



Staff Recommendation  
November 13, 2019

## Strategic Priorities to Protect California’s Coast and Ocean

Mark Gold, Executive Director

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

“The California Ocean Protection Council hereby adopts the *Strategic Plan to Protect California’s Coast and Ocean: 2020 - 2025* (Exhibit A) and directs staff to work with agency and other partners to implement this plan over the next five years.”

**LOCATION:** Statewide

### EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A: *Strategic Plan to Protect California’s Coast and Ocean: 2020 - 2025*

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Ocean Protection Council’s (OPC) previous strategic plan outlined priorities to protect coastal and ocean ecosystems between 2012 and 2017.<sup>1</sup> In early 2019, OPC staff initiated a process to develop an updated strategic plan that would guide priorities over the next five years, from 2020-2025.

The bold draft plan, entitled “*Strategic Plan to Protect California’s Coast and Ocean: 2020 – 2025*” (Exhibit A), was informed by feedback from OPC members, extensive public comments, existing state agency planning and technical documents, and numerous discussions with state agency staff. **The Strategic Plan aims to reflect collective action by all relevant partners within the state** and contains four overarching goals with objectives that include numeric targets with associated deadlines and actions. The goals of the plan are:

- **Goal 1: Safeguard Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Communities in the Face of Climate Change**, including actions related to sea-level rise, coastal erosion, ocean acidification, and climate-related research.

<sup>1</sup> A Vision for Our Coast and Ocean , California Ocean Protection Council Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2012-2017: [http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/2012-strategic-plan/OPC\\_042412\\_final\\_opt.pdf](http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/2012-strategic-plan/OPC_042412_final_opt.pdf)

- **Goal 2: Advance Equity Across Ocean and Coastal Policies and Actions**, including action related to improving engagement with California tribes and underserved communities, improving coastal access, and enhancing healthy human use of the coast and ocean.
- **Goal 3: Enhance Coastal and Marine Biodiversity**, including action related to marine protected areas, coastal sediment management, kelp forest ecosystem health, thriving fisheries, improved water quality, marine invasive species, and accelerated collaboration and accountability.
- **Goal 4: Improve Ocean Health through a Blue Economy**, including action related to sustainable seafood and aquaculture, oil platform decommissioning, offshore renewable energy, and decarbonizing shipping and ports.

The objectives, targets and actions in the plan will require extensive collaboration across government agencies, tribes, and stakeholders. Plan execution will result in greater coastal resilience to sea-level rise and ocean acidification, greater protection of California’s precious ecosystems including wetlands, beaches and kelp forests, a stronger blue economy with a sustainable seafood industry and offshore renewable energy generation, greater inclusion and engagement with California’s tribal and underserved communities, and universal affordable access to our spectacular beaches, coastal resources and coastal waters. Successful achievement of these strategic priorities will require a significant investment from the local, state, federal and private sectors and will advance the Newsom Administration’s priorities of climate resilience, biodiversity and access for all.

**NEXT STEPS:**

If the Council votes to approve the updated Strategic Plan on November 13, 2019, a final designed version will be brought to the Council at its February 20, 2020 meeting.