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## DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

*A California State Agency*

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July 31, 2017

Mr. John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
California Resources Agency  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Support for California Sea Grant to administer a competitive grant process for the Ocean Protection Council priority programs**

Dear Secretary Laird and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

I am writing this letter for the Delta Science Program, a part of the Delta Stewardship Council, to support and endorse the authorization by the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to disburse Proposition 84 Funds to California Sea Grant to administer competitive grant programs on behalf of OPC.

The mission of the Delta Science Program (Program) is to provide the best possible unbiased scientific information to inform water and environmental decision-making in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Bay-Delta. It is imperative that this body of knowledge be unbiased, relevant, authoritative, integrated across program elements, and communicated to the scientific community, agency managers, stakeholders, and the public. To this end, we have worked closely with California Sea Grant since 2003 to administer a very effective competitive grants program to select and sponsor Delta Science Research Fellows to fund the most competitive pre-doctoral and postdoctoral researchers (<http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/science-program/delta-science-fellows-program>). To date, the Delta Science Program has funded 86 early-career scientists with California Sea Grant's assistance. This collaborative effort has led to significant advances in research directly applicable to State policy and decision-making within the California Delta.

Tasks that California Sea Grant has undertaken on our behalf include advertising for and receiving scientific research proposals, arranging and facilitating an independent scientific review of the proposals, and issuing and managing awards to the successful proposers. California Sea Grant provides the majority of the logistical support including such tasks as proposal receipt and management, coordination and communication with panelists, and administration of these prestigious awards throughout the duration of the awards. Our

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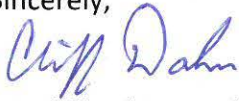
*"Coequal goals" means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."*

*– CA Water Code §85054*

partnership with them is, and has been, invaluable to the Delta Science Program. The Delta Science Fellows Program thrives under California Sea Grant administration and guidance.

I wholeheartedly recommend that you support the proposed authorization to disburse Proposition 84 Funds to California Sea Grant to administer the OPC grant programs on your behalf. This will benefit OPC by opening up staff time as well as broadening the outreach of research through California Sea Grant's integrated network with coastal communities statewide. Utilizing the very experienced and professional staff at California Sea Grant to administer the OPC competitive grants process is a time efficient and cost effective way to take on this major effort. I am confident that the California Sea Grant program will provide excellent services, and the information and products coming out of these projects will aid in solving contemporary and pressing marine-related management and resource problems.

Sincerely,



Dr. Cliff Dahm, Lead Scientist  
Delta Science Program, Delta Stewardship Council  
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July 28, 2017

John Laird, California Secretary for Natural Resources  
California Natural Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Proposition 84 Grant Program

Dear Secretary Laird,

The Nature Conservancy (the Conservancy) supports innovative solutions that promote thriving, sustainable fisheries and healthy coastal and marine ecosystems in the face of climate change. As such, we are writing to express our strong support for the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) staff recommendation calling for the disbursement of up to \$7 million of Proposition 84 funds to initiate a competitive grant program. This program would be administered by the California Sea Grant programs to implement scientific research projects that directly support OPC's strategic plan and priorities. We see this as a timely opportunity for California to invest in critical marine research to ensure that the state's coastal and marine resources are better conserved and sustainably managed for the long term.

Climate-driven changes are threatening California's dynamic and biodiverse marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as the thriving ocean economy they support. The proposed grant program would address this threat in several ways. First, funding provided by this program would be available to accomplish several important objectives critical to ensuring sustainable fisheries under changing ocean conditions. The program would include funding to improve our understanding of the impacts of climate change on marine environments and the coastal communities dependent upon these productive ecosystems. We hope these funds will help support research to encourage on-the-water experimentation and develop the technology tools necessary to increase timeliness and accuracy of data reporting, in order to inform more adaptive management frameworks. We also support the prioritization of funds that encourage collaborative research efforts, bringing together a diverse array of fisheries stakeholders to provide additional capacity and expertise in addressing priority marine issues.

Second, we strongly support making funding available for projects to quantify the impacts of sea level rise on coastal communities and ecosystems, and to explore how natural infrastructure can be a part of the formula for protecting these resources. Communities are increasingly aware of their vulnerability to climate-driven coastal change, but outreach indicates that planners and property owners are typically unaware of the range of options available to protect their assets. In

consequence, they continue to default to seawalls and other forms of coastal armoring to protect themselves. Coastal armoring leads to exacerbated erosion of beaches and other coastal habitats, and causes loss of coastal access, neither of which California can afford to lose. It is critical that California invest in projects that mainstream natural infrastructure and show how it can be used – in conjunction with other adaptation approaches – to maintain both communities and ecosystems over the long term.

In conclusion, the Conservancy is supportive of the proposed competitive grant program, which would implement scientific research projects aligned with OPC's strategic plan and priorities. This grant program represents a tremendous opportunity to support collaborative research to promote long-term conservation and management of California's marine and coastal resources.

Sincerely,



Tom Dempsey  
Senior Fisheries Project Director  
The Nature Conservancy  
California Oceans Program



Sarah Newkirk  
Senior Coastal Project Director  
The Nature Conservancy  
California Oceans Program



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Office for Coastal Management**

August 4, 2017

John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
California Resources Agency  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: August 7<sup>th</sup> Agenda Item 4: Support for California Sea Grant and University of Southern California (USC) Sea Grant to administer a competitive grant process for OPC priority programs**

Dear Secretary Laird and Members of the Ocean Protection Council,

I am writing to express the support of NOAA's Office for Coastal Management for the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to approve the disbursement of Proposition 84 Funds to both California Sea Grant and the University of Southern California (USC) Sea Grant. The competitive grants program California Sea Grant and USC Sea Grant will set up with this funding would significantly advance key ocean and coastal applied research and management actions to benefit California coastal resources.

Both USC and California Sea Grant have been integral in bridging state of the art scientific research with policy and natural resource management for the State of California. Each program has successfully stewarded competitive grant processes for decades through the Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel (RASGAP), where state level managers vet proposed projects and this program will build upon the successful approach of RASGAP.

As the federal partner to the California Sea Grant programs through the National Sea Grant Office, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has a long history of successful partnership with these programs to advance our common goals. NOAA's Office for Coastal Management has many examples of working together and leveraging the work that both Sea Grant Programs in California, as well as the work OPC. Specifically, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management (OCM) has successfully collaborated with USC Sea Grant on projects to improve coastal resilience and to understand and take action on sea level rise adaptation including the West Coast Ocean Partnership's Climate Change Action Coordination Team and AdaptLA. Currently, NOAA OCM and USC Sea Grant are working together on the multi-partner County Resilience workshops to support and align local government efforts for hazard mitigation, sea level rise, coastal and general planning. OCM also has worked extensively with

California Sea Grant over the years including the current, multi-agency San Francisco Bay Sentinel Site Cooperative, tying together NOAA and partner efforts to improve understanding and management of sea level rise impacts on the Bay's coastal marshes and natural resources.

In addition, NOAA – OCM and the many other California based NOAA programs - has long lasting and successful collaborations with the Sea Grant programs here on an amazing array of topics beyond coastal resilience including marine debris; coastal management with the Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy; port and harbor management and marine transportation; fisheries research and management; marine protected areas, estuarine research reserves and sanctuaries; and aquaculture.

In summary, NOAA OCM supports the proposed authorization to disburse Proposition 84 Funds to Sea Grant (California and USC). The grant programs that this action establishes will advance the goals of the Ocean Protection Council by leveraging the long term, successful collaborations between the Sea Grants and NOAA programs and many other partners to further improve understanding and management of California's amazing coastal and ocean resources.

Sincerely,



Rebecca A. Smyth  
West Coast Director, NOAA Office for Coastal Management

Cc:

Joshua Brown, Federal Program Office, NOAA Sea Grant  
Linda Duguay, Director, USC Sea Grant Program  
Jim Eckman, Director, California Sea Grant  
Sherry Lippiatt, California Regional Coordinator, NOAA Marine Debris Program