



MEMORANDUM

TO: California Ocean Protection Council

FROM: Abe Doherty, OPC Climate Change Policy Advisor

DATE: August 27th, 2014

RE: Proposed Resolution on Implementation of the “Safeguarding California Plan for Reducing Climate Risks”

Attachments: Proposed Resolution on Implementation of the “Safeguarding California Plan for Reducing Climate Risks” ([Exhibit 1](#)) and Resolution of the OPC on Sea-level Rise, adopted on March 11, 2011 ([Exhibit 2](#))

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council adopt the resolution attached in Exhibit 1, on Implementation of the “Safeguarding California Plan for Reducing Climate Risks”, pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code.

SUMMARY:

OPC is bringing together state agency leaders to develop a shared vision and empower bold action to reduce risks from climate change and sea-level rise and protect what Californians value about our coast and ocean. This role, one that OPC was created to do, is underscored in the newly released [Safeguarding California Plan for Reducing Climate Risks: An update to the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) (“*Safeguarding Plan*”). The *Safeguarding Plan* is designed as policy guidance for state decision makers. Staff is recommending that the OPC adopt a resolution (Exhibit 1) to implement key recommendations in the *Safeguarding Plan*. This staff report summarizes the relevant portions of the *Safeguarding Plan* and OPC’s role in implementation.

BACKGROUND:

The *Safeguarding Plan* continues to refine the state’s approach to climate adaptation, building upon the 2009 *Climate Adaptation Strategy*. Like the 2009 document, the *Safeguarding Plan* approaches climate change through the lens of sectors that are important to the state and incorporates new information on climate vulnerabilities and management approaches. Ocean and Coastal Resources and Ecosystems is one of the nine sectors upon which the report focuses. The *Safeguarding Plan* is not meant to replace the *Climate Adaptation Strategy* but to add new recommendations and replace portions of the prior document where new information allows for updating and revision. Except where revisions and new recommendations supersede, the strategies in the 2009 *Climate Adaptation Strategy* continue to be relevant and are carried forward.

The proposed resolution builds upon and reiterates portions of the Resolution on Sea-level Rise that the OPC adopted on March 11, 2011 (Exhibit 2), which set forth the following policy directives:

1. Pollutants that cause climate change should be reduced early in this century in order to limit the amount of damage from sea-level rise ;
2. State agencies should include consideration of sea-level rise when making funding decisions, to the extent permissible by law; and
3. State agencies should follow the recommendations in the guidance document on sea-level rise developed by a state agency working group with input from the OPC's Science Advisory Team (see Background section below). Non-state entities implementing projects or programs using state funding or on state property, including on lands granted by the Legislature, should also follow these recommendations.

The proposed resolution builds upon this earlier resolution by implementing additional recommendations on incorporation of risk reduction principles in decision-making by state agencies and non-state entities implementing projects with state funds or on state lands.

SUMMARY OF SAFEGUARDING PLAN:

Risk Reduction Recommendations

The introduction section of the *Safeguarding Plan* emphasizes that all sectors should undertake the following: “Leadership and support are needed to help transition from planning for climate risks to taking action to reduce risk...Establish a mandate and guidelines for all state agencies to consider climate risks in their policies, planning efforts, and investments.” The proposed resolution helps to implement these recommendations of the *Safeguarding Plan*, by calling for state agencies and non-state entities implementing projects or programs with state funds or on state lands to incorporate climate risk considerations into all relevant decision-making, including those related to infrastructure. The proposed resolution also calls on state agencies and non-state entities implementing projects with state funds or on state lands to incorporate the following considerations from the *Safeguarding Plan*:

1. Encourage iterative approaches;
2. Protect California's most vulnerable populations;
3. Achieve multiple benefits from efforts to reduce climate risks and prioritizes green infrastructure solutions;
4. Integrate climate risk reduction with emissions reductions to the fullest extent possible; and
5. Develop metrics and indicators to track progress on efforts to reduce climate risk.

The *Safeguarding Plan* calls for a cross-agency working group including representation from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Transportation Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the California Department of Public Health, the Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Finance, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture to develop guidelines for state agencies to follow as they incorporate climate considerations into all policies, planning, and investments. The *Safeguarding Plan* recommends that this group work in coordination with the Climate Action Team. OPC staff will continue to collaborate with other agencies on climate policy and implementation of the *Safeguarding Plan*.

Guiding Principles and Overarching Approach

The guiding principles set forth in the 2009 *Climate Adaptation Strategy* are still relevant and are reiterated and updated in the *Safeguarding Plan*:

- Use the best available science to identify risks and adaptation strategies;
- Understand that an effective strategy for preparing for climate risks should evolve as new information is available;
- Involve all relevant stakeholders;
- Establish and maintain strong partnerships across all levels of government, tribes, businesses, landowners, and non-governmental organizations;
- Give priority to strategies that also achieve benefits other than climate risk reduction benefits, including additional benefits to public health, the economy, environmental justice, and conservation of natural resources; and
- Ensure that strategies to reduce climate risk are coordinated, to the extent possible, with the state's efforts to reduce GHG emissions and other local, national and international efforts.

The OPC staff recommends that the Council adopt the resolution (Exhibit 1) to call on state agencies and non-state entities implementing projects or programs with state funds or on state lands to follow these guiding principles from the Safeguarding Plan.

Recommendations in the Ocean Chapter and OPC's Role for Implementation

OPC is the sector lead for the Ocean chapter of the *Safeguarding Plan*, which provides many recommendations for improving management practices, increasing capacity to withstand and recover from climate impacts, improving understanding of climate impacts and information sharing and education. OPC staff will be meeting with other state agency members of the Coastal and Ocean Working Group of the Climate Action Team (CO-CAT) to develop an implementation plan for relevant actions in the *Safeguarding Plan*.

State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise

One key recommendation in the Ocean chapter of the *Safeguarding Plan* calls on OPC to lead an inclusive, collaborative, science-based process to reduce risks from sea-level rise, storms and erosion and to collaborate with others to improve the capacity of entities at multiple scales to more effectively act to reduce these risks. The plan specifically recommends that OPC continue to work with the State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise, which consists of the California Coastal Zone Management Agencies (Coastal Commission, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and Coastal Conservancy), the state coastal land owners (State Lands Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation) and to collaborate with other state entities and with consultation with local land use planning authorities, tribes, federal partners, and other stakeholders. The Safeguarding Plan states that this process will involve activities such as:

- Conducting a science needs assessment in partnership with the California Ocean Science Trust and the OPC's Science Advisory Team to identify key information needs and the opportunities for existing and new science to inform management and reduce risks.
- Engaging state partners to assess progress and future plans and leverage resources.
- Engaging non-state entities working on many scales to learn what is working, what could be expanded and what else needs to be done.
- Collaborating with FEMA, NOAA, USGS and the Army Corps of Engineers and state agencies such as the Coastal Conservancy, Coastal Commission, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the Department of Water Resources on improving mapping of areas at risk of flooding due to sea-level rise, storms and shoreline change.

- Bring resources and expertise to assist the State Lands Commission, Coastal Commission and others address the issue of changing boundaries between public trust lands and private lands.
- Providing resources on funding sources and mechanisms for supporting actions to understand and reduce risks on many scales.
- Describing a range of tools that can be utilized to reduce risk while maximizing conservation of natural resources and public access, consistent with the public trust doctrine.
- Supporting state agencies to have the capacity to take effective action.
- Improving coordination and sharing of information needed to leverage resources and improve consistency and effectiveness.

The *Safeguarding Plan* further states that OPC will consider how to support innovative practices including managed retreat and use of natural processes and habitats to reduce risk from flooding, inundation and erosion; and will also address expected impacts to public access and use of beaches, trails and recreational areas along the coast.

Next Steps for OPC staff: In addition to working with the CO-CAT to develop a comprehensive implementation plan for the *Safeguarding Plan*, OPC staff will be collaborating with the senior management of the agencies that comprise the State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise to develop a visionary action plan to describe what success looks like for different time periods, present a framework for integrated action on different scales and identify changes to state and federal policies and funding streams that are necessary to implement the vision. This process will include engaging entities working on many scales to learn what is working, what could be expanded and what else needs to be done. OPC staff plan on bringing this visionary action plan to the Council within a year. The proposed resolution calls on staff to take this action.

Other Recommendations for the Ocean Sector

In addition to the action described above for the State Coastal Leadership Group, the Ocean and Coastal Resources and Ecosystems chapter for the *Safeguarding Plan* makes the following recommendations for actions:

1. Implement new policy on hazard avoidance for new development;
2. Encourage innovative design of new structures/infrastructure in areas vulnerable to sea-level rise;
3. Enhance integration of climate risk considerations, including extreme weather events and sea-level rise, into emergency management activities;
4. Support pilot projects for innovative shoreline management techniques;
5. Continue to study and support investment in cost-effective green infrastructure to reduce flood risk and stormwater runoff and maximize associated co-benefits;
6. Address climate impacts in Local Coastal Programs and General Plan guidelines;
7. Support and continue progress toward a more integrated ecosystem approach to management of ocean resources;
8. Continue development of the State Sediment Master Plan and sediment management activities;
9. Improve water management to be responsive to saltwater intrusion issues;
10. Better understand the impacts and opportunities associated with offshore renewable energy development;

11. Support reform of the Federal Flood Insurance Program;
12. Conduct further vulnerability assessments and cost analyses;
13. Continue development and refinement of models for climate impacts on California's ocean and coastal ecosystems and resources;
14. Continue support and investment in monitoring efforts;
15. Invest in risk communication efforts, emphasizing disclosure of risks that have not or cannot be addressed in an economically feasible manner;
16. Improve maps and tools and provide training to incorporate best-available climate science into planning and operation and management decisions where there is risk from sea-level rise;
17. Develop sustainability modeling tools for fishery managers; and
18. Improve public health risk communication efforts.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

The proposed resolution (Exhibit 1) on Implementation of the *Safeguarding California Plan for Reducing Climate Risks* takes the following actions:

1. **Visionary Action Plan** – The resolution directs OPC staff to continue to collaborate with senior management of the agencies that comprise the State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise and with others to learn what is working, what could be expanded and what else needs to be done and to develop a visionary action plan by the fall of 2015 to:
 - a. describe what success looks like for different time periods;
 - b. present a framework for bold action to reduce climate risks and protect what Californians value about our coast and ocean; and
 - c. identify changes to state and federal policies and funding streams that are necessary to implement the vision.
2. **Climate Risk Reduction**– The resolution calls on state agencies and non-state entities implementing projects or programs with state funds or on state lands to reduce risk from climate impacts to the coast and ocean, by implementing the *Safeguarding Plan's* recommendation to incorporate climate risk considerations into all relevant decision-making, including related to infrastructure, in such a way that it:
 - a. Encourages iterative approaches;
 - b. Protects California's most vulnerable populations;
 - c. Achieves multiple benefits from efforts to reduce climate risks and prioritizes green infrastructure solutions;
 - d. Integrates climate risk reduction with emissions reductions to the fullest extent possible; and
 - e. Develops metrics and indicators to track progress on efforts to reduce climate risk.
3. **Guiding Principles**- The resolution calls on state agencies and non-state entities implementing projects or programs with state funds or on state lands to follow the guiding principles from the *Safeguarding Plan*:
 - a. Use the best available science to identify risks and adaptation strategies;
 - b. Understand that an effective strategy for preparing for climate risks should evolve as new information is available;
 - c. Involve all relevant stakeholders;
 - d. Establish and maintain strong partnerships across all levels of government, tribes, businesses, landowners, and non-governmental organizations;

- e. Give priority to strategies that also achieve benefits other than climate risk reduction benefits, including additional benefits to public health, the economy, environmental justice, and conservation of natural resources; and
- f. Ensure that strategies to reduce climate risk are coordinated, to the extent possible, with the state's efforts to reduce GHG emissions and other local, national and international efforts.

This proposed resolution will support the state in taking action to reduce risks and will update OPC's previous resolution on sea-level rise to use the revised guiding principles and considerations for risk reduction and will direct OPC staff to implement a key recommendation of the *Safeguarding Plan*, to develop a concise visionary action plan within the next year.