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Media Contact:

Lisa Lien-Mager, (916) 653-9402

Lisa.Lien-Mager@resources.ca.gov

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Natural Resources Agency Releases Updated Report on Climate Adaptation, Resiliency Strategies

SACRAMENTO -- The California Natural Resources Agency today released an updated report on state actions and strategies to adapt to a changing climate. The [Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update](#) lays out a roadmap for everything state agencies are doing and will do to protect communities, infrastructure, services, and the natural environment from climate change impacts.

As California continues to experience rising average temperatures, destructive fires, higher sea levels, and extreme precipitation events, the plan lays out 69 recommendations across 11 sectors and more than 1,000 ongoing actions and next steps developed by scientific and policy experts across 38 state agencies.

"California leads the nation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to combat the effects of climate change, but impacts already are being felt – and they are disproportionately affecting our most vulnerable communities," California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird said. "This updated plan shows how we are addressing current impacts and how we are working across state government to create a more resilient future for the generations of Californians to come."

Last week, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. emphasized the need for climate action in his State of the State address. He also detailed a new plan for investing \$1.25 billion in cap-and-trade auction proceeds to reduce carbon pollution and improve public health and the environment.

The updated *Safeguarding California Plan* reflects hundreds of comments received during the public comment period and includes several new chapters and features, including a Climate Justice chapter highlighting how equity is woven throughout the entire plan.

From pinpointing vulnerabilities in the electricity grid to improving energy efficiency to realigning coastal roads to prepare for sea-level rise, state agencies are funding projects and actions to safeguard both natural and built environments from climate change impacts. Examples include:

- **Assessing transportation vulnerability:** In the past year alone, extreme weather in California caused severe flooding, landslides and coastal erosion totaling more than \$1.2 billion in highway damages statewide. Extreme events like these and associated costs are expected to become more pronounced and more frequent in the future because of climate change. Caltrans is conducting Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments to

identify segments of the State Highway System that may be impacted by rising sea levels and larger storm surge, more frequent wildfires, changing precipitation patterns and increasing temperatures associated with climate change. By identifying the possible risks and implications of climate change, the assessments seek to guide future planning and investments to reduce the likelihood of damage and ensure the long-term future of California's transportation system. By October 2019, Caltrans expects to complete assessment reports for all 12 Caltrans districts. Using the data from the study, Caltrans intends to help evaluate the vulnerability of other modes of the transportation system through partnerships and data sharing with local and regional agencies.

- **Studying grid vulnerability in Los Angeles County:** Research shows the Los Angeles region will see average temperatures rise 3-5 °F by mid-century and experience an increase in the number of “extreme heat days,” adding significant strain on the energy grid. A project funded by the Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) program is developing data that will help local and regional agencies and utilities identify where the grid is most vulnerable, which neighborhoods are served by these problem spots, and what types of adaptation measures should be taken to improve reliability and minimize risks to public health and safety.
- **Building drought resilience in Tulare County:** California's five-year drought left Tulare County particularly vulnerable. Hundreds of households in the unincorporated community of East Porterville lost access to safe drinking water as shallow wells went dry or became contaminated. The State Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Water Resources and the California Office of Emergency Services worked with local governments to deliver a permanent solution by connecting 1,100 homes to the City of Porterville's water system. As climate change continues to affect California's natural environment and hydrology, collaborative efforts such as these will help safeguard communities against the effects of drought and extreme events.

Additional examples of climate change adaptation actions can be found in a [compilation](#) developed by the Natural Resources Agency in tandem with the 2018 update.

Later this year, the Natural Resources Agency and other agencies will release California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, which will include more than 50 reports on expected climate change impacts in California. The Assessment will also include nine regional reports, three topical reports, and a statewide report on vulnerabilities and solutions to climate impacts across the 11 sectors addressed in the 2018 update to the *Safeguarding California Plan*.

More information about the state's climate change adaptation efforts can be found at <http://resources.ca.gov/climate/safeguarding/>.

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