

From: [Art Thompson](#)
To: [CSLC Commission Meetings](#)
Subject: 12/5 CA SLC Meeting - Agenda Item 60 - 2023 Draft Shoreline Adaptation Report
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 7:43:59 AM
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Attention: This email originated from outside of SLC and should be treated with extra caution.

"Climate change is the single-most existential threat to humanity we've ever faced, including nuclear weapons." – President Joe Biden, January 31, 2023.

"We must move at warp speed," warned UN secretary-general António Guterres at the launch of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023 in Interlaken, Switzerland on March 20, 2023. *"We don't have a moment to lose. We must super-charge our efforts. The climate time-bomb is ticking."*

I am surprised, shocked even, that the Draft Shoreline Adaptation and the Public Trust Protecting California's Public Trust Resources from Sea Level Rise Report does not cite or reference the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), or credit any of their reports or policies.

To confirm, the IPCC is the leading global authority on the science of climate change, both climate mitigation and climate adaptation action, and has established many of the global climate change action guidelines.

Importantly, the IPCC recognizes that choosing and implementing sea level rise responses present profound governance challenges. The complexity, time horizon and uncertainty of sea level rise, and the substantial impact expected, will challenge established planning and decision-making practices, stifling the need for urgency.

Choosing and implementing adaptation responses will be further challenged by a lack of resources; vexing trade-offs between safety, conservation, and economic development; multiple ways of framing the "sea level rise problem;" power relations; politics; and coastal stakeholders having conflicting interests in the future development of heavily used coastal zones.

The IPCC has highlighted the urgency of prioritizing timely, ambitious, and coordinated action to address unprecedented and enduring changes in the ocean and cryosphere. Reports indicate the benefits of ambitious adaptation for sustainable development and, conversely, the escalating costs and risks of delayed action.

"The more decisively and the earlier we act, the more able we will be to address unavoidable changes, manage risks, improve our lives and achieve sustainability for ecosystems and people around the world—today and in the future."— Debra Roberts, Co-Chair of the United Nations IPCC Working Group II.

Clearly, climate change is accelerating, causing sea levels to rise, and to rise at an accelerating pace, too. Storm frequency, intensities, and surge are increasing. Sunny day tidal flooding is now common and increasing in frequency in low-lying communities. Sea levels could rise several feet in the next century.

Higher floodwater levels are unsafe. Rising, fast-moving floodwaters can be hazardous and cause extensive waterfront damage. Coastal floods can be extremely dangerous and cause severe damage when high waters and storm surge are combined with the destructive forces of waves.

Driven by climate change, the floodwater levels of tomorrow will be much higher than the floodwater levels of today. Without strong adaptation responses, most low-lying coasts, communities, and coastal megacities face substantial and increasing risk from coastal hazards, the loss of lives and billions of dollars of damage.

Given the threat of climate change, disaster prevention and resiliency responses are high on the priority list of communities and countries around the world, as they should be, to mitigate risk from floods and sea level rise, protect the public and human safety, and prevent economic loss.

As POTUS has repeatedly confirmed, climate change is the single, biggest existential threat to humanity, even more frightening than nuclear war.

Yet, as the IPCC has warned, the State of California appears to be viewing and handling the climate crisis through the same

legislative lens and planning processes developed or implemented decades ago, for other reasons, including the Public Trust Doctrine, Burton Act of 1968, etc.

Per the IPCC guidelines, existing legislation, organization structures, and approaches will be challenged, which suggests the need for a new lens, a new focus, with a new system and a new process, to address and respond to the crisis, and to do so at warp-speed.

We are already behind, and the added potential for earthquakes takes our state's disaster risk to a whole other level.

Coastal adaptation action needs to be the priority, not a secondary concern, a subset of these last-century policies, in my opinion.

For example, when faced with rising sea levels, why are we still concerned with the notion of "bay fill" in what will be a larger San Francisco Bay, filled with substantially more water?

Or, given a housing crisis, why is housing not allowed along the San Francisco waterfront, on new or existing unused piers, when housing development could possibly be a source of sorely needed funding for adaptation there?

Or, given the sea level rise threat, why isn't public safety considered a public benefit or even the priority under the Public Trust doctrine, or is it?

Or, overall, why are the doctrine and our legislation and our processes so restrictive, when we need to adapt our California coasts at mega scale, at substantial cost and at warp-speed, to avoid future disasters?

Clearly, existing California legislation and policies do not align with the climate crisis, or allow for our urgent response. In effect, we are attempting to force an "uncontrollable" crisis to comply with current policies.

Other fundamental questions need to be asked, and answered, then a new, better informed strategy and plan developed.

Starting over with new, standalone climate change legislation to match the enormity of the existential threat of climate change to our planet, to our State, and future generations should be seriously considered first, as a focused, holistic mechanism to expedite climate adaptation action along the California coast.

Time is of the essence. We are already behind.

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