



ACTION ITEM

TO: California Ocean Protection Council
FROM: Jenn Phillips, Policy Advisor, and Tinya Hoang, Program Manager
DATE: July 25, 2018
RE: Update on Global Climate Action Summit; Consideration and Possible Adoption of a Resolution to Advance a Vision for California's Coastal Future

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

"The California Ocean Protection Council hereby resolves that OPC will adopt the following coastal vision: In science-guided, collective action, we will maintain and enhance California's coastal habitats in the face of sea level rise, other climate change-induced challenges, and development, ensuring a protected coast for future generations to enjoy, replete with as much or more habitat and wildlife, as well as social, economic, and recreational benefits, as we have today; and OPC will commit to several actions to advance the coastal vision and call on its partners to also adopt the vision and make commitments to advance the vision."

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A: Proposed Resolution of the California Ocean Protection Council to Advance a Vision for California's Coastal Future

Exhibit B: Global Climate Action Summit – One Pager

BACKGROUND:

The Global Climate Action Summit and Oceans Programming

The Global Climate Action Summit will bring together leaders across the world this September in San Francisco to showcase their achievements and make renewed commitments to put the world on track to prevent the most serious impacts of climate change facing our world today (Exhibit B). This event is a key opportunity for the ocean community to elevate timely commitments or statements of action and achievement.

Oceans have absorbed a significant portion of carbon dioxide emitted during the industrial era; they have also absorbed the lion's share of the heat that has entered the global climate system as a result of warming. As a result, ocean waters are warming, becoming depleted of oxygen, and acidifying, while sea levels are rising. These changes are affecting marine fisheries and aquaculture, which account for about 17 percent of the global population's intake of animal protein. They are also subjecting coastal areas to more frequent and intense flooding and storms. Absent action to reduce emissions and thoughtfully address the impacts of warming that are already anticipated because of current emissions, these impacts and their associated costs will intensify.

Given the central role the ocean plays in regulating climate and absorbing greenhouse gas emissions and the importance of healthy coastal and ocean ecosystems in safeguarding global populations from climate change impacts, ocean-related actions will be integrated throughout Summit programming and events. Oceans and coasts will be formally addressed and discussed through one of the five challenge areas of the Summit, the Land and Ocean Stewardship challenge. Specifically, OPC staff is leading the planning for two high level sessions in the official programming of the Global Climate Action Summit.

These high level sessions on oceans will demonstrate progress that has been made on ocean climate action and how more is needed. The sessions will bring together leaders from governments, businesses, and citizens from around the world to: (1) demonstrate how the tide has turned on the fight against climate change; (2) showcase ocean climate action taking place around the world; and (3) inspire deeper commitments from each other and from national governments. It will mobilize bold new commitments while demonstrating that stronger commitments are necessary, desirable and achievable.

Globally and at home in California, the ocean community has come together in a novel and cross-disciplinary way, developing partnerships across the world and across diverse sectors that support targeted goal setting and responsive action on climate change. For California, the sessions on oceans are a milestone to showcase the state's leadership on climate change adaptation and mitigation across this critical system, and to highlight upcoming work. The Summit is another timely opportunity to solidify that California is a global leader on ocean protection and addressing climate change, to further show successes on both fronts given their nexus, and illuminate how these efforts can be extended and expanded upon globally.

California Coastal Vision Commitment at the Global Climate Action Summit

In particular, a recently released statewide habitat assessment by the California State Coastal Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, "*Conserving California's Coastal Habitats: A Legacy and A Future with Sea Level Rise*," has highlighted the urgent need to take action to protect coastal ecosystems from the impacts of sea-level rise. The study found that 55% of current habitat by area is highly vulnerable to five feet of sea-level rise – that includes 60% of California's iconic beaches, 58% of rocky intertidal habitat, 58% of coastal marshes, and 55% of tidal flats. In addition, sea-level rise will further stress populations of 39 rare, threatened, or endangered species, and 41,000 acres of public conservation lands are projected to be drowned by subtidal waters. The study presents a blueprint for conservation of coastal habitat in the face

of sea-level rise, through which it is possible to have as much coastal habitat statewide as there is today with five feet of sea-level rise, but only with concerted, coordinated and sustained action.

A common vision for California's coast is necessary to guide such collective action at local, state, federal and international levels. To that end, the following coastal vision is being considered by multiple local, state and federal agencies for adoption:

In science-guided, collective action, we will maintain and enhance California's coastal habitats in the face of sea level rise, other climate change-induced challenges, and development, ensuring a protected coast for future generations to enjoy, replete with as much or more habitat and wildlife, as well as social, economic, and recreational benefits, as we have today.

In response to this vision, agencies are making commitments to advance this vision, leading up to the Global Climate Action Summit, where commitments will be announced to a global audience.

The above coastal vision aligns with OPC's mission to protect, conserve and maintain healthy coastal and ocean ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations, and with its strategic plan goal to prepare and reduce harmful impacts of climate change on coastal development and infrastructure, public health and safety, the economy, and ecosystems by encouraging adaptation to climate change. As such, OPC plays a significant role in the achievement of this vision. OPC staff have developed a set of actions that, should they be adopted by the Council, would be OPC commitments towards this vision and that are consistent with its duties and activities:

- a. Use the coastal vision to guide ongoing and future policy recommendations by OPC on sea-level rise adaptation and coastal habitat protection and restoration;
- b. Support science-driven collective action at the local, state, federal, and international levels;
- c. Coordinate with state agencies to ensure that natural habitats and the values they provide are considered in permitting, planning and investment decisions;
- d. Utilize all the financial tools available to OPC in furtherance of the coastal vision, such as through discretionary and competitive grant funding
- e. Call all on California state and local agencies to join the campaign to adopt the coastal vision and make commitments to advance the coastal vision to be elevated at public stages, such as the upcoming Global Climate Action Summit.

The coastal vision and proposed OPC commitments have been incorporated into a resolution which the staff is recommending for adoption.

RECOMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the OPC adopt a resolution (Exhibit A) on the following vision for California's coastal future: *In science-guided, collective action, we will maintain and enhance California's coastal habitats in the face of sea level rise, other climate change-induced challenges, and development, ensuring a protected*

coast for future generations to enjoy, replete with as much or more habitat and wildlife, as well as social, economic, and recreational benefits, as we have today; and commit to several actions to advance the coastal vision and call on its partners to also adopt the vision and make commitments to advance the vision.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT:

The proposed action is consistent with the California Ocean Protection Act (Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code). Section 35615(a)(1) specifically directs the Council to coordinate activities of state agencies to improve the effectiveness of state efforts to protect ocean resources, establish policies to coordinate the collection of scientific data related to the ocean, and recommend changes in state or federal law.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE OPC'S STRATEGIC PLAN:

Passage of the resolution is consistent with Goal B (Climate Change) of the OPC's Strategic Plan: "Prepare for and reduce harmful impacts of climate change on coastal development and infrastructure, public health and safety, the economy, and ecosystems by encouraging adaptation to climate change and engaging decision makers at all levels of government."