

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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December 3, 2021

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Persons

FROM: John Ainsworth, Executive Director
 Madeline Cavalieri, Statewide Planning Manager
 Ashley Reineman, Federal Programs Manager

SUBJECT: **Local Government Working Group Sea Level Rise Adaptation and LCP Update Documents**

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Following the July 2019 Local Government Workshop, a Local Government Working Group consisting of representatives from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and a Coastal Commission subcommittee (Commissioners Groom and Wilson) was formed. Over the past two years, this group has worked together to explore challenges and develop solutions to better address sea level rise planning. This work has recently resulted in several products ([Exhibit 1](#)) including a framework for a phased approach to LCP updates; a call for regional approaches; an elevation and concurrence process; and a reference document of resources for SLR planning. Commission staff recommends adoption of these work products.

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[Exhibit 1 – Local Government Working Group’s 2021 Work Products](#)

I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION

Motion:

I move that the Commission adopt the Local Government Working Group's 2021 Work Products.

Staff Recommendation of Approval

Staff recommends a **YES** vote. Passage of this motion will result in the Commission's adoption of the Local Government Working Group's 2021 Work Products. The motion passes only by an affirmative vote by a majority of the Commissioners present.

Resolution of Approval

The Commission hereby adopts the Local Government Working Group's 2021 Work Products.

II. DISCUSSION

Following the July 2019 Local Government Workshop, a Local Government Working Group consisting of representatives from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and a Coastal Commission subcommittee (Commissioners Groom and Wilson) was formed. Over the past two years, this group has worked together to understand challenges and develop solutions to better address sea level rise planning. In November 2020, the working group presented, and the Commission adopted, a [Joint Statement on Adaptation Planning](#) (Joint Statement).

The Joint Statement includes a set of guiding principles, challenges, opportunities, and actions associated with proactive and effective sea level rise adaptation for California's coastal communities. It focuses on what the three entities represented by the working group can do to address sea level rise, specifically relating to Local Coastal Program (LCP) policy development, adaptation planning, and project-level decision making.

Over the past year, the working group met and developed materials to make progress on the actions identified in the Joint Statement. The resulting materials are attached as [Exhibit 1](#) and include the following:

- 1) A framework for a phased approach to LCP updates for sea level rise (Framework)
- 2) A call for regional approaches to resiliency and adaptation (Regional Approaches)

- 3) An elevation and concurrence process to support efficient LCP updates (Elevation Process)
- 4) A “quick links” reference document including resources for SLR planning and LCP updates (Quick Links)

The Framework provides an approach to updating LCPs to address sea level rise that is phased over time. It follows through on the first action identified in the Joint Statement that called for the working group to co-develop guidance on an improved LCP update process that supports more frequent and incremental or “phased” updates to LCPs. As part of a first phase update, the Framework describes the importance of including four key policy areas that lay the foundation for sea level rise planning and future LCP updates. The four policy areas highlighted include using best available science to support permit and planning decisions, developing vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans, incorporating risk disclosure and assumption of risk policies, and designing a phased approach to future, more regular LCP updates. The Framework also includes an appendix of recently certified LCP policy examples that address these four areas. The Framework demonstrates the working group’s commitment to making progress on LCP updates to address sea level rise, as well as the importance of these four foundational policy areas.

The Regional Approaches document highlights the need to address sea level rise challenges and solutions from a regional perspective. It provides a collaborative vision for California communities, agencies, and property owners to employ regional approaches to sea level rise adaptation as a model for addressing resilience. Often, sea level rise planning will be most effective and efficient from a regional, rather than local perspective, but regional planning requires significant funding and presents challenges related to government coordination. This document demonstrates the working group’s commitment to continue to seek funding and to develop pilot approaches to support regional and phased approaches to sea level rise planning, specifically within the context of LCP development and approval.

The Elevation Process provides a method for addressing conflicts and ensuring that the Commission and local governments are working constructively and collaboratively throughout the LCP update process. It describes strategies and a sequence for early coordination and conflict resolution as Commission staff and local government staff move through the LCP update process. The Elevation Process is intended to support efficient and effective communication between local jurisdictions and the Commission for all LCP updates. It establishes agreed upon goals and strategies for coordination and details a process to identify and elevate conflicts that may arise during the LCP planning process.

Finally, the Quick Links document includes key sources of information on sea level rise planning, adaptation, and best available science from the Commission as well as other entities in a concise and approachable format. This document can be used by staff, decision-makers, and other stakeholders as a primer for many different elements of sea level rise planning.

Together, these documents demonstrate the group's growing commitment to work collaboratively on sea level rise planning throughout the state. Adoption of these four documents will further this shared commitment and provide a path forward for both the Commission and local governments to advance work on sea level rise planning.