

# EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

June 23, 2026



## **New Strategic Plan**

Commission staff continue to make steady progress on developing the Commission's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan. Since the April Commission meeting, staff have conducted internal and external outreach and begun formulating specific goals and performance metrics that reflect Commission priorities. The Commission has also received more than 60 public comments, which staff are currently reviewing. Staff remain on track to release a draft Strategic Plan in Fall 2026 for public review and comment.

## **State Budget**

The Governor's May Revision, released on May 14, reflects savings related to departments' vacant position funding and reduced operating budgets originally in the 2024-25 Budget Act to achieve a balanced budget. The Commission had 15 vacant positions eliminated and a reduction of \$1,725,000 from special funds. The Commission's proposed total budget is roughly \$52 million. The May revision includes three budget change proposals submitted by the Commission. The first is for six positions and \$2,085,000 from the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fund to support the Marine Environmental Protection Division to meet the growing demands of the Marine Oil Terminal industry and regulatory mandates. The second is for \$102,000 from the School Land Bank Fund to conduct the required safety inspections of abandoned mine features on school lands, improve the safety of staff during inspections, proactively perform mine closures and remediate features that present a safety risk to the public. The third is for \$31,000, with an annual increase through 2030-31 from the General Fund and Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fund to pay for the increasing difference in the projected new rent for the Long Beach Office over its existing rent after the lease renewal.

## **Tribal Nations Summit**

The Executive Officer, Tribal Liaison, and community engagement specialist attended the California Tribal Nations Summit co-hosted by the Governor's Office and the California Tribal Chairpersons' Association. The Summit convened tribal leaders and Administration offices to collaborate about strengthening government-to-government relationships to accomplish more for tribal nations and tribal land stewardship. The Summit goals were to provide tribal leaders with

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an opportunity to engage with Administration staff, set high-level cross-agency policy priorities, and education the Administration on California tribal nations.



## **West Coast Ocean Alliance Annual Meeting**

The Executive Officer and Climate Adaptation and Special Initiatives Projects Manager, along with the Ocean Protection Council and the California Coastal Commission's Executive Directors, attended the 2026 West Coast Ocean Alliance Annual Summit in Ventura. The Summit provided an opportunity to support information-sharing and coordination across west coast state, tribe, and federal governments on common regional ocean and coastal priorities. The Summit's goals included providing strategic input on current and future projects that can be supported by the alliance; sharing updates regarding members' capacity and priorities that may affect regional science activities, engagement, and potential collaborations; and identification of shared regional science needs.

## **Wildfire Risk Reduction: Forest Fuel Reduction Projects**

The Prosser Dam fuel reduction project in Truckee, the first Commission-managed fuel reduction project in decades, is finishing this month. The project is intended to improve fire resiliency and forest health and reduce risk to critical infrastructure and the community of Truckee from wildfire in a dense 109-acre pine tree forest. We sent the wood chips generated from harvested forest

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material to the Greenleaf Power LLC renewable energy biomass facility at Honey Lake that converts forest biomass and high hazard fuels into power.

The Shasta Springs Fuel Reduction project near Weaverville is still underway. This project, a collaboration between the Commission and the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, is intended to improve fire resiliency and oak woodland habitat. Forest material was placed into piles, many of which were burned this past winter. Consistent with [California's Wildfire & Forest Resilience Action Plan](#), staff continue to assess the condition of forested school land and to identify and treat parcels requiring fuel reduction.



*Prosser Dam Project (Zone 3) Before Treatment, Jan 2026*



*Prosser Dam Project (Zone 3) After Treatment, May 2026*

## **Coastal Wetland Restoration: Sea Level Rise Preparedness**

Staff retained a consultant to [study sea level rise adaptation strategies](#) for the Bolsa Chica wetlands in Southern California. This is the first large coastal wetlands restoration project in the state to do this type of study. The goal is a re-envisioned restoration of the wetlands to improve its self-sustaining nature to account for sea level rise. This will include a reduction in water management gates and pump reliance, expansion of full tidal influence, and integration of broad wetland/upland transition zones.

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## **San Francisco Bay Area Public Trust Project**

In response to the pressing need to address sea level rise impacts in the Bay Area, the staffs of the California State Lands Commission and the [San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission](#) are collaborating on a Bay Area Public Trust Project to create guiding principles for public trust consistency in waterfront development projects on bay area tidelands. The principles will focus on how projects can maximize public benefits and uses consistent with the public trust, generate revenue, and support coastal resiliency. The project is informed through engagement and outreach efforts with ports, harbors, local governments, Tribal governments, business and developer groups, community-based organizations, and the public to understand how climate-related adaptation and waterfront development can benefit the diverse uses and resources of the bay area. The project team has gathered input regarding the public's needs and values related to state lands from community-based organizations and tribes using survey forms and conducted virtual interviews with most granted lands trustees in the bay area and several private sector groups. The project team will craft the principles over the summer and anticipates releasing a *Draft Public Trust Guiding Principles for a Resilient San Francisco Bay* report for public comment in early 2027 with the final report expected in spring 2027.

A more detailed overview and update can be read in the [Informational Staff Report](#).

## **Port of San Diego Site Visit**

Staff met with Port of San Diego Executive Director Scott Chadwick and his leadership team and toured the Bay for a briefing on the Port's stewardship initiatives and emerging technologies that support maritime commerce and navigation. Staff learned about habitat friendly shoreline structures that improve coastal resilience, expand public access, and safeguard the San Diego Bay. The tour also featured the region's first electric tugboat, the Rady Shell waterfront venue, and newly installed electric cranes. The visit was an opportunity for staff and one of the largest grantees of public trust lands, the Port of San Diego, to collaborate and strengthen our working relationship.

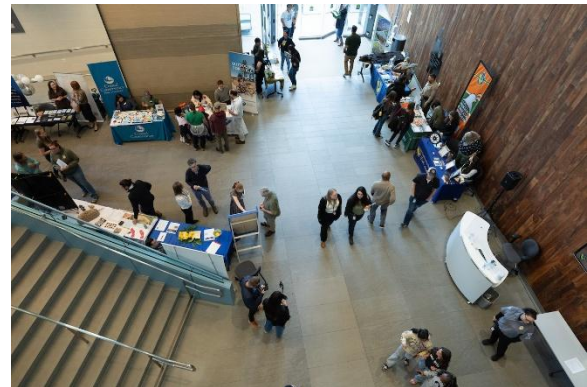
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## Earth Day 2026: Our Power, Our Planet

In April, staff joined the California Natural Resources Agency for a family friendly Earth Day celebration at the Sacramento headquarters lobby and outdoor poppy pavilion. The event included hands-on activities, live animal ambassadors, and interactive displays from the agency departments, including the Commission, illustrating how we independently and collectively protect California's natural resources.



*Photo credit: CA Dept. of Water Resources*

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## Offshore Wind Energy

On April 27, the federal administration announced an agreement with Golden State Wind to relinquish their lease offshore Morro Bay. Under the terms of the agreement, Golden State Wind will receive \$120 million after it invests in fossil fuel projects along the Gulf Coast. This is the second agreement between the federal administration and an offshore wind lessee for the lessee to relinquish their lease, a setback for offshore wind development in California. On May 4, the California Energy Commission issued an [administrative investigative subpoena](#).

The California Coastal Commission unanimously adopted a [Statewide Strategy for the Coexistence of California Fishing Communities and Offshore Wind Energy](#). State Lands Commission staff commented on document drafts and contributed to the development of the final strategy, with a focus on content about the Coastal Commission's jurisdiction, roles, and responsibilities regarding offshore wind energy development. The Statewide Strategy provides an important, comprehensive, and collaboratively developed tool to guide offshore wind developers, Tribes, fishing communities, and regulatory agencies.

Staff attended the [2026 Pacific Offshore Wind Summit](#) in Long Beach, focused on staying the course to advance California's offshore wind energy goals and foster industry and stakeholder collaboration. The Executive Officer participated in a panel discussion about coexisting with coastal communities and ocean users, with a focus on monitoring and mitigating wildlife and fisheries impacts.



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## **City of Newport Beach Granted Lands Management**

Staff attended a community outreach meeting hosted by the City of Newport Beach to elicit input from stakeholders as part of the City's efforts to address granted lands management issues in Newport Bay. Staff joined the City in presenting about the Commission's oversight role on granted lands and the findings of staff's Report on the [City of Newport Beach's public trust lands management](#). Staff participated in a question and answer session to help the City address public concerns and reservations about changes to the City's mooring buoy and residential pier permit programs. This meeting served as the City's public kickoff to its multi-phase plan through which it will develop and implement solutions to address management issues in Newport Bay. The City will continue public engagement with outreach meetings targeting user groups in the Bay and plans to implement a comprehensive policy package in mid-2027 that will resolve the issues identified in the Commission's report.

## **Offshore Oil and Gas Pipeline Analysis**

Staff are developing an Analysis of Impacts to Public Trust Resources and Values, to assess the long-term risks and impacts to public trust resources of offshore oil and gas pipelines under the Commission's jurisdiction. These pipelines are in Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties. The direction to develop this analysis, issued in [December 2023](#), was coupled with the Commission issuing a temporary moratorium on new offshore oil and gas lease applications until the analysis is complete. Staff have retained a contractor, Industrial Economics, Inc., to assist with the analysis. Staff expects to release a draft analysis for public comment in 6-8 months and present a final draft to the Commission in mid-2027.

## **Marine Invasive Species Program**

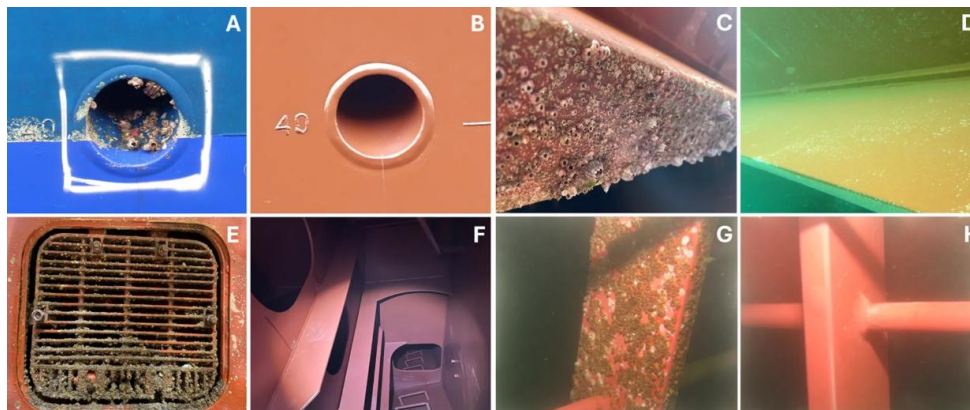
Staff coauthored a peer-reviewed paper in the scientific journal *Frontiers in Marine Science*. Staff produced the paper, [The Trojan seahorse: neglecting biofouling management of vessel niche areas](#), in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Maryland, New Zealand Environmental Protection Authority, and Safinah (United Kingdom). The paper highlights the disparity between the typically effective management of invasive species associated with vessel hulls and the often unmanaged or undermanaged underwater

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appendages and recesses (often referred to as niche areas) that are hotspots for species accumulation on vessels.



*Figure from paper: Examples of niche areas complexity and biofouling conditions. Top row: Fouled (A) and clean (B) internal seawater system outlet. Fouled (C) and clean (D) bilge keel. Bottom row: Fouled (E) and clean (F) sea chest. Fouled (G) and clean (H) bow thruster grating.*

## **Methane Emissions Reduction: Federal Grant Implementation**

The Commission's methane emissions reduction work is proceeding under a contract with Tidelands Oil Production Company. Current efforts are focused on identifying wells in the West Wilmington field that meet the marginal conventional well criteria and within the scope of our contract. Stakeholder coordination is underway to support well selection, sequencing, and operational planning as the project moves more into implementation.

Staff continue to coordinate with the California Geological Energy Management on the potential to apply grant funds to marginal conventional wells elsewhere in the state. This coordination broadens the universe of eligible wells under consideration and helps ensure the most effective use of the grant funds. Staff will continue to refine its approach as conversations with the federal grant team, the contractor, and partner agencies progress.

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## Offshore Oil and Gas Decommissioning

### Platform Holly

Staff are developing a draft Environmental Impact Report to decommission Platform Holly and hope to release it for public comment in early 2027. That will be followed by public comment and final certification.

The Commission embarked on this decommissioning project after [Venoco filed for bankruptcy](#) in 2017. Platform Holly is currently in caretaker status, meaning that the wells have been plugged and disconnected from the reservoir, process fluids have been removed and equipment cleaned and the platform is unstaffed and remotely monitored for safety. The proposed decommissioning project that will be analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report is to fully remove Platform Holly, though partial removal, cutting the platform at least 85 feet below the surface and leaving the lower portion in place, remains under consideration.

### Rincon Island

Staff are preparing for the final decommissioning of Rincon Island and associated facilities. Staff are preparing a scope of work to hire a contractor to perform the work and anticipate releasing a contract solicitation and bid soon. The Commission's adoption of the [Addendum](#) to the Final Rincon Phase 2 Decommissioning Environmental Impact Report last November marked the end of Phase 2, which involved the development and environmental assessment of a remediation plan to decommission and restore Rincon Island and an onshore facility. Phase 2 was preceded by Phase 1, which included plugging and abandoning 70 oil and gas wells and removal of oil processing facilities and most structures at Rincon Island, the onshore facility, and an adjacent parcel. Phase 3 is to implement the decommissioning project.

### Platform Esther

DCOR LLC, the Platform Esther owner and operator, has abandoned all 30 wells on the platform and is flushing the processing equipment and cleaning any residual hydrocarbons before mothballing the platform. Platform Esther offshore Seal Beach is one of California's last platforms in state waters. Its shut-in leaves only two remaining operational oil platforms in state waters. Platform Esther ceased production in 2025 as part of a [settlement](#) between the Commission and DCOR LLC. The settlement ended oil production about 15 years ahead of its

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originally anticipated life and requires DCOR LLC to pay all decommissioning costs.

## **Staff Spotlight**

### **Superior Accomplishment Awards**

The Commission awarded Michelle Pelka and Christopher Hall superior accomplishment awards for their work on the offshore geophysical and geological permit program.

### **Summer Internships**

The Land Management Division is hosting a summer intern, Noah Garcia, through the Arizona State University Sacramento Scholars program. The External Affairs Division and the Environmental Justice and Tribal Liaison are hosting a summer intern, Beatrice Barnes, through the [Stanford Environment and Policy Internship Program](#). We are grateful to have these partnerships and excited to host summer interns.

### **Promotions**

The Land Management Division promoted Jennifer Bryant, Michelle Pelka, Michelle Haflich, Marina McGough, and McKeegan Harless to Public Land Management Specialist IIs. Congratulations!!

### **New Hires**

The Mineral Resources and Management Division welcomed Amaris Pham as an Office Technician.

Photos provided by Commission staff unless otherwise noted.

Banner photo credit: California Department of Water Resources