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The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) commissioned this background document, *Coastal and Marine Planning and California*, to support its 2011 strategic planning initiative.

This report presents both general and California-specific information about coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) as background information for policy makers, stakeholders, and the public for consideration in how CMSP could support California's coastal and ocean management activities. It also served as an initial background piece for OPC discussions with agencies and stakeholders as part of its process to develop draft recommendations for proposed actions relating to CMSP as part of its 2012-2017 strategic planning initiative.

The report is not designed to be a conclusive discussion of CMSP, but is intended to be used as a preliminary snapshot of U.S. and worldwide efforts to develop geospatial systems and tools, spatial plans, and stakeholder processes to improve management approaches for protecting coastal and marine ecosystem health. It was also intended to provide a summary of California initiatives where these types of approaches are already being implemented to some degree and opportunities where OPC, and California, could further explore their benefits.

OPC's draft 2012-2017 strategic plan proposed actions related to CMSP are rooted in the development of an improved data management system. These are consistent with the National Ocean Policy goals outlined for CMSP, as well as California Assembly Bill 2125, which charged the OPC with "promoting and sharing the use and sharing of scientific and geospatial information for coastal and ocean decision-making."

OPC acknowledges that this approach will serve as a critical step in achieving its mandate of promoting ecosystem-based management and ecosystem health, as outlined in the California Ocean Protection Act. Data tools and systems that integrate current biological, physical, geological, and human use data in combined platforms and formats will assist agencies and stakeholders to see the overall picture of our ocean and coastal ecosystems and how the various elements are interconnected. These information systems can also provide a baseline for developing tools for effectively siting emerging uses of the coast and ocean, minimizing cumulative impacts and conflicts between uses, and improving coordination among the state's management regimes.

Finally, OPC recognizes that protecting California's valuable coast and ocean resources is not just the actions taken by the state's resource management agencies, but relies heavily on cooperation and effective partnerships with others. The principles of CMSP to make scientific information further available to the public, to improve the transparency of decision-making, and to engage stakeholders and the public in marine and coastal trade-off and planning decisions and are all worthy principles that OPC will continue to explore in its efforts to enhance the protection of the state's coastal and ocean resources.