Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Water, *California Coastal Resources: California Coastal Act of 1976: enforcement: penalties, Bill no. SB 588*, 2011-2012 Regular Session, http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/sen/sb_0551-0600/sb_588_cfa_20110318_140036_sen_comm.html.



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COUNTY OF VENTURA**

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February 21, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont St., Ste. 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105
SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

SUBJECT: COMMENTS TO DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2018

Chair Shallenberger and Members of the Commission:

The County of Ventura appreciates the opportunity to comment on the California Coastal Commission's (Commission) Draft Strategic Plan (DSP), discussed by the Commission on January 9, 2013. We acknowledge the difficulty faced by all State and local agencies in fulfilling their service responsibilities given the limited resources available in these difficult budgetary times. Along with the Commission, counties and cities, too, have had their budgets reduced, have laid off staff, and have had to eliminate non-essential services.

Our local agencies care deeply about the coast and serving the needs of our residents. While the Commission does not always agree with how this gets implemented at the local level, there should be an understanding that many of our goals are the same.

The comments provided below on the draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018 are made in an effort to further service the public by both the Commission and local communities along coastal California.

GENERAL COMMENTS

- While public agencies are applicants for projects and are their proponents, agencies are not private developers. We spend public dollars to develop projects that serve the public in order to make coastal resources available to residents. The time it takes to permit a public project, along with the costs of developing alternative designs or detailed information requested during the hearing process is prohibitive and is borne by the public agency. These funds come directly out of the dollars that are available

for programming services for further public access. There is no way to recover these costs on public projects. In fact, jurisdictions sometimes forego public projects rather than incur the expense of no reliable project approval or process. Recognition of our common goals and cooperation in a more streamlined and less costly process would go a long way to improving the relationships between the Commission and local coastal jurisdictions.

- Recognizing the likelihood of continued limited funding available to Coastal Commission staff, and in support of the Commission's discussion on January 9, 2013, we encourage administrative approval of those projects that do not create challenges to the Coastal Act or LCPs.
- Utilizing the expertise of other State agencies rather than duplicating their efforts could minimize costs for the Commission and local jurisdictions. For example, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) regulates water quality through detailed MS4 permits issued to local agencies. Commission water quality conditions sometimes conflict with these permits or require duplicate efforts. This is confusing and expensive for permittees. Working with these agencies could streamline the process of conditioning projects. The same is true for issues reviewed by California Fish & Wildlife. In years past, the Commission worked in tandem with these agencies rather than bringing on separate technical staff.
- Consider charging appellants a fee to file an appeal to recover partial costs of such an action.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

- Objective 1.4, Actions 1.4.1 and 1.4.2: Ventura County agrees with the Commission's fundamental goal of maximizing public access as evidenced in our LCP which requires all new development between the first public road and the ocean to grant easements for vertical and lateral access. With reference to Action 1.4.1 and the establishment of the California Coastal Trail (CCT), Ventura County Field Office staff has directed us to review the Malibu Local Coastal Plan (LCP) and Local Implementation Plan (LIP) as guidance for developing acceptable policies and ordinance regulations related to the CCT. As noted in the Malibu LCP Land Use Plan 2.62, the LCP shall be amended to incorporate all plans and designs for locating and implementing the CCT within the City including the final mapped alignment. To satisfy the Commission's alignment principals and implementation of the CCT, Ventura County will need a considerable amount of money. An updated joint coastal access program that provides the necessary funding to acquire land and construct new segments of the CCT needs to be developed for the CCT to become a reality. A local agency's LCP update should not be held hostage for not being able to implement the CCT.

- Objective 2.1 and Action 2.1.3: The Santa Monica Mountains span across the southern end of Ventura County, the City of Malibu and Los Angeles County. This area consists of Mediterranean habitat, which is the second most threatened habitat in the world. In the City of Malibu, all of the undeveloped native areas within the Santa Monica Mountains are considered ESHA. In Los Angeles County, a different approach is being explored resulting in certain areas being designated ESHA and other areas being excluded. In an attempt to develop policies and regulation to protect ESHA in those portions of the Santa Monica Mountains in Ventura County, it is unclear what the Commission's expectation is when there is differing opinions on what constitutes ESHA. We believe the dynamic nature and functionality of this ecosystem establishes the Santa Monica Mountains as one region however, fulfilling Action 2.1.3 and developing policies concerning the identification, protection, mitigation, enhancement, and restoration of ESHA that is consistent with the City of Malibu and Los Angeles County cannot be achieved unless there is clear policy guidance for coastal permitting to protect, enhance and restore sensitive habitats.
- Objective 2.3, Action 2.3.1, Objective 2.4 and Action 2.4.5: The State Department of Boating and Waterways distributes excellent educational materials to all marina operators to distribute to the boating community on reducing impacts to water quality. We believe this is another area where the Commission should rely on the expertise of other State agencies rather than duplicate their efforts.
- Objective 3.1 and Action 3.1.1: At its regular scheduled hearing on April 12, 2012, the Commission determined the City of San Buenaventura's Northeast Harbor Area mixed use waterfront project at the Ventura Harbor was inconsistent with Public Resources Code (PRC) 30253 and conditioned the project to plan for sea level rise scenarios identified by the State of California Sea-Level Rise report, prepared by the California Ocean Protection Council which were noted as 16 inches of sea level rise by 2050, 27 inches of sea level rise by 2070, and 55 inches of sea level rise by 2100. Estimated amounts and rates of sea level rise used in project reviews today may be either lower or higher than those assigned to the Northeast Harbor Area. This degree of uncertainty will continue until sufficient scientific data indicates a clear trend. The Commission needs to provide planning and permitting guidance on the topic of climate change and sea level rise so that local governments can use this information in coastal permitting and LCP planning. Coastal staff should not be burdened with addressing sea level rise on a project-by-project basis. In the absence of this guidance, LCP's will be limited to acknowledging sea level rise will occur, but will lack the planning tools to implement adaptive management.
- Objective 4.2 and Actions 4.2.1 and 4.2.3: Ventura County's LCP, like many other jurisdictions, is in need of updating. Local jurisdictions have limited resources available for plan updates, and must carefully delineate the scope of proposed amendments to ensure they can be completed within the allocated budget and timeframe. Historically, a pattern of "late hit" comments from Coastal Commission

staff and associated “scope creep” has resulted in budget overruns and delays that prevent amendments from being adopted and projects being approved. To address these issues, we recommend creating a formal comment and response system to ensure potential issues with proposed plan amendments are identified and resolved early in the process and well in advance of the local decision-making process. Further, the Commission should allow the approval of incremental LCP amendments versus the alternative of having no amendment approved due to unresolved disputes. We cannot risk a task that has a bottomless budget impact.

- Objective 4.4: Local jurisdictions have found that there is inconsistency in the implementation of Coastal Act policies in different district offices. At the same time, it does not appear that the district offices are able, without the Commission Executive Director’s approval, to negotiate compromises on policy issues. Local agency representatives have met with the Commission Executive Director and upper management staff to establish a strategy and framework for processing an LCP amendment, Public Works Permit amendment or project. These discussions and agreements are helpful in giving local agencies an idea of the timeline and cost of an upcoming submittal. This discussion does not always get communicated to other staff members, and results in delays, additional costs, confusion and frustration at the local level. Strategic and policy decisions made by upper management must be more clearly given in directing Commission staff who review local agency submittals and write the staff reports. Local jurisdictions would like to pursue a balanced approach to resolving disagreements by exploring the opportunity for pre-dispute resolution conferences with an empowered Commission manager or the Executive Director to present both sides of an unresolved issue prior to a formal dispute resolution or hearing with the Commission.
- Objective 5.3: Commission conditions on similar projects often vary between district offices, between projects and between staff members. When conditions are created at the Commission hearing they can be difficult to interpret later. Standardizing conditions would assist local agencies in clearly understanding their intent and carrying them out.
- Objective 6.4: Ventura County encourages the Commission to lower the cost of Commission hearings, as well as the cost of travel to Commission meetings for other agencies, however it may be accomplished.

With an increasing number of outdated LCPs in need of updating, the Commission’s first priority should be to address the topic of improving the LCP amendment process. The current amendment process is time-consuming and costly, with no guarantee that an amendment will ultimately be approved by the Commission. This has led to great frustration among local jurisdictions that have attempted to process local amendments, and has prevented many jurisdictions from even attempting to update their local coastal development documents.

Success of the coastal program is directly tied to the state-local partnership and the program's ability to keep LCPs current and responsive. Thank you for your consideration of our comments to the Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018.

Sincerely,



Kathy Long
Ventura County Supervisor, Third District



Lyn Krieger, Director
Ventura County Harbor Department



Kim Prillhart, AICP, Director
Ventura County Planning Division

WESELOH & YOUNG
REAL ESTATE BROKERS & LAND AGENTS

California Coastal Commission Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco CA 94105

January 31, 2013

RE: CCC Strategic Plan 2013-2018

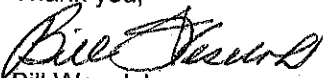
Dear CCC Members and Staff:

Certainly none of you are looking for a hundred page critic of the 2013-2018 Plan. Let me be brief and share a beach front property owner's view for your consideration.

1. What does it take to get you to look at your work through the eyes of a coastal property owner?
2. Consider a simplified rules/regulation vs. 4000 plus "Bible" of rules with so many exceptions it takes a lawyer to comprehend the data.
3. Does it really require 38 pages to cover your 2013-2018 priorities? And in 2018 how many items will still be on the "To Do List?" It would be useful to have a concise one page summary of the "Proposed Program."
4. OK, continue to maintain the basic goal - reasonable access to the 1100 miles of California Coast. With such a lengthy water front - be fair, sensible to the existing property owners. Why so much attention to Santa Cruz County, Santa Barbara and Malibu?
5. How about a philosophical attitude change - do your job but work with property owners and erase the negative experiences to applicants projects.
6. Is it really necessary for the CCC to modify/change an applicant's plan to protect their property?
7. Invest in a Public Relations Program where applicants have applauded your services & inform the public accordingly.
8. Adopt an open-mindedness to be flexible to a workable alternative. Can you actually tell what plants are covering a rip-rap wall when walking at the surf edge that is 100, 200, 300 feet away?

I could go on - but to summarize my thoughts - we have two ears, two eyes and one mouth. If one listens & looks more than they speak (or write), much more could be accomplished by all of us.

Thank you,


Bill Weseloh
Realtor

P.S. You should know I have neighbors and friends that share these thoughts. They will not write to you. They have given up because nothing happens.



February 28, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

City Council

Mike Tracy, Mayor
Cheryl Heitmann, Deputy Mayor
Neal Andrews, Councilmember
Brian Brennan, Councilmember
James L. Monahan, Councilmember
Carl E. Morehouse, Councilmember
Christy Weir, Councilmember

RE: Coastal Commission Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Chair Shallenberger and Commissioners:

The City appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Commission's vision and goals during the next 5 years, as articulated in the Draft Strategic Plan. Since certification of the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP) in 1983, the City continues, in partnership with the Coastal Commission, as a good steward of our local coastal resources, including expansion of coastal recreation and visitor-serving uses, protection of sensitive habitats, and supporting our productive fishing industry. The Commission is commended for considering strategic actions and conducting the effort at all in light of tight fiscal times all governmental agencies continue to face. Any organization contemplating improvements or new policy directions is wise to reflect on the past experiences as an evaluation tool and helpful guidance. In that spirit, the City offers the following observations and suggestions to your draft effort.

In reviewing the draft Strategic Plan's mission statement and core values, several key themes are interwoven into "protecting and enhancing" California's coast as your Commission has identified in effective intergovernmental coordination:

- Partnership with local government (*Stewardship*),
- Effective and efficient agency effort in work products (*Public Service and Excellence*),
- Recognizing teamwork is essential and value expertise of others (*Teamwork*),
- Dispassionate analysis and consideration of alternatives (*Objectivity*)
- Seeking practical solutions and listening carefully (*Problem-Solving*), and
- Implementing the Coastal Act fairly and consistently (*Rule of Law*).

The City supports these core values and believes wholeheartedly that intergovernmental relations between the Commission and local jurisdictions should use this foundation for coastal planning and implementation.

However, our experience processing LCP amendments since 2004 has been challenging. It appears this might occur as a disconnect between the meaning of your core values between City and Commission, or more likely, when it comes to real project implementation, these core values dissolve away in the details of project specific policies and issues—the *devil in the details syndrome*. However, the impact is real to the local community. Exhaustive effort and public monies have been spent in LCP amendment efforts that take years, and then receiving final Commission determinations/outcomes based solely upon statewide policy direction, with little regard or recognition for the jurisdiction's effort—the result of which begs the question for the local agency as to the purpose and intent of having a locally certified LCP at all.

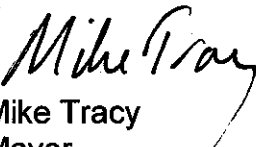
As noted in the Goals/Objectives/Actions, your draft Strategic Plan proposes an ambitious effort on significant policy issues that raise both technical and political implementation challenges: *new wetlands policies, mitigating for climate change, expanding coastal access, and new water quality practices*. How effective can these new efforts be if not through coordinated efforts of your local jurisdiction partners? As the Commission considers the final draft Specific Plan, the City strongly encourages that each of your Goals/Objectives/Actions be reviewed in light of how the intergovernmental working relationship could be improved first, then how your strategic actions can be implemented. Alternatively, recognition of the need for improved intergovernmental coordination could become new *Organizational Goal*, with specific implementing actions that address the process and outcome concerns raised by local jurisdictions, with performance measures to evaluate how well the effort improves.

Shifting from old to new approaches is always a big effort and takes much longer than any of the players involved would like. Sometimes small, incremental changes can provide meaningful adjustments, but from our perspective more significant process and outcome improvements are warranted. For example, "change agents" try out a completely different approach as a "pilot study" and evaluate the results before implementing the shift more broadly. This could be done through any of your regional offices, but we believe many of our sister cities and counties within the South Central Coast region would value and seek out partnership with Commission staff to develop and implement such a "pilot LCP amendment process", based upon upfront work to specifically design the process, expected local/state engagement, and defined time frame. We encourage the Commission and your strategic plan to be that change agent.

California Coastal Commission
February 28, 2013
Page 3

Should the Commission seek to incorporate some of these suggestions in the strategic plan, please consider the City as a resource to your implementation efforts.

Sincerely,


Mike Tracy
Mayor

C: Brian Brennan, Coastal Commissioner.
Jeffrey Lambert, Community Development Director

Marian Saldo
2131 Shoreline Drive
Pismo Beach, CA 93449

LATE
past 2/22/13

RECEIVED

March 4, 2013

MAK 07 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION

Honorable Chair and Members of the Commission:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on your Strategic Plan. Your commitment to protect the California coast is commendable. Nevertheless, while you have enjoyed many successes in making the Coast more accessible to the people, you have also created contention among the property owners of the land abutting the bluff.

Your "let it fall as nature intended" plan allows erosion to continue unfettered. The landowners have a right to protect their property from the ravages of nature. I believe the California Coastal Commission should direct their efforts toward safe, sound engineering and design standards of seawall protection.

The concept of "let it fall as nature intended" may be a good idea for land that is open space, public or undeveloped land, but it is not acceptable for developed areas. The Coastal Act, which calls for the creation of Local Coastal Plans to execute the day to day management within city and county boundaries, should be followed by the Commission. Instead you are using your resources to micromanage local governments, even appealing decisions to gain control. This has and will continue to alienate local governments and the people who live on the coast and lovingly care for and about it.

The Coastal Act charges you to respect private property rights. You have an obligation to return management to local governments, and follow the spirit and letter of the Coastal Act when considering your new goals.

Sincerely,



Marian Saldo

MS:rm



County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development

Glenn S. Russell, Ph.D., Director

Dianne Black, Assistant Director

March 19, 2013

California Coastal Commission
Executive Division
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94106

RE: Coastal Commission Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Chair Shallenberger and Commissioners,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan 2013-2018. These comments are intended to assist your Commission in developing a Strategic Plan that is highly effective in carrying out the spirit and intent of the Coastal Act for protecting the irreplaceable resources of the California coast. One important purpose of our comments is to enhance the working relationship between County and Coastal Commission staff. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Commission and Commission staff in the maintenance and refinement of our Local Coastal Program and the review of coastal development projects.

Our comments are both general and specific to particular sections of the draft plan.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- The Plan characterizes the Commission staff and the work of the Commission very positively and appropriately so. (eg, "The Commission's institutional framework operates efficiently and its actions are guided by strong core values such as commitment to public service, stewardship, science and the rule of law."). It might also be useful and enhance the effectiveness of the document to recognize the difficult issues that sometimes arise when working with local governments.
- The Plan establishes very worthy objectives and actions. Since the Commission staff have limited resources, it would be helpful to identify priorities among those identified. This would help to establish realistic expectations and focus efforts appropriately.
- The Plan would be positively enhanced if it indicated how the knowledge and expertise possessed by other agencies on coastal issues contributes to the overall goals of the plan.
- The Plan should recognize that the resource and access protection goals promulgated by the Coastal Commission must be carefully balanced with local issues, including residential and employment opportunities.

- The Plan needs to better address how issues of statewide importance, such as Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Agriculture, will be prioritized and treated in the coastal zone while also being part of a comprehensive statewide approach.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Page 12 The Plan would be improved if it addressed how the public and public agencies will be able to provide input into the establishment of the Commission’s priorities, such as which items will be five year actions and which will be longer term actions.

Goal 1: Maximize Public Access and Recreation

The Plan acknowledges that “public access continues to be threatened by ... illegal encroachments or blockages.” The Plan would be more effective if it also included objectives and actions that addressed efforts to ensure that such illegal encroachments or blockages are removed.

The Plan should recognize the challenges inherent in the acquisition of new public access in relation to the continually evolving law on exactions (nexus and rough proportionality).

It would be helpful if Action 1.1.2, coordination with local governments in the development of guidelines for beach curfew, etc., included some details as to how this would be pursued.

It may be beyond the scope of the current Plan, but Action 1.2.2 would benefit from additional detail as to how this would be accomplished. For example, The County of Santa Barbara is interested in ways to effectively use the in lieu fees collected for Hollister Ranch developments.

Goal 3: Address Climate Change through LCP Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education

Page 24 Objective 3.2, Our experience suggests that developing “adaptation planning strategies” typically means abandonment. It would be helpful if the Plan acknowledged that existing development such as residential and visitor-service commercial and recreation are also important resources (in addition to Coastal Act Chapter 3 resources) that deserve consideration for protection.

Action 3.3.2, While appropriate, this action contradicts the early input the County received from Coastal Commission staff relating to placing alternative energy facilities in the Gaviota Coast Plan. Perhaps it would be clarified if the action indicated what scale of alternative energy facilities should be facilitated.

Goal 4: Strengthen the LCP Planning Program.

Page 25 In the first paragraph under Goal 4, the document includes the phrase “notwithstanding inadequate resources”. This is the only specific goal that is qualified in this manner. If this issue is relevant to other goals, perhaps a general statement in the introduction to Strategic Goals, Objectives & Actions on page 12 would be appropriate.

Page 26 In the first full paragraph on this page, the fact that most local jurisdictions have their LCPs online should be acknowledged. The Commission could simply provide links to those documents on their website.

Action 4.2.1, If there was a way to provide incentives for local governments to comprehensively update their LCPs, it would greatly help to facilitate this action. The idea of considering alternatives to full periodic reviews is good, but will require restraint on the part of the Commission and its staff. If there is any additional information as to how this might be achieved, it would be useful to add that to the action.

Action 4.2.4, Allocating more staff time to LCP planning is a very useful goal, but providing some additional details regarding what management strategies would allow this would make the discussion of this action more effective.

We recommend that the Plan include an additional Action 4.2.5 Work with Local Governments to facilitate the Updating of LCPs. Such an action would emphasize a collaborative approach to LCP planning. This action might also include:

- Allowing the development of regional standards rather than statewide requirements, where appropriate.
- Identifying as a goal reducing the time required to certify LCPs amendments.

Action 4.3.3 seems to go further than providing and maintaining LCPs online. Please consider if it should be placed elsewhere in the plan.

Action 4.4.1 which includes LCP workshops is a very appropriate action. The action, or perhaps a separate action, should also consider other ways of improving communications. For example, Coastal Commission staff could occasionally make presentations to local decision making bodies at public hearings to emphasize priorities and receive feedback.

Action 4.4.2 should include “Continue or convene”. Santa Barbara County and the Ventura office have already established regular coordination meetings.

Goal 5: Improve the Regulatory Process, Compliance and Enforcement.

Some additional detail would assist in clarifying this goal. For example, it is not clear if Objective 5.3 relates to Coastal Commission issued permits or local government issued permits, or both.

The discussion could also benefit by making it clear in the actions that the Coastal Commission's goals are to ensure that conditions are followed through on the ground. Of course, this is implied, but an additional statement to that effect would be helpful.

An additional action should be added to update the California Coastal Management Program, which we believe has not been adequately updated in many years. For example, and there are others, the Program does not include Hannah Beth Jackson's bill regarding marine tankering.

Goal 6: Enhance Information Management and E-Government

Consider including an action in Objective 6.2 that proposes collaboration with local agencies on GIS and mapping resources, as many local jurisdictions have their own systems and data.

Action 6.4.5 should specify that the staff report template should model concise, focused staff reports to reduce the level of energy currently spent on staff report production.

I would like to again thank you for the opportunity to review the Plan and make comments. We hope that you find our comments useful in making revisions that strengthen and clarify this very important Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn Russell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Glenn Russell, Ph.D.
Director

C.: Board of Supervisors
Chandra Wallar, CEO