Preparing for Rising Seas: How the State Can Help Support Local Coastal Adaptation Efforts

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Rachel Ehlers
Legislative Analyst’s Office
About This Report

- Undertaken in Response to Increasing Legislative Interest in Climate Adaptation
- Focuses on How State Can Support Local Coastal Adaptation Efforts
- Has a Statewide Perspective
- Findings and Recommendations Informed by Extensive Interviews and Research
California Faces Threat of Rising Seas and Tides

- Magnitude of Sea-Level Rise (SLR) Projected to Be About 1 Foot in 2030 and as Much as 7 Feet by 2100
- Storms and Future Climate Impacts Could Raise Water Levels Further
Could affect:

- Public infrastructure.
- Natural resources.
- Vulnerable communities.
- Private property.
- State and local economies.
Local Responses Will Be Key to Statewide Preparedness

- Most Responsibility for SLR Preparation Lies With Local Governments
- The State, However, Has a Vested Interest in Ensuring the Coast Is Prepared
- Taking Early Action Could Yield Many Benefits
Many—But Not All—Coastal Jurisdictions Across the State Have Begun Planning for SLR

- Conducting vulnerability assessments.
- Developing adaptation plans.
- Beginning to develop detailed project plans and policies.

Few Communities Have Progressed to Implementing Projects
Key Challenges for Local Adaptation Efforts
Six Key Challenges Facing Local Adaptation Efforts

- Funding Constraints Hinder Both Planning and Projects
- Limited Local Government Capacity Restricts Their Ability to Take Action
- Adaptation Activities Are Constrained by a Lack of Key Information
Six Key Challenges Facing Local Adaptation Efforts

- A Lack of Forums for Shared Planning and Decision-Making Impedes Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration
- Responding to SLR Is Not Yet a Priority for Many Local Residents or Elected Officials
- The Protracted Process for Attaining Project Permits Delays Adaptation Progress
Recommendations for Legislative Steps
Foster Regional-Scale Adaptation

- Establish and Assist Regional Climate Adaptation Collaborative Groups
- Encourage Development of Regional Coastal Adaptation Plans
- Support Implementation of Regional Adaptation Efforts
Support Local Planning and Adaptation Projects

- Increase Assistance for Cities and Counties to Plan for SLR
- Support Coastal Adaptation Projects With Widespread Benefits
- Facilitate Monitoring of State-Funded Demonstration Projects
Provide Information, Assistance, and Support

- Establish the CA Climate Adaptation Center and Regional Support Network
- Develop a Standard Methodology for Economic Analyses of SLR Risks and Responses
- Require a Review of How Regulatory Permitting Processes Can Be Made More Efficient
Enhance Public Awareness of SLR Risks and Impacts

- Require Coastal Flooding Disclosures for Real Estate Transactions
- Require That State-Funded Adaptation Plans and Projects Include Robust Public Engagement
- Direct State Departments to Conduct a Public Awareness Campaign About SLR
Various Avenues Available for Legislative Action:

- Policy bills.
- Budget act.
- Bond proposition (would need voter approval).
- Direction to state departments.
- Oversight and informational hearings.
Additional Issues Will Need Legislative Attention in Future

- Clarifying Uncertain Legal Questions
- Defining Statewide Priorities and Responsibilities
- Rethinking How and Where We Build
- Responding to Changes in Insurance Markets
- Addressing Additional Climate-Related Risks and Challenges
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Rachel Ehlers
Rachel.Ehlers@lao.ca.gov