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December 15, 2005

The Honorable Mike Chrisman
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
COPCpublic@resources.ca.gov

RE: Support for California Coastal Ocean Observing System (CalCOOS)

Dear Chair Chrisman:

On behalf of the California Coastkeeper Alliance, which represents Waterkeeper groups from the Oregon border to San Diego, I am writing to express my strong support for the Coastal Conservancy's CalCOOS proposal before Ocean Protection Council. As the only public stakeholder on the national Steering Committee for the development of the Global Ocean Observing System, I recognized the critical need for a unifying governance structure for the various ocean observing activities. This overarching governance structure is essential to ensure coordination of the observing activities and, more importantly, to ensure that the ultimate user of the information – the public – receives sustained, useful data products.

The Coastal Conservancy's CalCOOS proposal would achieve these goals for California. It would also ensure that California's ocean observing associations are speaking with one voice in both Sacramento and in Washington D.C., which will be the ultimate source of the funding that will be needed to sustain and expand upon these nascent efforts. Because of the relatively short life of the bond funds being used to start these critical efforts, the CalCOOS proposal should be adopted and implemented as soon as possible, so that there is an entity that can work to leverage existing funding to the maximum extent possible, and begin the task of seeking new funding that will carry current activities forward. The Coastal Conservancy is the appropriate entity to implement the recommendations in the report due to its unique familiarity with this issue, given its experience to date with managing the bond funding for ocean observing specifically, and for the Ocean Protection Council agencies and applicants more generally.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Sheehan", with a long, sweeping underline.

Linda Sheehan
Executive Director

cc: Sam Schuchat, California Coastal Conservancy