



**Monterey Bay
Aquarium**



RESOURCES LEGACY FUND®
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS. LASTING RESULTS.



March 14, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

We share your pride in California's extraordinary ocean and coast and the decades of state leadership to ensure they will be healthy, productive, and accessible for generations of Californians to come. Our state's climate change policies, marine protected area network, and public access laws, to name a few, have become global models of excellence. The millions of Californians who live along the coast—and the hundreds of millions more who visit every year—directly benefit from these actions. In fact, California's economy depends on a healthy ocean and coast, and our state has shown that we can be an economic superpower while leading the world in environmental stewardship.

But change is coming fast. We need immediate action to address the full range of threats to California's coast—old and new. Sea-level rise, intensifying storms, coastal erosion, acidic ocean waters, plastic pollution, offshore oil and gas development, and habitat loss are putting human and natural communities at increasing risk. We must continue to invest more in protecting what we have, restoring what we've lost, and mitigating increasing threats to the integrity of our ocean and coast.

And we can do this. The California Ocean Protection Council, which you served on as Lieutenant Governor, provides an effective venue to address our state's most pressing ocean management challenges. California is also home to the world's top ocean research institutions that produce the science necessary to develop the most effective policies and management strategies possible. We have a unique opportunity to harness this science—and the ingenuity that marks California—to develop innovative and ground-breaking solutions for the biggest ocean and coastal challenges we face today. We must also do a better job of ensuring that the state's increasingly diverse population is fully and equitably represented in the design and implementation of these solutions.

Californians of all regions, age, income, education level, and background overwhelmingly support strong coastal and ocean protection and management. According to the Public Policy Institute of California's July 2018 survey of Californians and the Environment, 95 percent of Californians say the condition of the ocean and beaches is important to California's future economy and quality of life.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium, Resources Legacy Fund, and Ocean Conservancy have joined together to recommend actions your administration can take to help achieve this vision. Several other organizations have also signed on in support of these recommendations. We urge you to:

- Continue California’s climate leadership.
- Bolster California’s ocean and coastal science and management capacity.
- Promote ocean and coastal water quality throughout California.
- Advance equity and diversity in ocean and coastal decision-making.
- Ensure access to the ocean and coast by all Californians.

We applaud your leadership on these issues to date, and we welcome the opportunity to support you and your administration in building on California’s legacy of stewardship and sustainability in the days ahead.

Best regards,



Julie Packard
Executive Director
Monterey Bay Aquarium



Michael Mantell
President
Resources Legacy Fund



Janis Searles Jones
CEO
Ocean Conservancy

Protecting California's Ocean and Coast

AN AGENDA FOR CALIFORNIA'S OCEAN FUTURE



The Coast Makes California

Nothing shapes California more than its place on the western edge of the continent. Our 1,100 mile coastline delivers the Mediterranean climate that distinguishes California from the rest of America in livability, agricultural productivity and biodiversity. The narrow band of the coast is home to most of the state's nearly 40 million residents, attracts hundreds of millions of annual visitors, and generates over 80 percent of California's GDP—all while sustaining some of the world's most biologically productive ecosystems.

California has long been an environmental leader. Our state boasts a strong foundation of coastal protection institutions and policies, starting with the Coastal Act of 1976, which guarantees public access to our spectacular beaches and regulates coastal development. The state's network of marine protected areas, covering 17 percent of state waters, is a model for other states and nations. In 2004, the Legislature adopted the California Ocean Protection Act, finding:

California's coastal and ocean resources are critical to the state's environmental and economic security, and integral to the state's high quality of life and culture. A healthy ocean is part of the state's legacy, and is necessary to support the state's human and wildlife populations. Each generation of Californians has an obligation to be good stewards of the ocean, to pass the legacy on to their children.

The Act also established the California Ocean Protection Council to elevate ocean and coastal protection within state government. Over the past 15 years, the Ocean Protection Council has led on a range of critical issues, from ocean acidification and sea-level rise to marine protected areas. California Governor Gavin Newsom served as a member of the Ocean Protection Council during his tenure as Lieutenant Governor, as have other key leaders from the current Administration and Legislature.

But more must be done. While passing laws and adopting policies is essential, fully implementing them to achieve their goals is also critical. Coordinating the many state agencies, boards, commissions, and conservancies with ocean and coastal roles in California government is not easy. Yet, never has it been more important to commit to the coast. Emerging problems linked to climate change—including ocean acidification, warming waters and sea-level rise—threaten lives, livelihoods and the state's natural heritage. They demand focus and action. Long-standing federal protections that have helped conserve California's coastal riches are under attack. All coastal communities, from tribal nations to business associations, must be engaged, including those whose voices have historically been excluded.

The agenda below, if embraced by state leaders, would strengthen ocean and coastal protections for the next generation. These actions would prepare California for the worst effects of climate change. They would help ensure decision-making based on solid science and equity. And they would keep California at the front of a global movement to protect and sustain ocean and coastal resources for the benefit of all.

Lead On Climate Change

Climate change is the biggest threat facing ocean health—and all of humanity. California leads the world in enacting ambitious climate policies, including a landmark greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program and a goal to reach 100-percent renewable electricity by 2045. But the climate-altering effects of human-caused carbon emissions are already underway. We must act now to protect California's coastal communities and ecosystems from sea-level rise, intensifying storms, changing ocean conditions and coastal erosion. We must also defend against efforts to open offshore

waters to new oil and gas development. Renewable energy resources such as offshore wind generation should be developed in ways that minimize harm to ocean wildlife and ecosystems. We also need to guard our existing natural coastal habitats, and restore new areas to buffer communities from storms and flooding while also sequestering atmospheric carbon. And California should continue to elevate the critical role of the ocean in climate solutions on the international stage, as we did during the 2018 Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco.

ACTION 1

Continue California's global leadership on the climate crisis and the role of the ocean in climate solutions.

ACTION 2

Oppose new offshore oil and gas exploration, development, and production off the California coast.

ACTION 3

Increase investment in science-based ocean and coastal resilience measures that prioritize natural infrastructure solutions, and dedicate cap-and-trade funds to advance these measures.

ACTION 4

Protect California's coastal habitats—including wetlands, tidal marshes, eelgrass, and kelp—and establish state policies to promote coastal habitat restoration at the local and regional level.

ACTION 5

Implement California's Ocean Acidification Action Plan with a focus on reducing pollution, protecting habitats, and increasing investment in research, monitoring and observation.

ACTION 6

Ensure development of offshore renewable energy is guided by science and minimizes impacts to ocean and coastal wildlife and ecosystems.

Bolster Science and Management

Fed by upwelled nutrients and supported by diverse habitats from rocky reefs and kelp beds to estuaries and deep-water canyons, California's ocean waters are rich with marine life and productive habitats. Nearly 600 species of fish and shellfish, 35 species of marine mammals, several species of sea turtles, and dozens of species of seabirds and shorebirds inhabit state waters. Long-term temperature records indicate that California ocean waters are warming, and climate change is predicted to result in large-scale ecological changes with significant economic consequences. Changes are already evident: In Northern California, exploding

populations of purple sea urchins have caused massive kelp barrens and widespread starvation of abalone and other kelp-dependent species. High levels of domoic acid, a neurotoxin released by certain algae, forced the state to delay parts of the commercial Dungeness crab season several years in a row. Warmer ocean conditions have drawn prey species closer to shore, attracting whales to areas with a higher risk of fishing gear entanglement. As threats to ocean and coastal health intensify, so does the need for forward-looking, science-based management that is coordinated across state agencies and sufficiently funded to move quickly and effectively.

ACTION 1

Ensure the Department of Fish and Wildlife has the necessary staff and resources to manage fisheries sustainably in the face of climate change.

ACTION 2

Prioritize the continued success of California's first-in-the-nation network of marine protected areas (MPAs), and direct "once-through-cooling" mitigation fees from coastal power plant owners toward MPA management and enforcement.

ACTION 3

Oppose action to weaken federal laws and programs that protect ocean and coastal resources in California.

ACTION 4

Evaluate the latest scientific information on marine aquaculture relevant to California to inform the development of a comprehensive and precautionary statewide aquaculture management approach.

ACTION 5

Ensure any new desalination projects are designed and sited to minimize negative environmental impacts, and amend the California Ocean Plan to clarify such requirements.

Promote Clean Coastal Waters

California's coastal ocean and waterways are the foundation of some of our state's most valued resources and underpin our way of life. Nearly 70 percent of California's population lives along the coast. The coast also supports tourism, agriculture and other economically valuable industries; polluted waters threaten coastal industries and surrounding communities. The state must accelerate its efforts to control point and non-point sources of pollution by making polluters more accountable

through robust modeling, increase enforcement of existing laws, and boost investment in multi-benefit pollution control technology and abatement. Plastic pollution is also a growing challenge in California, as it is around the world. Nearly nine million tons of plastic enter the global ocean each year, and increasing per capita use of plastic is a major contributor. California should build on local and state efforts to reduce sources of plastic pollution and establish itself as a global leader on this issue.

ACTION 1

Increase enforcement of clean water laws.

ACTION 2

Support implementation of policies to improve stormwater capture, minimize nutrient runoff and execute multi-benefit projects.

ACTION 3

Establish a strategy to promote wastewater recycling and reduce ocean wastewater discharges.

ACTION 4

Establish statewide targets to significantly reduce sources of ocean plastic pollution with a focus on single-use plastic products and packaging.

Advance Equity and Diversity

One of California's greatest strengths is our state's extraordinary human diversity. Californians trace their ancestries all over the globe. However, decisions about how we manage the state's ocean and coastal resources historically have fallen short of respecting

and meeting the needs of tribal people, communities of color, and low-income communities. More must be done to ensure that California's governance structures and processes are truly representative, and that decisions are just and equitable for all Californians.

ACTION 1

Ensure appointments to California ocean and coastal agencies, boards, conservancies, and commissions reflect the diversity of our state, and that appointees promote equitable public access and public trust resource protection for all.

ACTION 2

Direct state agencies with ocean and coastal responsibilities to adopt and implement meaningful environmental justice policies and programs, and ensure equitable program investments.

Expand Access To All Californians

The California Constitution and California Coastal Act guarantee the public's right to access the coast, and our state and local beaches and parks are among the most-visited public lands in the state. However, unlawful efforts to block access, congested public amenities, the prohibitively high costs of living and staying near the coast, and a legacy of inequitable and discriminatory policies are some of the barriers that keep all Californians from enjoying their coast. Sea-level rise and other impacts from climate change, pollution

and poorly-planned development also impede coastal access in many locations. To ensure all Californians are able to enjoy our ocean and coast, the state must make access a priority and increase investment, including through use of Proposition 68 funds, in programs that provide transportation and outdoor education opportunities for lower-income families and communities. This includes the California Coastal Conservancy's "Explore the Coast" program and the California Coastal Commission's "Whale Tail" program.

ACTION 1

Increase access to the coast for all Californians by setting specific and measurable targets related to lodging, transportation and recreational programming.

ACTION 2

Approve and develop lower-cost overnight accommodations in high-priority areas of the coast, and direct state agencies to seek partnerships to ensure these projects enjoy public support, promote employment and are well maintained.

ACTION 3

Invest in projects and programs that will increase access to the coast for all.

ACTION 4

Invest in the necessary infrastructure and public amenities to enable safe public use and resource protection.

The following organizations join Monterey Bay Aquarium, Resources Legacy Fund, and Ocean Conservancy in supporting

Protecting California's Ocean and Coast

AN AGENDA FOR CALIFORNIA'S OCEAN FUTURE

Azul

API Forward Movement

Audubon California

Brown Girl Surf

Californians Against Waste

California Coastal Protection Network

California Coastkeeper Alliance

Community Nature Connection

Environment California

Fathers and Families of San Joaquin

Greenlining Institute

Latino Outdoors

Natural Resources Defense Council

Nature For All

The Nature Conservancy

Outdoor Outreach

Surfrider Foundation

WILDCOAST