Resolution of the California Ocean Protection Council
on Ocean Renewable Energy

Approved December 16, 2011

WHEREAS, Governor Brown signed SBX1-2 (2011) requiring that renewable energy should equal at least 33 percent (approximately 20,000 megawatts [MW]) of total electricity sold to retail customers in California by December 31, 2020, and the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) estimates that renewable energy goals for 2050 may range from 67 percent to 79 percent;

WHEREAS, ocean renewable energy technologies (wave, tidal and offshore wind) may help California meet its long-term energy and carbon reduction goals, create new jobs, diversify the state's energy supplies, and reduce air pollution from fossil-fuel power generation;

WHEREAS, the Energy Commission's 2011 *Renewable Power in California: Status and Issues* report estimates California's total offshore wave and tidal technical energy potential[1] to be 32,763 MW and the offshore wind technical potential to be 75,400 MW;

WHEREAS, the Energy Commission is the primary state agency for energy policy and planning and is currently undertaking the development of the 2011 Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR) which evaluates market trends and develops energy policies that seek to conserve resources, protect the environment, ensure energy reliability, enhance the state's economy, and protect public health and safety;

WHEREAS, the Ocean Protection Council recognizes that experimental ocean renewable energy projects can provide opportunity for evaluating the potential benefits and feasibility of these technologies;

WHEREAS, the Ocean Protection Council, in collaboration with the Energy Commission, has invested in facilitating the environmental review of these experimental technologies, including funding a report on potential environmental effects, establishing the California Marine Renewable Energy Working Group, and preparing a permitting guidance document for experimental ocean renewable energy projects;

NOW, THEREFORE the Ocean Protection Council hereby:

RESOLVES that the Energy Commission should adopt an ocean renewable energy policy that guides the state's goals for the development of these renewable energy technologies while balancing this development with the protection and conservation of ocean resources for broad public benefit;

RESOLVES to recommend that the Energy Commission consider adopting an ocean renewable energy policy for inclusion in the 2012 IEPR update, taking into account the following elements:

[1] Technical energy potential is the amount of generating capacity theoretically possible given resource availability, geographical restrictions, and technical limitations like energy conversion efficiencies.

- Ocean renewable energy technologies have the potential to help California meet its long-term energy and carbon reduction goals, and that these technologies need to be properly evaluated through small-scale test and pilot projects to: a) determine energy production potential and electricity generation costs, b) evaluate potential impacts to marine ecosystems, and c) assess compatibility with other marine uses;

- Studies conducted through small-scale test and pilot ocean renewable energy projects can provide valuable information about potential environmental effects and/or design-changes that help to minimize these effects, boost power production, and reduce generation costs. California's academic institutions can provide valuable opportunities for collaboration by conducting and funding research related to this nascent industry; and

- The Ocean Protection Council and Energy Commission will facilitate the development of small-scale test and pilot ocean renewable energy projects located within their jurisdictions, to the extent allowed by law, through the following actions:

    - **Continue co-chairing the California Marine Renewable Energy Working Group to coordinate and facilitate state agency review of small-scale test and pilot projects and improvements to the permitting process**. Coordination among California coastal and ocean management and energy agencies is critical to assisting the deployment of experimental ocean renewable energy projects and addressing regulatory challenges. Early agency and stakeholder consultations can also assist in identifying appropriate ocean renewable energy project sites and minimizing conflicts with marine uses.

    - **Assist in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between California and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)** which calls for the state and FERC to coordinate application review schedules, encourage pilot projects prior to commercial development, and coordinate state and federal environmental reviews, where possible. The Energy Commission and the Ocean Protection Council will continue to use the California Marine Renewable Energy Working Group as a venue for implementing this MOU.

    - **Work with state agencies and academic institutions in California to promote research programs and funding related to evaluating small-scale test and pilot ocean renewable energy projects.** Supporting the development of collaborative research programs around test and pilot projects can provide agencies, stakeholders, industry and the public with information to better understand these technologies, how they interact with the marine environment, and how they may contribute to future renewable energy portfolios for the state and/or local communities.