



CONSENT ITEM

TO: California Ocean Protection Council
FROM: Deborah Halberstadt, OPC Executive Director; Dr. Karina Nielsen, OPC-Science Advisory Team Co-Chair and Interim Science Advisor
DATE: January 31, 2018
RE: New Member Selection for the Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT)

1. Consent Action

The Executive Director of the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and the Co-Chair of the OPC Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT) recommend that the OPC approve Dr. Elliott Hazen to serve on the OPC-SAT.

2. Summary

In September of 2017, Ocean Science Trust (OST) coordinated a public nomination process to identify a scientist for a recently vacated seat on the Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT). This memo provides background on the selection process used to identify a new OPC-SAT member and the process by which the OPC-SAT Executive Committee (the leadership body of the OPC-SAT, which includes Ocean Protection Council management) and OST arrived at a unanimous recommendation for consideration and approval by the Ocean Protection Council (OPC). The candidate being recommending for formal approval by OPC is Dr. Elliott Lee Hazen, Research Ecologist, NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Environmental Research Division. A short biography and a curriculum vitae for Dr. Hazen are included below to support this recommendation (Exhibit A).

3. Background

Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team – Overview

The mission of OPC is to ensure that California maintains healthy, resilient, and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. The OPC was established by the California Ocean Protection Act of 2004, and is chaired by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency. Central to the OPC is a commitment to science informing policy. To that end, the OPC established a Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT), currently consisting of 23 members across a range of ocean and coastal disciplines and research institutions. Member scientists have a range of expertise in natural and social science, law, tribal perspectives and interests in coastal and ocean resource management. The mission of the OPC-SAT is to ensure that the best available science supports OPC policy and funding decisions.

OST coordinates and supports the activities of the OPC-SAT. OST is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation whose mission is to advance a constructive role for science in decision-making by promoting collaboration and mutual understanding among scientists, citizens, managers, and policymakers working toward sustained, healthy, and productive coastal and ocean ecosystems. OST was established under the California Ocean Resources Stewardship Act (CORSA) of 2000. Ocean Science Trust's Executive Director also serves as co-chair of the OPC-SAT and Science Advisor to the OPC. A member of the OPC-SAT, Dr. Karina Nielsen, is serving as the co-chair of the OPC-SAT and the Science Advisor in an interim capacity while OST is conducting a search for a new Executive Director.

Role of the OPC-SAT

OPC-SAT members operate in a complex institutional and political space and serve as an effective portal to the wider scientific community for the OPC. Members must be willing to respond to the State's needs and provide requested information or reviews, sometimes on short notice. As such, OPC-SAT members must be responsive, engaged, and have a proven track record of working collaboratively and constructively with people from a range of backgrounds and perspectives. New members of the OPC-SAT are invited to serve an initial three-year term, with the possibility of renewal. OPC-SAT members are expected to actively participate in activities to the best of their ability and consistent with their area of expertise. The OPC-SAT supports the State with advice related to, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Providing recommendations on high level strategic planning to the OPC based on emerging issues and/or scientific innovations;
- Identifying critical emerging science issues that should be of concern to the state, and recommending potential actions that the OPC could take to respond to these issues;
- Assisting in describing, refining, and ranking research priorities;
- Developing recommendations on scientific issues identified by the OPC;
- Responding to information requests from the OPC;
- Evaluating the technical merit of scientific and technical projects proposed to the OPC;
- Suggesting outside experts to serve as peer reviewers for OPC proposals and projects, as well as products of other state, federal, and non-governmental entities;
- Providing technical expertise and advice on, and review of, OPC project reports, literature reviews, and agenda items; and
- Convening technical working groups to address critical management problems.

OPC-SAT Vacancies - 2017

Two OPC-SAT seats held by a federal fisheries scientist and a marine mammal veterinarian were vacated in 2017. When seats on the OPC-SAT become available, OST conducts a public nomination process. To initiate this process, OST engaged with OPC leadership to identify the expertise necessary to support OPC's work in coming years. OPC indicated its interest in maintaining federal fisheries expertise for one of the vacant seats and its desire to further evaluate current and future scientific expertise needs before filling the second seat.

Upon formulation of a vacancy description, OST released a public notice of vacancy on September 1, 2017, including instructions for making nominations. These materials were posted on OST's and OPC's websites, distributed over the OPC listserv, and spread through other public platforms. The nomination period lasted one month and all nominations were submitted to OST. The response to the vacancy was substantial – OST received over thirteen highly qualified nominees from universities and research institutions in California and beyond.

Following the nomination period, OST contacted each nominee to confirm their interest in serving and to obtain additional, standardized background information for the evaluation and selection process. OST compiled all materials and worked with the OPC-SAT Executive Committee to review the nominees. A short list of highly qualified nominees was provided to the OPC-SAT for additional review and feedback. Upon final deliberation, the OPC-SAT Executive Committee unanimously recommended Dr. Elliott Hazen, NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Environmental Research Division.