



## CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

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John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources, Council Chair  
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Fran Pavley, State Senator  
Toni Atkins, State Assemblymember  
Geraldine Knatz, Public Member  
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December 31, 2013

Dear California Congressional delegation:

California has the largest ocean economy of any of our 50 states –valued at over \$40 billion annually. For that critical piece of California’s economy to continue to benefit all of the United States as it does now, I urge you to support fiscal year 2014 funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Coastal Zone Management Agency (CZMA) grants at \$71 million, which is consistent with allocations used by the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

California’s three federally recognized coastal zone management programs, operated by the California Coastal Commission, the California Coastal Conservancy, and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) epitomize the value of federal/state partnerships. Each year, the state of California, through these agencies, more than matches the funding provided in NOAA grants to tackle some of the most urgent issues facing coastal states, such as protecting the public and infrastructure from increasingly devastating storms.

The CZMA budget also includes funding for regional ocean partnerships (ROPs), including the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA). The nation’s nine ROPs both address issues that are important to their own regions and further many of the federal government’s priorities. ROPs are a wise investment because they can solve problems far more cost-effectively than individual states working alone. For example, the WCGA used NOAA ROP funds to develop the West Coast Ocean Data Portal to give coastal decision makers better access to ocean and coastal geospatial data (for a description, please visit <http://portal.westcoastoceans.org/>). The cost of such a regional portal was far less than if each of the three states had developed a data portal on its own.

The WCGA has also joined with the Canadian province of British Columbia to invest in better understanding the issue of ocean acidification. The West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel, comprised of leading experts from three states and British Columbia, is presently undertaking the work of framing this complex issue coast-wide on behalf of decision makers. Again, because the four jurisdictions are pooling resources, much more can be accomplished to understand ocean acidification than what each state could accomplish on its own. Nevertheless, increased federal investment is needed in this area.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that CZMA grants benefit far more than coastal and shoreline communities. A very significant portion of agricultural exports from California’s Central Valley, for example, are shipped through the Port of Oakland, which works closely with BCDC, one of its major regulators and a recipient of CZMA grants. Knowing how important these programs are for the California economy, I am concerned that report language in the fiscal year 2014 House Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill recommends a drastic cut for CZMA grants, resulting in a funding level of only \$40 million. This represents a 35 percent reduction in a program already hampered by a decade of level funding.

While many of us are grateful that NOAA’s overall budget has not decreased during the past several years of historically difficult budgetary conditions, I am concerned that the ocean and coastal programs are taking a

disproportionate cut within the agency. While satellites provide critical data, the cuts to the ocean and coastal programs will severely hamper NOAA's ability to put this information to use for on-the-ground management, hazard and flood prevention, and disaster response.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to support funding for the CZMA grants program at \$71 million, consistent with allocations established by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Sincerely,



John Laird  
Secretary for Natural Resources and Chair, Ocean Protection Council  
State of California

Cc: Senator Barbara Mikulski, Chairwomen of Senate Appropriations Committee and Chairwomen of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Senator Richard Shelby, Vice Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Representative Frank Wolf, Chair of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations

Representative Chaka Fattah, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations

Charles Lester, Executive Director, California Coastal Commission

Larry Goldzband, Executive Director, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer, State Coastal Conservancy