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For Immediate Release

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## **Ocean Protection Council Seeks Proposals to Increase Marine Life in**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Ocean Protection Council released a call for proposals for grant projects that mitigate the negative impacts of once-through cooling (OTC) technology and increase marine life in California’s marine protected areas (MPAs). The Ocean Protection Council’s [Once-Through Cooling Interim Mitigation Program](#) directs mitigation payment investments through four critical components: 1) restoration that increases marine life in the geographic regions of the facilities; 2) research to understand how existing MPAs may be mitigating for OTC impacts; 3) enforcement of MPA rules and regulations statewide; and 4) outreach and education to improve compliance with MPA rules and regulations statewide.

The grant opportunity marks the first time funds are available through a competitive process to invest in projects that mitigate the negative impacts of OTC. A total of \$3.4 million is available for restoration projects this grant period, with similar grant proposal periods expected annually for the next several years. Applicants can submit a proposal for this round of grant funds by submitting a letter of intent by November 30, 2018. For more information, please visit <http://www.opc.ca.gov/once-through-cooling-interim-mitigation-program/>.

Grant funds are intended to mitigate for impacts associated with power generating facilities that use OTC technology to pull water from the ocean or nearby estuaries to cool the steam used to make electricity. In the process, fish, larvae, eggs, seals, sea lions, turtles, and other creatures can be trapped against screens or drawn into the cooling system, where they are exposed to pressure and high heat. These impingement and entrainment impacts contribute to the decline of fisheries and the degradation of marine habitats near power plants using OTC.

Most power plant owners and operators elected to comply with mitigation requirements by providing interim mitigation funding to the California State Coastal Conservancy and the Ocean

Protection Council to support projects that will offset negative ecological effects and increase marine life associated with MPAs in the geographic area of the power plants. The requirements are part of the statewide Water Quality Control Policy on the Use of Coastal and Estuarine Waters for Power Plant Cooling ([OTC Policy](#)), which was adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board in May 2010 and went into effect on October 1, 2010. The OTC Policy includes requirements for owners and operators of existing power plants to implement measures to mitigate interim impingement and entrainment impacts resulting from their cooling water intake structures until they achieve final compliance with the OTC Policy. Providing interim mitigation funds is one of three options for demonstrating compliance with the interim mitigation requirements.

The Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team in collaboration with the California Ocean Science Trust published a report in June 2018 titled, "[Ocean Restoration Methods: Scientific Guidance for Once-Through Cooling Mitigation Policy](#)," that defines the geographic extent of negative impacts caused by OTC and provides guidance on the scientific principles needed to identify effective restoration projects.

The June 2018 report found that due to oceanographic currents connecting locations both inside and outside of MPAs, harmful effects of once-through cooling could extend hundreds of kilometers from a power plant's intake pipe. Given the geographic extent of power plants still using once-through cooling, the findings of the report define the areas impacted as the entirety of state waters (three nautical miles from the coastline) from San Diego to Big Sur, including the waters around the Channel Islands.

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**About the California Ocean Protection Council:**

The Ocean Protection Council is a state agency whose mission is to ensure that California maintains healthy, resilient, and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. The Council was created pursuant to the California Ocean Protection Act, which was signed into law in 2004 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. For more information, visit [www.opc.ca.gov](http://www.opc.ca.gov).

**About the State Water Resources Control Board:**

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations. The OTC Policy was adopted by the State Water Board to establish technology-based standards to implement federal Clean Water Act Section 316 (b) and reduce the harmful effects associated with cooling water intake structures for power generating facilities on marine and estuarine life. For more information about the OTC Policy, please visit: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/ocean/cwa316/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/cwa316/).