

Exhibit 1: Letter of Support

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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June 3, 2005

TO: California Ocean Protection Council
FROM: Peter Douglas, Executive Director
RE: Project for Permanent Funding of Coast and Ocean Conservation

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The single most important thing California can do to ensure effective, long-term conservation of its coast and ocean resources is to identify, establish and activate a permanent, reliable, and adequate funding program to support implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act, Marine Life Management Act, the California Coastal Act, and the McAteer-Petris and Suisun Marsh Preservation Acts. Legislation introduced this year by Senator Joe Simitian (SB 956), is intended to create such a program by imposition of a per night, per room tax on overnight visitor serving accommodations in the 20 coastal counties of the State. The bill was recently heard and held in the Senate Natural Resources Committee on the understanding the author would do more work to develop a funding approach that has broader support, that can be effectively and efficiently implemented, and that includes a public-private partnership with the California hospitality industry (if the room tax is the ultimate source of funding).

PROPOSAL

Our request is that the Council direct staff to develop a specific project proposal to retain an experienced consultant to design a specific funding program that would result in a permanent source of adequate funding to carry out the coastal and ocean resource protection provisions set forth in the MLPA, MLMA, the California Coastal Act, and the McAteer-Petris and Suisun Marsh Preservation Acts. An RFP for such a project should include the following elements:

1. Description of experience and a demonstrated record of successful innovation in identifying and promoting long-term funding for public interest programs.
2. Require inclusion of a design for a public-private partnership for the funding program that relies on incentives as well as requirements for participation. For example, if a hotel room tax is utilized, design a program that includes incentives for voluntary participation such as tax incentives, promotional benefits for the participating partners, marketing elements, etc., as well as mandatory provisions to ensure equitable participation.