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Director Halberstadt Issues Statement on Signing of Bills Protecting our Marine Environments

Sacramento – Ocean Protection Council (OPC) Executive Director Deborah Halberstadt released the following statement after Governor Brown signed into law two bills designed to protect our oceans and marine environments: SB 1363 (Monning) and AB 2139 (Williams).

“Although ocean acidification is a global phenomenon, the West Coast will face some of the earliest, most severe changes. These bills underscore the importance of taking action now on a local scale in California. OPC is ready to take action, as directed in these bills, and work with our network of partners on a federal, state, regional and local level to ensure that we safeguard our unique coastal ecosystems for the impacts of ocean acidification. We appreciate the leadership of the legislature, Secretary Laird, and the Governor in addressing such a critical issue facing not just California’s coast, but the entire West Coast and global ocean.”

SB 1363 highlights actions that can be taken at the local and regional levels to combat the global challenge of ocean acidification through eelgrass restoration and protection. AB 2139 incorporates many of the recommendations from the West Coast Ocean Acidification & Hypoxia Science Panel report released earlier this year and tasks Ocean Protection Council staff with monitoring and yearly reporting on progress and next steps. Both SB 1363 and AB 2139 elevate the issue of ocean acidification and hypoxia (OAH) within our legislature for the first time.

The Ocean Protection Council works to ensure that California maintains healthy, resilient, and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations.

Several other leading voices in the ocean protection community expressed their support of the legislation.

“Today California took a giant step forward in confronting the threat of ocean acidification to the state’s ocean and coastal communities. This new legislation will ensure that the best science is brought to bear to reduce impacts, plan for change, and demonstrate that concrete action now can help protect the ocean’s vital services for all Californians in the future. We commend the leadership of the legislature, Secretary Laird, and Governor Brown in charting a path forward for a healthy ocean future.” - George H. Leonard, PhD, Chief Scientist at Ocean Conservancy

“These bills enable California to be the first of the west coast states to adopt broad-based actions stemming from the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel’s report,

which in turn builds on the state's leadership in establishing two unique and innovative California ocean institutions, the Ocean Protection Council and the Ocean Science Trust, who played pivotal roles in convening the Panel." – Margaret Spring, VP of Conservation & Science and Chief Conservation Officer at Monterey Bay Aquarium

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