



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Lester Snow, Secretary for Natural Resources
John Chiang, State Controller, State Lands Commission Chair
Linda Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection
Susan Golding, Public Member
Geraldine Knatz, Public Member
Fran Pavley, State Senator
Pedro Nava, State Assemblymember

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ocean Protection Council

FROM: Amber Mace, Executive Director

DATE: September 7, 2010

RE: Ocean Protection Council Support for Federal Funding Proposals

ATTACHMENTS: (1) [Letter](#) from the Council Chair
(2) [S. 3641](#), as amended July 27, 2010

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) approve sending to the U.S. Senate leadership the attached letter from the council chair in support of:

- A new national commitment to fund ocean protection, conservation, restoration, and understanding; and funding objectives such as those articulated in the *National Endowment for the Oceans (NEO) Act of 2010* (S. 3641);
- The President's \$20 million budget request to support regional ocean governance and marine spatial planning; and
- Legislative improvements to the Coastal Impact Assistance Program to increase the efficiency of this federal grant program.

SUMMARY:

As articulated in the Final Recommendations of The Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force (Council on Environmental Quality, July 19, 2010), a healthy ocean regulates and sustains our climate and provides much of the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the ecosystem services that support healthy fisheries and provide valuable recreational activities. There is a strong connection between healthy oceans and coasts and vibrant coastal communities and economies. Therefore, activities to protect, restore, and understand our oceans support not only the California economy, but also the economic health of the nation.

Given the ecological and economic importance of coastal and ocean ecosystems, there is growing need for dedicated funding to further protect, restore, and understand these systems.

The Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force identified a \$3.9 billion annual unmet need to adequately manage our ocean and coastal resources. Through public and private partnerships, California has leveraged available dollars to provide improvements in our understanding of ocean currents, the coastal seafloor and shoreline, offshore ocean uses, and areas critical to fish habitat and reproductive success. However, there remains a significant unmet need to continue these and other needed efforts into the future.

The OPC therefore supports a bold new national commitment to fund ocean protection, conservation, restoration, and understanding; and funding objectives such as those articulated in the *National Endowment for the Oceans (NEO) Act of 2010* (S. 3641). The NEO will enable work to address issues that are becoming increasingly critical, such as the following (please see the full text of S. 3641, as amended July 27, 2010, in Attachment 2):

- Development of baseline science, monitoring, and observation data to facilitate sustainable uses that will create jobs and support coastal economies;
- Research and planning for ocean and coastal effects of climate change, to ensure that coastal communities and resources are resilient and able to adapt to changing conditions.

The OPC also supports the President's \$20 million dollar budget request to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Ocean Service to support a competitive NOAA grant program for Regional Ocean Partnerships. Issues such as climate change, invasive species, and large ecosystem disruptions demonstrate the need for region-wide responses. Regional Ocean Partnerships are a critical piece of the new National Ocean Policy, and new resources will be required to implement its recommendations. The West Coast Governors¹ endorse the President's budget request, which is supported by ocean partnerships located throughout the nation.

Finally, the OPC supports legislative improvements to the federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) to increase its efficiency. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (the Act) established the CIAP to help offset the impacts of offshore oil and gas development on coastal states (more information about the CIAP can be found in Attachment 1). The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) currently implements the program, and has instituted additional review based on their interpretation of the Act that is time-consuming and that results in costly project delays with minimal measurable improvements in the projects. The OPC therefore recommends that Congress enact legislation directing the BOEMRE to do the following, in order to enable California and the other five CIAP states to receive the previously-approved CIAP funding immediately and implement projects without additional delays:

- Immediately disburse CIAP payments to eligible states and local political subdivisions upon the approval of a State Plan by the Secretary of Interior and

¹ In 2006, the Governors of California, Oregon, and Washington created the West Coast Governor's Agreement on Ocean Health, which launched a proactive regional collaboration to protect and manage the ocean and coastal resources along the entire West Coast.

- Eliminate requirements for eligible states and local political subdivisions to submit any additional project applications and any other requirements (other than notifying the Secretary of which projects are being carried out under the State Plan) to receive CIAP payments.

CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT:

The proposed letter of support for the funding proposals discussed therein is consistent with the California Ocean Protection Act (COPA), Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code because it suggests changes in federal law and policy that support the goals of COPA and seek to improve protection, conservation and restoration of ocean ecosystems in federal and state waters off the state's coast. (Pub. Res. Code § 35615(b)(1)).

CONSISTENCY WITH OPC'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Support of federal funding proposals will help implement specific provisions of the OPC's current Five-year Strategic Plan. Specifically, **Goal A – Governance, Objective 5a** calls for the OPC to actively engage in efforts to support increased funding for state and federal programs. The plan urges the OPC to work with the President, Congress, the Council on Environmental Quality, and others to achieve this goal.