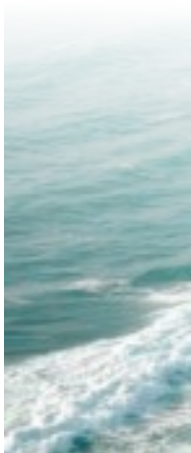




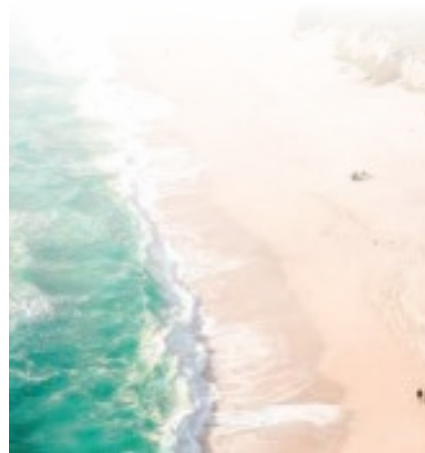
OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

June 15, 2022 – October 5, 2022

Providing an update on outcomes and accomplishments since the previous OPC Meeting.



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Updates By Strategic Plan Goal

Goal 1: Safeguard Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Communities in the Face of Climate Change • Goal 2: Advance Equity Across Ocean and Coastal Policies and Actions • Goal 3: Enhance Coastal and Marine Biodiversity • Goal 4: Support Ocean Health through a Sustainable Blue Economy

Goal 1: Safeguard Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Communities in the Face of Climate Change

Proposition 68 Chapter 10 Solicitation: Improving Coastal Resilience

On May 5, OPC released a [solicitation](#) for projects that build resilience on the coast to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of sea-level rise (SLR). OPC received over 50 Letters of Intent (LOI), and a select number of applicants were invited to submit full proposals by August 26. Review of the full proposals is currently underway. Recommended projects are expected to be brought to the December 2022 OPC meeting for funding approval.

Sea-Level Rise Adaptation Planning

OPC received \$101.5 million over multiple years in the Governor's final budget to fund sea-level rise (SLR) adaptation planning and projects, as described in Senate Bill 1 (Atkins, 2021). This funding will be used to create a grant program to equitably support local governments in their efforts to address the impacts of SLR through adaptation planning and implementation projects. OPC will coordinate with state partners through the State Agency SLR Leadership Team (which will serve as the SLR Collaborative mandated in SB 1) to ensure these funds support and leverage ongoing state programs and priorities. OPC will also prioritize increased collaboration with local governments to ground truth needs and challenges in addressing coastal resiliency.

Ocean Acidification & Hypoxia

OPC is participating in a workgroup of experts to help the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) develop a 303d listing process for ocean acidification and hypoxia (OAH) with focused biological, chemical, and assessment sub-groups. This group consists of members from Oregon, California, Washington, and Alaska, and is working towards how this 303d listing process for OAH that could translate to water quality criteria. The [OAH Modeling project](#), while still ongoing, shared interim results with OPC, the California State Water Resources Control Board, and Southern California Coastal Water Quality Project Commission in June and September related to the (1) effect of anthropogenic nitrogen on ocean acidification in the Southern California Bight, (2) biological effects of changes in ocean chemistry, and (3) potential for nitrogen management and/or water recycling to alter these effects. The results from this OAH Modeling project are anticipated to inform both Oregon and California assessments of OAH and water quality.

Harmful Algal Blooms

This summer, a multi-week harmful algal bloom (HAB) identified as *Heterosigma akashiwo*, an invasive species of marine algae responsible for some of the 'red tides' that are toxic to fish and aquatic life, occurred in San Francisco Bay. Evidence of the San Francisco bloom first appeared near Alameda in late July 2022. The bloom later spread to open-bay regions of South San Francisco Bay and continued to expand into San Pablo Bay, making this bloom the largest in recorded history. The bloom resulted in the death of as many as 10,000 fish in late August, including both white and green sturgeon, leopard sharks, striped bass, bat rays, and anchovy. As of Labor Day weekend, the bloom has declined with the State Water Resources Control Board, San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) monitoring for additional aquatic deaths caused by depleted oxygen levels as algae decays. OPC staff participate in the San Francisco Bay Water Board's ongoing effort to determine how best to manage nutrient inputs to the Bay through a [Nutrient Management Strategy](#) and avoid or respond to adverse impacts of nutrients, such as HABs.

California Water Supply Strategy

The [California Water Supply Strategy: Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future](#) was released August 2022. This Strategy highlights investments in wastewater recycling and desalination technology to help drought-proof communities with the reuse at least 800,000 acre-feet of water per year by 2030 and 1.8 million acre-feet by 2040, with most of that additional recycling involving direct wastewater discharges that are now going to the ocean, increased stormwater capture with the goal to increase annual supply capacity by at least 250,000 acre-feet by 2030 and 500,000 acre-feet by 2040, and consider amendments to the Desalination Policy in the State Water Resources Control Board's Ocean Plan, consistent with Targets 1.2.1, 1.2.2, and 3.4.7 of the OPC Strategic Plan.

Goal 2: Advance Equity Across Ocean and Coastal Policies and Actions

Wiyot Tribe Acquisition of Coastal Land

Last month, OPC staff and CNRA's Secretary of Tribal Affairs joined the Wiyot Tribe and its partners, including Cal Poly Humboldt, in a [ceremony to celebrate the Tribe's purchase](#) of one of the last pieces of undeveloped coastal wetland and upland in their ancestral territory near the Humboldt Bay. The 46 acres, known as *Mouralherwaqh* or wolf's house, will be preserved for the cultural significance to

the Wiyot Tribe, and for ecocultural restoration, water quality protection and conservation purposes. The acquisition project is supported by [OPC's Proposition 1 funding through a targeted coastal environmental justice solicitation](#), which was approved by the Council last year.

Equity Plan

OPC staff will recommend their final proposed Equity Plan for consideration and adoption at this Council meeting, a seminal step for advancing inclusive ocean and coastal policy development and actions that directly address Target 2.2.1 of OPC's Strategic Plan Goal 2. The collaboratively developed OPC Equity Plan aims to establish the foundation for existing and future equity needs and priorities in a way that compliments and augments agency-wide efforts, as well as the Administration's broader strategies to embed equity in California. The proposed [final Equity Plan](#) can be accessed on our [meetings webpage](#) as an Exhibit to the [staff recommendation](#).

Environmental Justice Small Grants Program

In adopting the OPC Equity Plan, staff will also recommend the Council approve up to \$1,300,000 to establish a pilot Environmental Justice Small Grants Program, providing direct action on a strategic priority within the Equity Plan. This small grants program will continue OPC's ongoing efforts to advance equity and environmental justice by creating a dedicated funding path to prioritize investments for small and short-term projects across coastal regions that create positive impacts in California's environmental justice communities. If approved by the Council, staff will work on identifying a grantee in the following months to help design and administer the program.

Tribal Engagement Strategy

OPC is consulting and collaborating with California Native American tribes on the development of a Tribal Engagement Strategy, which will provide a framework for enhanced partnership between OPC and tribes on ocean and coastal issues. Based on feedback received during early consultations and listening sessions in 2021, OPC has developed a draft strategy that includes guiding principles, specific opportunities for enhancing tribal engagement across all of OPC's efforts to protect California's coast and ocean, and approaches for improving communication between OPC and tribes. The draft strategy was released to tribes for a 90-day consultation period on July 6, and on August 24, OPC hosted two community roundtable listening sessions to discuss the draft strategy and receive tribal input. The consultation period will close on October 7. OPC staff anticipates

bringing a final strategy to the Council for consideration and possible adoption at its December meeting.

Tribal Marine Stewards Network

In 2020, OPC approved the disbursement of \$1,000,000 to establish a Tribal Marine Stewards Network pilot program focused on marine protected area (MPA) monitoring and rooted in shared priorities between tribes and the state. Since the inception of the pilot program, the Tribal Marine Stewards Network has made significant strides toward enhancing the capacity of its partner tribes to steward their ancestral lands and waters. At this meeting, [staff will recommend that the Council approve \\$3,610,000](#) to support the Tribal Marine Stewards Network's continued monitoring, outreach, and organizational development work for the next three years, and allow for a Southern California tribe to join the Network. This investment is consistent with the priorities listed in OPC's forthcoming Tribal Engagement Strategy.

Beach Water Quality

OPC staff participated in a three-day Bacteria Summit co-hosted by the California Water Boards and California Stormwater Quality Association on September 14 - 16, 2022 to discuss existing standards and state of the science relevant to defining and achieving waters that are safe to swim and shellfish that are safe to eat. OPC staff will continue to partner with the State Water Resources Control Board on their efforts with the research community, Regional Water Boards, the Beach Water Quality Working Group, municipalities, and the NGO community to initiate and complete critical research, share and agree on effective beach management and public health notification approaches, and identify and abate sources of fecal indicator bacteria to beaches consistent with Target 2.4.2 of the OPC Strategic Plan.

Goal 3: Enhance Coastal and Marine Biodiversity

MPA Monitoring Series: Ask the Researcher

This [webinar series](#) unpacked the results of the latest state-funded [MPA long-term monitoring projects](#) through an 8-part virtual summer series. This summer series was responsive to community feedback where the public requested an opportunity to interact directly with researchers involved in California's MPA monitoring projects to learn more about MPA science and results. Researchers from 24 universities, agencies and institutions across California worked closely with OPC and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to monitor key habitats both inside and

outside of MPAs, including kelp forests, rocky reefs, rocky shores, estuaries, and sandy beaches. Additionally, one project provided a socioeconomic evaluation for commercial and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel fisheries. Results from these monitoring projects, along with information from [other sources](#), have informed California's [MPA Decadal Management Review](#) report to the California Fish and Game Commission, to be publicly released in January 2023.

Proposition 68 Chapter 9 Solicitation: MPAs & Climate Resilience

On July 1, OPC released a [solicitation](#) to advance our scientific understanding of the intersection of California's MPA network and climate change. Specific project types include those that identify potential areas of refuge, vulnerability, and resilience, model habitat and species range shifts, and assess social values and outcomes relating to MPAs and climate resilience. Selected projects will fill knowledge gaps outlined in the [Climate Resilience and California's MPA Network](#) report developed by an OPC-SAT working group in 2021. OPC anticipates distributing up \$2 million through this round of Proposition 68, Chapter 9 funding. An informational webinar was held on July 7, additional "office hours" were held on July 14, and Letters of Intent were submitted to OPC on July 29. Selected applicants have been invited to submit full proposals by October 7. Recommended projects are expected to be brought to the February 2023 OPC meeting for consideration and possible approval.

California's 30x30 Initiative

OPC is leading implementation of 30x30 in California's coastal waters, in close collaboration with California Native American tribes, state and federal agency partners, and key stakeholder groups. Strengthening biodiversity protections in California's federally-managed National Marine Sanctuaries is one way in which the state plans to achieve the 30x30 target, and in August, OPC staff met with Sanctuary leadership to identify potential opportunities for state/federal partnership on issues such as whale protection, marine pollution, climate resilience, and habitat restoration. Additionally, on September 28, OPC leadership and staff attended the statewide 30x30 Partnership kickoff meeting to publicly present the state's approach to 30x30 in coastal waters and begin making connections with key stakeholders and partners. OPC looks forward to working with environmental justice organizations, conservation groups, fishermen, and others as the state moves forward with the strategies and opportunities detailed in the *Pathways to 30x30* document. OPC will also lead tribal consultations, listening sessions, and other engagement opportunities to ensure that the voices of California Native American tribes are elevated and prioritized in 30x30 implementation.

Statewide Restoration & Mitigation Policy

OPC staff have developed a draft policy for restoration and mitigation for coastal and ocean habitats. Although habitat restoration and mitigation activities have been occurring for years in California, the state currently lacks a comprehensive policy for such activities within marine waters, resulting in a piecemeal and inconsistent approach. This new policy will provide a consistent, standardized foundation for evaluation and approval of such efforts. The draft policy has been reviewed and revised by an expert science panel that includes Dr. Sean Anderson (CSU Channel Islands), Dr. Richard Ambrose (UCLA), Dr. Marissa Baskett (UC Davis), Dr. Peter Raimondi (UC Santa Cruz), and Whelan Gilkerson (Merkel & Associates). In the coming weeks, OPC will share the revised policy with partner agencies for input and anticipates finalizing and publicly releasing the policy in early 2023.

International Engagement on Biodiversity

OPC continues to work closely with California Natural Resources Agency leadership to support California's participation in the United Nations biodiversity conference (COP 15), which will take place December 7-19 in Montreal, Canada. OPC has identified several opportunities for engagement, including: participation in negotiations around a new global agreement for biodiversity conservation; a leading role for California at a subnational government summit; and attendance at key side events on issues such as 30x30, tribal/indigenous community engagement, and protected area management. These opportunities will allow California to showcase its global leadership on biodiversity and initiate knowledge exchange to benefit current initiatives in the state. California is also making progress in its effort to add the state's globally significant MPA network to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. An expert assessment group convened by IUCN has determined that the MPA network meets a majority of the criteria necessary for Green Listing. This fall, the group will discuss the final remaining criteria and conduct site visits to selected MPAs. Full Green Listing is anticipated by the end of this year.

Statewide Microplastics Strategy: Research Solicitation

Following the adoption of the [Statewide Microplastics Strategy](#) during the February 2022 Council Meeting, OPC has committed to releasing a research proposal in partnership with California Sea Grant to leverage federal funding opportunities and advance the research priorities outlined in the Statewide Microplastics Strategy and California Ocean Litter Strategy. Staff has identified the preliminary scope of a forthcoming research solicitation centered on advancing source attribution of microplastics and understanding of ecological impacts of

microplastics statewide. The anticipated release of the competitive research solicitation is postponed to December 2022, where it is anticipated to be brought before the Council for approval.

Panel Addressing Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) in Aquatic Ecosystems

OPC and State Water Resources Control Board co-funded an [expert panel](#) on emerging contaminants in aquatic ecosystems. The panel is in the process of drafting a final report assessing the current state of scientific knowledge on the risks of CECs impacting human health and the environment in freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems of the State. This project will culminate in a final report updating the [2012 panel recommendations](#), include monitoring recommendations for emerging contaminants in state waters and to guide the development of a statewide management strategy for emerging contaminants. It is anticipated the final report will be available for public comment and public webinar in mid-December 2022.

Goal 4: Support Ocean Health Through Sustainable Blue Economy

Offshore Wind

After the [publication of the California Proposed Sale Notice \(PSN\)](#), the Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management (BOEM) started to collect public comments. OPC staff worked with other state agencies to provide feedback on the PSN before the public comment period ended on August 1, 2022. The auction of five lease areas within the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area and Humboldt Wind Energy Area is expected to take place in the fall of 2022. The Final Sale Notice will likely be released before the auction. In response to the BOEM's draft guidelines for mitigating impacts to commercial and recreational fisheries released on June 23, 2022, OPC worked with other state agencies to draft a comment letter, which was submitted on August 22, 2022. In the comment letter, state agencies provided several recommendations including the need for comprehensive environmental and fisheries monitoring of individual projects and coordinating efforts across offshore wind companies to develop comparable datasets.

The California Energy Commission (CEC) approved the offshore wind goals of up to 5 GW by 2030 and 25 GW by 2045 at the CEC's business meeting on August 10, 2022. OPC staff continue to support the interagency strategic planning process through participation on working groups and funding relevant research.

Projects Approved by the Executive Director's Delegated Authority

Grantee	Project	Amount	Description
California Energy Commission	Central Coast Offshore Wind: Cultural Resources Inventory	\$199,836	This project will support state agencies and central coast tribes in developing and sharing a common collection of cultural resources data to help inform future state actions related to offshore wind energy development.

Legislation

The following is an update on coastal and ocean-related legislative proposals tracked by OPC staff during the recent legislative session:

[SB 54](#) (Allen): As amended, this bill enacts the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producing Responsibility Act, which would cover certain single-use packaging and plastic single-use food service ware. The bill would require producers of these materials to ensure that covered material offered for sale, distribution, or import after January 1, 2032 is recyclable or compostable. The bill would further require producers of covered materials to be part of a producer responsibility organization (PRO) with a producer responsibility plan approved by CalRecycle, and would impose various requirements on PROs, including paying \$500,000,000 annually between 2027 and 2037 into California Plastic Pollution Mitigation Fund created by the bill. Signed by Governor 6/30. (Ch. 75, Statutes 2022).

[SB 846](#) (Dodd): This bill authorizes the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant to continue to generate power beyond its scheduled decommissioning date of August 1, 2025, and make associated appropriations. This bill specifies that the final compliance date of the Once-Through Cooling policy for the Diablo Canyon powerplant is October 31, 2030. Signed by Governor 9/2. (Ch. 239, Statutes 2022).

[SB 852](#) (Dodd): This bill would authorize a city, county, city and county, special district, or a combination of any of those entities to form a climate resilience district, as defined, for the purposes of raising and allocating funding for eligible

projects and the operating expenses of eligible projects. Signed by Governor 9/9. (Ch. 266, Statutes 2022).

[SB 867](#) (Laird): As amended, this bill would require a local government located in whole or in part within the coastal zone or the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission to address sea level rise planning and adaptation through either a local coastal program or a San Francisco Bay shoreline resiliency plan, as applicable, by January 1, 2033, and prioritize sea level rise funding, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the implementation of projects located within an approved sea level rise planning and adaptation plans on or before January 1, 2028. Vetoed by Governor 9/29.

[SB 1036](#) (Newman) - California Conservation Corps: California Ocean Corps Program

This bill would require the California Climate Corps director to establish and administer the California Ocean Corps Program to provide competitive grants to certified local conservation corps located in coastal communities in order to provide opportunities for young people to complete workforce preparation, training, and education programs, and to obtain employment, or continue education, in ocean and coastal conservation or related fields. Vetoed by Governor 9/29.

[SB 1078](#) (Allen): This bill would require the Ocean Protection Council, in consultation with the State Coastal Conservancy, to develop the Sea Level Rise Revolving Loan Pilot Program for purposes of providing low-interest loans to local jurisdictions for the purchase of coastal properties in their jurisdictions identified as vulnerable coastal property, located in specified communities, including low-income communities. Vetoed by Governor 9/29.

[SB 1123](#) (Caballero): This bill would require the Office of Planning and Research, on or before July 1, 2023, to establish within the program the Resilience Navigators Program to provide information and guidance to potential applicants for state programs that offer financial assistance, including grants or loans, to develop or implement plans, programs, or projects that seek to create, improve, or enhance resilience to climate change. This bill would require the Natural Resources Agency, on or before July 1, 2024, and in coordination with the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program and state entities represented in the California Climate Adaptation Strategy, to develop an interactive internet website that displays the state's climate adaptation strategy, including the strategy's priorities,

goals, actions, metrics, timeframes, and lead agencies. Held in Appropriations 8/11.

[AB 1611](#) (Davies): This bill would require a potential casualty with a submerged oil pipeline to be treated as a threatened discharge of oil in waters of the state pursuant to the above-specified reporting provision of the Lempert-Keene-Seastrand Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act. The bill would require the operator of a vessel involved in a potential casualty with a submerged oil pipeline to immediately report the potential casualty to the office and would subject a vessel operator who fails to make that report to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$1,000,000 for each violation. Held in Committee 6/21.

[AB 1724](#) (Stone): As amended, this bill would require that all state-owned washing machines to have a microfiber filtration system with a mesh size of 100 microns or smaller upon enactment of the bill. Held in Appropriations 5/19.

[AB 1832](#) (L. Rivas): This bill would repeal the State Lands Commission's existing authorization to issue leases or grant permits for the extraction or removal of hard minerals from tidelands or submerged lands of the state. This bill would effectively prohibit seabed mining in California. Signed by Governor 9/19. (Ch. 433, Statutes 2022).

[AB 2016](#) (Bauer-Kahan): This bill would request the California Council on Science and Technology, in consultation with the Department of Water Resources, to undertake and complete a comprehensive feasibility study of the desalination of ocean water, brackish water, and groundwater and the potential impact of desalination plants along the San Francisco Bay and inland lakes and streams. Held in Appropriations 8/11.

[AB 2109](#) (Bennett): This bill would make it unlawful to use any bait, lure, or chum to attract any white shark or to place any shark bait, shark lure, or shark chum into the water within one nautical mile of any shoreline, pier, or jetty when a white shark is either visible or known to be present except if the activity is authorized by a permit issued by the department for scientific, educational, or propagation purposes. Signed by Governor 9/19. (Ch. 437, Statutes 2022).

[AB 2225](#) (Ward): This bill would require the Natural Resources Agency to conduct regional workshops with Native American tribes across the state to solicit input, priorities, and concerns regarding the state's collection, acquisition, storage, and

use of traditional ecological knowledge by January 1, 2024. The bill would require the agency, in consultation with the Governor's tribal advisor, to adopt a policy regarding the state's collection, acquisition, storage, and use of traditional ecological knowledge by July 1, 2024. Held in Committee 6/13.

[AB 2248](#) (E. Garcia): This bill would make \$100,000,000 available from the General Fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the California Environmental Protection Agency to address water quality problems arising in the rivers that come across the border from Mexico. The bill would require expenditures of the funding to be consistent with the work of the California Environmental Protection Agency Border Affairs Program and would require priority for the funding to be given to projects that have funding committed by the United States, the Republic of Mexico, the State of Baja California, or the City of Tijuana or Mexicali. The bill would authorize grant funding to be conditioned on enforceability and accountability mechanisms agreed upon by the state board and the recipient and would authorize funding to be provided for activities or projects in the State of Baja California under certain circumstances. Vetoed by Governor 9/18.

[AB 2257](#) (Boerner Horvath): This bill would require the State Lands Commission to develop, on or before December 31, 2024, a cost study that measures the fiscal impact of a voluntary buy-out of any lease interests in actively producing state offshore oil and gas leases in state waters. Passed out of both houses and presented to Governor 9/6.

[AB 2278](#) (Kalra): This bill would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to prepare and submit, beginning on or before January 1, 2024, an annual report to the Legislature on the progress toward achieving the directives of Executive Order No. N-82-20, establishing the California Biodiversity Collaborative and conserving at least 30% of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030. Signed by Governor 9/16. (Ch. 349, Statutes 2022).

[AB 2287](#) (Stone): This bill would rename the California Ocean Trust to the California Ocean Science Trust and make conforming changes to administer grants and expenditures of the trust for specified purposes from private and public fund sources. Signed by Governor 8/29. (Ch. 208, Statutes 2022).

[AB 2593](#) (Boerner Horvath): This bill would authorize the Coastal Commission to authorize blue carbon demonstration projects to demonstrate and quantify the carbon sequestration potential of these projects and inform California's natural

working lands and climate resilience strategies. Held in Appropriations 8/11.

[AB 2758](#) (O'Donnell): This bill would require the California Environmental Protection Agency, until January 1, 2027, to hold at least 4 public meetings per year, with the first meeting occurring on or before March 31, 2023, to provide members of the public with current information on the agency's efforts to study and mitigate DDT and other chemical waste located at Dumpsite-1 and Dumpsite-2 off the coast of Los Angeles. Held in Appropriations 8/11.

[AB 2787](#) (Quirk): This bill would prohibit the sale or distribution of specific consumer products that contain intentionally added microplastics at a concentration greater than 0.01%. Ordered to inactive file 5/26.

Budget

[SB 154 Budget Act of 2022](#). Appropriates \$50,000,000 shall be available to the Ocean Protection Council for grants or expenditures for resilience projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems. \$6,500,000 to the Ocean Protection Council for the Marine Mammal Stranding Network. \$10,000,000 to the Ocean Protection Council for the Ocean Science Trust. \$5,600,000 to the State Water Resources Control Board for DDT cleanup near southern California. Signed by Governor 6/27. (Ch. 43, Statutes 2022).

[AB 179 Budget Act of 2022](#). Appropriates \$50,000,000 to the Ocean Protection Council for grants or expenditures for resilience projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems. \$1,000,000 for support or local assistance for the Ocean Protection Council to support environmental research associated with implementation of Chapter 231 of the Statutes of 2021 (AB 525). \$5,600,000 to the University of California, Santa Cruz, the California State University, Monterey Bay, Stanford University, and Center for Blue Economy at the Middlebury for White Shark Monitoring Technology. \$3,000,000 to the Monterey Bay Aquarium for the Monterey Bay Aquarium Sea Otters Tank. \$37,500,000 for implementation of Chapter 236 of the Statutes of 2021 (SB 1) for state operations or local assistance. Signed by Governor 9/6. (Ch. 249, Statutes 2022).

[AB 209 Energy and Climate Change Trailor Bill](#). This bill makes several changes to AB 205 (Chapter 61, Statutes of 2022) which was passed in June to advance energy projects and electric grid reliability. The bill establishes the Voluntary

Offshore Wind and Coastal Resources Protection Program within the Energy Commission for the purpose of supporting state activities that complement and are in furtherance of federal laws related to the development of offshore wind facilities. The program would award moneys to public and private entities, including state agencies, tribal entities, local governments, research institutions, and NGOs to support environmental impact monitoring, research, and other activities. Signed by Governor 9/6. (Ch. 251, Statutes 2022).

[AB 211 Resources Trailer Bill](#). Appropriates \$54,500,000 in the 2023–24 fiscal year and \$10,000,000 in the 2024–25 fiscal year to the Ocean Protection Council for implementation of Chapter 236 of the Statutes of 2021 (SB 1). The Ocean Protection Council shall work in collaboration with the State Coastal Conservancy to implement this funding, and the council shall structure these funds to maximize leveraging of any available federal funding. Signed by Governor 9/27. (Ch. 574, Statutes 2022).

Personnel Notes



Sreeja Gopal, *Coastal Habitats Program Manager*

Sree joined OPC in September 2022 as the Coastal Habitats Program Manager. Prior to that, she earned an MAS degree in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation from Scripps Institution of Oceanography, where her graduate work focused on coastal management. Before that, Sree worked in the pharmaceutical industry for over a decade as a scientist and a team leader after receiving her Ph.D.

in Bioengineering from MIT. She enjoys spending time with her family, is an avid gardener and aquarist, and loves being in and around the ocean.

Tova Handelman

September 16 was Tova Handelman's last day with OPC. Tova began her work with OPC as a California Sea Grant fellow and progressed over the years to help lead our MPA Management Program. She has taken a new position with the California Academy of Sciences, and we wish her the best in this next chapter of her career.

Communications

OPC in the Media Highlights:

OPC Press Release: [Wiyot Tribe Celebrates the Return of Coastal Land](#)

This press release as picked up by the following outlets: News Break, Bakerfield.com, Indian Gaming, BusinessWire, Egreenenews, AP News, Yahoo, Morningstar, Fox 40, Coastal News Today

KMUD Radio: [Interview with OPC's Maria Rodriguez, Wiyot Tribal Natural Resources Director Adam Canter, and CalPoly Professor Laurie Richmond about the Wiyot Tribe Land Return](#)

KMUD Radio: [Interview with Tribal citizens Sheryl Seidner and Hilanea Wilkinson, Wiyot Tribal Natural Resources Director Adam Canter, and CAIPoly Professor Laurie Richmond about the Wiyot Tribe Land Return](#)

Times Standard: [Wiyot Tribe celebrates return of coastal land](#)

Humboldt Now: [Reclaiming Mouralherwaqh](#)

Native News Online: [50 Acres of Ancestral Homeland Repatriated to the Wiyot Tribe](#)

Lost Coast Outpost: [Reclaiming Mouralherwaqh: Wiyot Tribe Acquires Culturally Significant Forest Land Near King Salmon](#)

The Mendocino Voice: [Hope for kelp on the Mendocino Coast: landmark restoration report shows regrowth after urchin removal](#)

Orange County Register: [Newport Beach set to have the West Coast's first water wheel trash collector](#)

Alta: [Everything, Everywhere: The big problem with microplastics](#)

CalMatters: [It's high time to put a lid on plastics](#)

SF Chronicle: [North California Kelp Forest Shows Signs of Recovery After Sea Urchin Removal](#)

SF Chronical: [Will California's offshore wind farms damage underwater life](#)

Earth.org: [What You Need to Know About Sea Level Rise in California](#)

Wired: [How Scientists Are Cleaning Up Rivers Using Grasses and Oysters](#)

Marin Independent Journal: [New report details Richardson Bay eelgrass damage](#)

SF Chronicle: [California's cliffs are crumbling into the sea. This map shows the spots where they're eroding the fastest](#)

California Ocean News Highlights:

Phys.org: [History of DDT ocean dumping off LA coast even worse than expected, EPA finds](#)

The Hill: [Plastics plague our oceans, killing marine mammals](#)

NPR: [Behind this locked door is the white abalone's best chance of avoiding extinction](#)

Associated Press: [Judge approves \\$230M settlement in California oil spill case](#)

The Guardian: [What's ailing the sea lions stranded on California beaches?](#)

Forbes: [Economic Headwinds Mean the West Coast Should Stop Being an Offshore Wind Laggard](#)

The Guardian: [Ships are turning whales into 'ocean roadkill'. This AI system is trying to stop it](#)

Mendocino Voice: [Drones map kelp on the North Coast with "game-changing" tech that takes minutes, not months](#)

Santa Barbara Independent: [Global Shipping Companies Recognized for Reducing Speeds off California Coast to Protect Blue Whales and Blue Skies](#)

New York Times: [Toxic Red Tide Kills 'Uncountable' Numbers of Fish in the Bay Area](#)

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