

# Staff Report 44 (Informational)

Informational Update on Efforts to Develop the Commission's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan

## **INTRODUCTION:**

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The Commission is in the process of developing its new five-year Strategic Plan. This next plan addresses key issues including public access, climate change and sea-level rise, environmental justice, tribal relations, sustainable economic development, and environmental protection. During recent months, the Commission has worked with a consultant to complete an extensive series of stakeholder interviews, representing various areas of interest. The Commission has also facilitated a series of tribal engagement roundtable sessions and individual Consultations. Additionally, the consultant recently facilitated a workshop with senior Commission management to solicit their input on the trends, issues, and priorities that will affect the Commission's work over the next 5-10 years. The continuing development of the Strategic Plan is an iterative process and staff looks forward to receiving feedback and additional perspectives, ideas, and comments to incorporate prior to the release of a draft Strategic Plan at an upcoming Commission meeting.

California has an abundance of rivers, lakes, streams, and a spectacularly scenic coastline. The Commission manages much of these public lands on behalf of the people of California. Established in 1938, the Commission manages 4 million acres of tide and submerged lands and the natural beds of navigable rivers, streams, lakes, bays, estuaries, inlets, and straits. These lands stretch from the Klamath River and Goose Lake in the north to the Tijuana Estuary in the south, and the Pacific Coast 3 miles offshore to world-famous Lake Tahoe and the Colorado River, and includes California's two longest rivers, the Sacramento and San Joaquin. The Commission also manages state-owned school lands in the desert and the forested areas of California to support public schools. And it oversees waterfront land and coastal waters legislatively granted to cities and counties, including land underlying California's major ports and harbors. The Commission regulates large oceangoing vessels to protect state waters from marine invasive species introductions and minimizes the risk of oil spills by providing the best achievable environmental protection at marine oil terminals, offshore oil platforms and production facilities.

The Commission applies the best available science and embraces public participation and intergovernmental coordination in its decision making.

## **BACKGROUND:**

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The Commission adopted its current [Strategic Plan](#) at its December 18, 2015 public meeting ([Item 117](#)). The Plan was the culmination of robust stakeholder input and collaboration to guide the Commission's stewardship of public lands and resources and promoting public access.

The Strategic Plan contains the following Strategic Goals:

- Lead Innovative and Responsible Land and Resource Management
- Meet the Challenges of Our Future
- Engage Californians to Help Safeguard Their Trust Lands and Resources
- Cultivate Operational Excellence by Integrating Technology

The Strategic Plan enables the Commission to adapt to emerging challenges, while creating a meaningful and rich framework to effectuate state policy goals, promote public access, generate revenue for the state's General Fund and for benefit of California's State Teachers' Retirement System, and enforce the protections of the Public Trust Doctrine. Annual updates on the Plan's implementation can be found on the Commission's website.

## **UPDATE: OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

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The Commission has worked to facilitate a comprehensive and inclusive engagement and outreach effort to inform the development of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. During this process, the Commission has held a special meeting for the Strategic Plan, provided updates at each Commission meeting with opportunities for public comment, worked with a consultant to interview stakeholders across varied interests, facilitated a series of tribal engagement sessions, and continues to engage in government-to-government Consultation at the request of several Tribes.

On February 4, 2020, the Commission held a special meeting for the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to facilitate a public discussion and solicit input and engagement from various stakeholders. Thoughtful insights and suggestions, as well as robust panel discussions provided a wealth of information, perspectives, and priorities for the Commission's consideration. During the February 28, 2020 public meeting, the Commission received comments and recommendations for the Plan including

reducing harmful air emissions at Ports through the use of zero emission technology; encouraging renewable energy, including offshore wind energy; coordinating with other agencies to map out the permitting process for renewable energy projects; promoting aquaculture; providing grant funding for public access; and providing increased public access to open space for environmental justice communities.

Following the April 2020 award of the Strategic Plan consultant contract to Stantec Consulting Services, Inc., Commission staff began working with the Stantec team immediately to identify stakeholders and develop questions and resources for stakeholder interviews. The stakeholders included individuals and entities interested in or associated with climate change/sea level rise, the blue economy, public access, California ports, renewable energy and utilities, the oil and gas industry, tribal governments, environmental justice, air quality and public health, land and wildlife conservation, public land and resource management and protection, and state and local agencies.

These virtual interviews included individual and small focus group sessions. Stantec interviewed 79 of the 149 identified stakeholders. Many of the stakeholders were unable to participate and others were not responsive. Several cited the COVID-19 pandemic as reasons for their inability to participate.

The Stantec team reviewed and organized the input across the various fields of interest to identify key topics and intersecting themes. Stakeholders frequently referred to public access, renewable energy, and climate change and sea-level rise as important topics to address in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Across these topics, Stantec identified key intersecting themes: Climate, Collaborate/Convene/Mediate (Building Alignment), Equity and Environmental Justice, Post-Petroleum Economy, and the Evolving Nature of the Public Trust Doctrine in land and resources management. Stakeholders also emphasized the role of collaboration and the value of innovation in addressing climate change and sea-level rise.

Commission staff facilitated a series of virtual tribal roundtable sessions and initiated several individual Consultation efforts. The four roundtables were organized broadly according to region and potential topics of interest: North Coast; Inyo, Owens Lake and Mono Lake; South/Central Coast; and South Coast. Commission staff reached out to representatives from 39 tribes throughout the state to schedule the roundtables and individual consultations. A total of 12 tribes participated in the four roundtable discussions, and three Tribes have requested formal Consultation. During these roundtables, participants highlighted many of the same existing and emerging issues identified by the other stakeholder groups, including climate

change, renewable energy, habitat and resource protection/restoration, social equity/Environmental Justice, and public land access. Additionally, several key intersecting themes and ideas were discussed as part of a recommendation that the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan include as a central theme “Incorporate Native American perspectives”. Elements under consideration include:

- Enhance and protect tribal access to lands for cultural use;
- Return culturally important lands to Tribes;
- Uplift and incorporate traditional ecological knowledge;
- Practice reciprocity and respect for the land, resources, and people;
- Engage and enlist tribal governments in co-management of lands;
- Facilitate collaborative discussions; and
- Pro-actively engage with and advocate for tribal governments and communities.

Commission staff are currently following up with all roundtable participants and those who were unable to participate to schedule individual interviews; additionally, several Consultations are ongoing or have not yet been completed. The Commission recognizes that our tribal partners may have limited resources and capacity and are working through overlapping challenges due to COVID-19, the resulting economic crisis, and the State’s unprecedented number of wildfires. Commission staff will continue to outreach to our tribal partners, complete Consultations, and provide various options for gathering input and comment to inform the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

Stantec also recently facilitated a workshop with senior Commission management. The goals of this internal workshop, which included breakout groups, were to foster staff engagement and investment in the Plan, elicit new ideas and themes that would strengthen the Plan, develop robust strategic goals, and increase staff collaboration. During the session, senior management were asked to list topics that are dramatically different between now and when the 2016 Strategic Plan was developed and identify trends and issues that will affect the work of the Commission over the next 5-10 years. Staff then went into small-group breakout sessions generally organized by division. The groups were asked to identify the optimum ways to respond to the trends and issues previously noted, the top three items that should be incorporated into the Plan if there were no barriers, and the top three things that staff would like to be bragging about in 2025. Each breakout group then reported out to the larger group. There was a lot of meaningful discussion and the input received is now being reviewed by Stantec for inclusion into a draft Strategic Plan.

## **UPDATE: DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN**

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The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan is intended to be an aspirational document that is forward-looking and based on the input and comments we received through robust tribal, stakeholder, and public engagement. The Strategic Plan will highlight the Commission's progress since the adoption of the previous Strategic Plan, and will identify certain core values as a lens through which the Commission will view all of its activities and recommendations.

The 2015-2020 Strategic Plan outlined a set of guiding principles that shape the Commission's culture and serve as a foundation to achieve its mission in accordance with its vision. The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan will respond to stakeholder input by adding a new guiding principle: Public Health and Safety. This principle is rooted in the Commission's responsibility to prioritize and embed public health and safety in every action taken by the Commission. During the Strategic Plan engagement, the Commission received input and insight into what challenges and opportunities it should anticipate, for the next five-years and beyond. The Strategic Plan will identify emerging issues, drivers, stressors, and challenges that are urgent, far-reaching, and will require focused action.

Commission staff continue to work with Stantec to incorporate the input, ideas, and comments from the stakeholder and tribal engagement and public meetings and comments into a draft Strategic Plan that will be presented at a future Commission meeting. The Strategic Plan development is an iterative process. Commission staff continue to work with Stantec to develop the key goals and strategies for the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The Commission is committed to being responsive to the input and comments from the engagement process. The Commission will continue to provide updates on the development of the Strategic Plan and gather input and perspective from our tribal partners, stakeholders, and the public to inform the final draft of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

## **HOW TO GET INVOLVED:**

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The public's voice, insight, and experience are important to the development of the Strategic Plan. Specifically, the Commission wants to hear perspectives on what should be eliminated, changed, or added to the Strategic Plan, what the Commission's biggest challenges will be, and how the Commission can balance sustainable economic growth (including revenue generation for the state) with environmental protection through the lens of equity and climate change.

Please share your thoughts and suggestions for the Strategic Plan by phone at (916) 574-1800, by email at [StrategicPlan@slc.ca.gov](mailto:StrategicPlan@slc.ca.gov), or by attending a future public Commission meeting. The current tentative schedule is:

- December 17, 2020 –1:00 PM

While general geographic locations are listed, it is possible that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, upcoming meetings will be “virtual meetings.” Specific meeting locations will be announced as they become available.