

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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July 3, 2020

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties
FROM: John Ainsworth, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report, July 2020

State Budget & Agency Operations

The COVID virus is raging out of control across the State and Country. It would appear the COVID pandemic will continue to disrupt our society until we have a vaccine or therapeutics to treat the virus. The pandemic is not only a public health crisis it is an economic crisis. The virus has had devastating impact on the State's economy which in turn has adversely affected the State's budget. Although the details of the Commission's budget have not yet been released, we do know the overarching budget cuts that will affect the agency's operations. The budget includes a 9.23% cut to staff salaries which will be implemented through a Personal Leave Program (PLP 2020), with two personal leave days per month over the next two years. In addition, all scheduled general salary increases have been cancelled through June 30, 2022. The reduction in staff salaries will be difficult for staff who are already struggling to get by on inadequate state wages in the high cost of living areas where our offices are located.

Also, 5% of our staff (8 staff members) were redirected to contract tracing. Therefore, we are facing almost a 15% reduction in our workforce. This situation will result in a reduction of productivity across our entire agency including delays in processing regulatory and planning items, enforcement cases, LCP grant work and coordination with our local government and agency partners.

The reduction of our workforce will require us to prioritize our work across the agency and look for new ways to increase efficiencies in everything we do. Focusing and investing our time and efforts on important regulatory and planning matters where significant coastal resources at stake. This will take discipline and focus and will make us all uncomfortable as we make the difficult decision on what matters warrant close scrutiny and what matters we should not spend as much time and effort on.

Given the COVID cases virus is again surging across the State and across the Country, I see no scenario where we will be holding in person Commission meetings in the near future. Therefore, our plan is to continue to have virtual Commission meetings through December 2020 and likely into 2021. Staff will continue to telework with only minimal staffing in our offices to take care of critical business we cannot do remotely. Finally, the San Francisco

Headquarters office move is scheduled to start on July 27. This move involves a lot of moving parts and difficult logistics that are exacerbated by the COVID crisis. The move will affect and slow down our core operations temporarily until we are settled into the new office.

Racial Equity/Environmental Justice Efforts

We are very fortunate that during this historic racial justice movement, our Environmental Justice (EJ) Unit was already in place and a team of staff had two years of focused equity training with GARE (Government Alliance on Race & Equity) as a foundation from which to have completed an all staff EJ and equity training earlier this year. In the past several weeks, the EJ Unit compiled a detailed resource list of books, articles, documentaries and other material for staff seeking to deepen their understanding of race, equity and systemic discrimination. I have authorized staff to use these materials for personal development hours during the workday as appropriate.

Our newest hire to the unit, Javier Padilla, is developing a facilitation guide for district staff who want to discuss these issues with their colleagues, and the unit will launch monthly guided discussions on race, social justice, and diversity and inclusion in the workplace for all CCC staff. These discussions provide a safe, structured space for staff to explore their personal experiences on these topics and how that connects to CCC and role of government. The aim is to normalize conversations on these topics and provide staff the tools to further the agency's commitments to environmental justice, race, and equity outlined in our EJ Policy and internal Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP).

Meetings and Events

Coastal Cleanup Day 2020

The Public Education Program is happy to announce a revised plan for the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day. In order to continue to inspire coastal stewardship as safely as possible, the Coastal Commission will be encouraging volunteers to conduct neighborhood cleanups around their own homes and with the people or family members with whom they've been sheltering-in-place. The cleanups will take place on each Saturday of this September, from 9 AM to Noon. This new model will help educate Californians about the impacts we can all have on our coast even from far inland locations, while discouraging large gatherings at traditional cleanup sites.

More information, and this year's new Coastal Cleanup posters, can be found now at www.coastalcleanupday.org.

California Ocean Litter Prevention Strategy Webinar

Staff participated in and helped facilitate the *California Ocean Litter Prevention Strategy Implementation Webinar*. The webinar included two plenary sessions on the mornings of June 24 and 25, along with six breakout sessions to discuss specific goals on the afternoon of the 24th (staff facilitated the discussion around one of those goals).

CSU Council on Ocean Affairs, Science and Technology

On June 2, three of our staff – Dr. Joseph Street, Geologist; Sumi Selvaraj, Environmental Justice Manager, and Dr. Lauren Garske-Garcia, Senior Ecologist – participated as agency webinar panelists for the CSU Council on Ocean Affairs, Science and Technology (COAST) [State Science Information Needs Program \(SSINP\)](#). The purpose of the panel was to support a COAST [Request for Proposals \(RFP\) on sea level rise](#) by offering technical insight to prospective investigators, fielding questions, and providing context for specific sea level rise research needs identified. The latter were developed through COAST's consultations with staff from multiple agencies, including many additional staff at CCC, and focused on areas that were broadly recognized as valuable to informing State recommendations and decision-making in economics, environmental justice, adaptation for coastal and estuarine habitats, coastal and estuarine geomorphology, and groundwater. Our staff will continue to make themselves available to COAST for consultation through the proposal review phases and expect to potentially engage more directly with funding recipients in the future, to help ensure that the research remains relevant to advancing State goals in sea level rise.