



Heal the Bay

January 23, 2023

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 9th Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Item #5: Tribal Engagement Strategy and Tribal Small Grants Program

Dear Chair Crowfoot and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing NGOs working on marine protected areas in California, we offer our support for Item #5, the Tribal Engagement Strategy and disbursement of funding for a Tribal Small Grants Program, under consideration at the Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) January 25, 2023 meeting.

Tribes have stewarded California's coast and natural resources since time immemorial, and maintain their inherent rights to lands and waters of California and beyond. The State of California has made strides toward acknowledging the harms that have been perpetrated against tribes through actions such as Executive Orders B-10-11 and N-15-19, but much work remains to ensure that tribes are both informing and leading natural resource decision-making.

The Tribal Engagement Strategy supports OPC Strategic Plan 2.1 and is an important step towards defining equitable engagement with tribes and tribal partners. We appreciate that this Tribal Engagement Strategy builds on more than eighteen months of direct tribal outreach, and that it is accompanied by funding to ensure that tribes can carry out marine and coastal efforts that align with their priorities and OPC's Strategic Plan.

Tribal partners are core leaders in addressing the myriad challenges facing our coastal and marine environments, and we urge your support for OPC's Tribal Engagement Strategy and Tribal Small Grants Program. Our collective work is enriched and can only be successful with tribal leadership and participation.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

THE UNDERSIGNED

Michael Quill
LA WaterKeeper

Jules Jackson
Founder
Coastal Defenders

Rikki Eriksen
California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

Laura Walsh
California Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Morgan Patton
Executive Director
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin

Calla Allison
Executive Director
MPA Collaborative Network

Sean Bothwell
Executive Director
California Coastkeeper Alliance

Emily Parker
Coastal and Marine Scientist
Heal the Bay



RESOURCES LEGACY FUND
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS. LASTING RESULTS.

January 19, 2023

VIA Electronic Transmission

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 9th Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Item #5: Tribal Engagement Strategy and Tribal Small Grants Program

Dear Chair Crowfoot and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) offers our support for adoption of a Tribal Engagement Strategy and approval of funding for a Tribal Small Grants Program under consideration at your January 24, 2023 meeting.

Adoption of this Strategy and funding is an important next step to implement the Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) Strategic Plan, particularly Goal 2: Advance Equity Across Ocean and Coastal Policies and Actions; Objective 2.1: Enhance Engagement with Tribes. We understand that OPC staff has worked closely with Tribes and Tribal organizations over the past 18 months through a series of consultations and listening sessions in crafting the proposed Strategy and appreciate OPC's commitment to continue to adapt the Strategy as needed based on future input from Tribes.

Tribes and Tribal communities have stewarded California's natural environment since time immemorial. Despite colonization's history of violence, displacement, and dispossession, California Tribes remain deeply engaged in natural resource stewardship including ocean and coastal stewardship. The OPC's Tribal Engagement Strategy reflects your intent to support Tribal-led monitoring, education, outreach, and organizational priorities around the ocean and coastal environment and across all aspects of its work.

OPC's Tribal Engagement Strategy is significant not only for California Tribes who seek to exercise their inherent right to and traditional stewardship of state lands and waters; it is also part of a growing global movement to elevate indigenous leadership as a critical means of advancing effective, equitable resource management. The OPC's support of this item helps demonstrate the State of California's commitment to advancing Tribal leadership in stewarding ocean and coastal resources and deserves your strong support.

Sincerely,

Kaitilin Gaffney
Director of Ocean, Coast, and Fisheries