

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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“CROWDING THE RIM” INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON NATURAL HAZARDS AND DISASTERS

Staff Recommendation for California Coastal Commission Sponsorship as a “Supporting Organization”

Introduction: The Pacific Rim is seeing unprecedented development and population increase. When coupled with economic globalization, this increase in population tends to magnify and extend the disruptive impact of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sea level rise, tropical storms, and other natural hazards, that are endemic to the region. In an increasingly interconnected global economy, the effects of a natural disaster in one Pacific Rim region is quickly propagated around the Pacific Rim. Because a regional approach to decision-making is essential in such an environment, understanding local disasters within a regional framework will allow for more informed decisions by decision-makers, such as the California Coastal Commission, throughout the Pacific Rim region.

These issues will be addressed at a public-private summit entitled "Crowding the Rim" that will be held at Stanford University in August 2001. This workshop is being jointly organized by Stanford University, the U. S. Geological Survey, the Circum-Pacific Council, and the American Red Cross. Supporting organizations include Chevron Corporation, the Asia Society, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, the International Geographical Union, the International Union of Geological Sciences, the American Geological Institute and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. It is proposed that the California Coastal Commission join this group as a supporting organization.

Goals: As a public-private, cross-disciplinary summit, "Crowding the Rim" is designed to explore large-scale regional connections and to initiate planning to mitigate global implications of natural disasters on the populations and increasingly interdependent economic infrastructures of the Pacific Rim countries. The five principal objectives of the summit are:

- (1) Develop through consensus an understanding of the nature of risk throughout the Pacific Rim

- (2) Create a series of preliminary risk maps for various natural hazards throughout the Pacific Rim
- (3) Develop a high school educational curriculum for the countries of the Pacific Rim
- (4) Draft policy recommendations to political leaders for risk reduction
- (5) Conduct a series of post-summit educational workshops throughout the Pacific Rim for decision-makers, business and industry, and citizens to communicate the issues and motivate community-based action.

Activities: These goals will be met through a variety of related activities that are planned for the summit. During the three-day summit itself, to be held at Stanford University in August 2001, approximately 200 experts from around the Pacific will examine the economic and societal ramifications of impending natural disasters through presentations and workshops. Preliminary risk maps that show the spatial extent of various hazards will be developed through game simulations and structured workshops. To support these simulations and to develop a long-term resource for ongoing decision makings, digital data on natural hazards, resources, demographics, infrastructure are being gathered by the U.S. Geological Survey and made accessible through a geographic information systems (GIS) and will be disseminated via the world wide web. In addition, a high school curriculum is being developed to communicate the essence of the summit to the region's future decision-makers. Finally, workshops will be convened throughout the Pacific Rim community following the summit in order to further disseminate these data and the conclusions reached at the workshop.

Expected Products: The GIS database incorporating information on geohazards, physiography, demographics and infrastructural elements is already underway. Two software interfaces are being developed that will allow access to this database from distinct users (one for summit participants and another for the general public). Summit participants will use a customized ArcView Project that will allow non-specialists to access the database; this information will then be used to answer qualitative/visual and quantitative questions that will arise during the summit proceedings, ultimately leading to the creation of preliminary risk maps. This information will also be converted to a format accessible via the world wide web to allow access for the general public. Finally, an educational module will be developed that will communicate the message of the summit to students, teachers and communities around the Pacific Rim.

Participating Institutions: The summit is being jointly sponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey, Stanford University, the American Red Cross and the Circum Pacific Council. In addition, the Asia Society will host a pre-summit workshop in Manila to engage international colleagues in this risk assessment exercise. Supporting organizations also include the International Union of Geologic Sciences, the

International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, and the International Geographical Union, the American Geological Institute and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. Professional colleagues from these organizations will help frame the processes to be used in evaluating risk.

Relationship to mandate of the Coastal Commission: The goals of the summit are consistent with the State of California's long-term goals for the coast, especially the goal, as defined in Section 30001.5(e) of the California Coastal Act, to "encourage state and local initiatives and cooperation in preparing procedures to implement coordinated planning and development for mutually beneficial uses...in the coastal zone." In recognition of the economic and social interdependencies around the Pacific Rim, the Commission finds that extending this goal to international initiatives is fitting and appropriate. In addition, pursuant to Section 30012 of the Coastal Act, the Commission can offer its help in developing a public education program "that includes outreach efforts to schools, youth organizations, and the general public for the purpose of encouraging public participation in programs for the conservation and wise use of coastal and ocean resources."

Coastal Commission Contributions: Staff recommends that the Coastal Commission join the summit as a "supporting organization." The summit organizers would thus be authorized to use the name of the Commission in soliciting funds and in advertising the summit, implying Commission support for the goals of the summit as detailed above. In addition, the Commission can contribute staff time to help develop the products and to participate in the activities described above. Although the Commission has no funds available to contribute to the summit.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Commission join this effort as a Supporting Organization. The Commission's staff geologist will serve as principal contact person and will participate in the summit in August 2001. Other staff members as appropriate may also be called upon to further the objectives of the workshop and of the Commission as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director.

Motion:

"I move that the Commission adopt the staff recommendation, by authorizing the Executive Director to execute a letter of support for the "Crowding the Rim" summit.

Staff recommends a YES vote.

More information about the "Crowding the Rim Summit" can be found at <http://www.crowding-rim.org>

