



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Ocean Protection Council

FROM: Amber Mace, Executive Director
Moira McEnespy, Program Manager

DATE: September 7, 2010

RE: Ocean Protection Council Strategic Plan Update

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) approve the conceptual workplan contained in this memo, which identifies guiding principles, a plan development process and a timeline to update the OPC's five-year strategic plan.

BACKGROUND:

The California Ocean Protection Council was established by the California Ocean Protection Act¹, signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on September 23, 2004. Generally, the Act directs the OPC to:

- Coordinate activities of state agencies to improve protection and conservation of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems;
- Coordinate collection, evaluation, and sharing of scientific data related to coastal and ocean resources, and establish a Science Advisory Team;
- Identify changes in state and federal law and policy needed to improve conservation and protection in ocean ecosystems, and recommend actions to encourage such changes.

In 2006, the OPC adopted its first strategic plan to identify the goals, objectives, and strategies needed to meet these directives and carry out its mission²

(http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/docs/OPC_Strategic_Plan_2006.pdf). The Draft Ocean Protection Council White Paper presented to the Council at this meeting emphasizes the need for the Council to develop a clear, strategic vision for California's ocean and coastal

¹ Public Resources Code Sections 35500 *et seq.*

² The mission of the OPC is to ensure that California maintains healthy, resilient, and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations.

resource management and a focused plan for moving forward with a coordinated set of activities within that vision.³

With the current plan approaching its fifth year, staff has prepared the following workplan to guide development of a strategic plan update. Like the previous plan, this plan will guide OPC activities for a five-year period after OPC adoption.

CONCEPTUAL WORKPLAN:

Guiding Principles/Core Strengths: Through the strategic planning process, the OPC will consider employing the following guiding principles and core strengths when carrying out its work in the next five years. As directed, the OPC will:

- Continue to help identify and resolve California’s most pressing ocean challenges through coordinated government action and innovative approaches to management.
- Provide ocean policy leadership at the state and national level.
- Actively engage and work with partner agencies and organizations in an open, humble, understanding, and inclusive manner.
- Use transparency in its decision-making and its actions. The OPC will promote accountability for itself and for those that it works with, and develop metrics to measure performance.
- With its partners, develop a clear, strategic vision for California’s ocean and coastal resource management, and a focused plan for moving forward that builds on the OPC’s core strengths:
 - **Council membership:** Coordinated, high-level representation of all California ocean and coastal resource agencies, the state legislature, and the public.
 - **Communication and Outreach:** Raise awareness and provide visibility for ocean issues and their value to California.
 - **Coordination:** Facilitate collaborative action among public agencies and key stakeholders.
 - **Funding:** Fund strategic projects and research that advance identified goals for ocean and coastal ecosystems that would not have been supported otherwise, and effectively leverage and distribute funding.
 - **Decision-Making Informed by Science:** Deliver new, highly-relevant information into the policy area through commissioned, targeted, authoritative studies.

Criteria to Identify Issue Areas: The OPC will use the following criteria and work closely with the OPC Steering Committee,⁴ the OPC Science Advisory Team⁵ and interested stakeholders to

³ Draft White Paper, Section 3.F.

identify the substantive issue areas that will comprise the focus of OPC efforts over the next five years. These areas will encompass critical ocean threats and potential solutions where the OPC's particular role in coordinating agencies, recommending policies, and funding projects is essential and will have high impact. In outline form, these criteria will be:

- **Significance**—The issue area/ problem has a significant effect on the condition and sustainability of coastal and ocean ecosystems and coastal communities.
- **Consistency**—Required actions fulfill OPC goals and purpose and match OPC core strengths and statutory authorities.
- **Timeliness**—The issue area/problem has developed to a point where the OPC can leverage its core strengths to advance the issue or resolve the problem.
- **Urgency**—Action in the near-term is critical for effective engagement.
- **Probable impacts**—The OPC can make a critical, tangible, and lasting difference. The cost ratio benefit is high.
- **Need**—The OPC's core strengths are required for effective state action.
- **Sound science**—The OPC's scientific undertakings will be based on sound science, vetted by independent reviewers.

Strategic Plan Development Process: The strategic plan update process will incorporate the following major steps. As this is a conceptual workplan, these steps will be expanded and the process detailed and refined at the staff level.

For each issue area selected through a public process, the OPC will develop:

- A clear problem statement.
- Rationale and need for OPC engagement (unique role).
- Prioritization of strategic actions.
- Identification and engagement of key partners and stakeholders.
- Action plan, including policy development and specific science and operational projects to advance policy objectives.
- Anticipated outcomes and measurable goals.
- Funding requirements and potential sources of funding.

In addition, the OPC will:

⁴ The OPC's Steering Committee is composed of senior representatives of state departments, boards, and commissions that have ocean and coastal protection responsibilities.

⁵ The OPC's Science Advisory Team consists of over 20 experts representing a broad range of disciplines. The team is coordinated by the OPC's Science Advisor, who also serves as the Executive Director of the California Ocean Science Trust.

- Engage the expertise of the OPC Science Advisory Team, to ensure that the strategic plan update has a credible scientific underpinning.
- Engage the OPC Steering Committee, to ensure that the strategic plan update will improve the state's ability to manage its coastal and ocean resources.
- Gather input from federal partners to ensure that the strategic plan update will be as consistent as possible with federal goals and policies.
- Gather input from interested members of the Legislature.
- Involve interested stakeholders in the update process, via workshops and public meetings, to ensure an open forum for public engagement.

The Executive Director will evaluate the need to retain a facilitator and/or other contractor to assist with the strategic plan update process.

Timing: Staff anticipates commencing the update process once this conceptual workplan is approved, and bringing the new strategic plan for OPC approval by its last meeting in 2011.