

STAFF REPORT

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**CONSIDER A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF
ADVANCING A VISION FOR CALIFORNIA'S BLUE ECONOMY**

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the proposed Resolution, attached as Exhibit A, to advance a vision for California's blue economy, and direct staff to take appropriate actions on behalf of the Commission to affirm its commitment to the protection and responsible economic use of coastal resources.

The United Nations and World Bank Group define the term *blue economy* as "comprising the range of economic sectors and related policies that together determine whether the use of ocean resources is sustainable...The *blue economy* concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas." (Source: World Bank and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2017. *The Potential of the Blue Economy: Increasing Long-term Benefits of the Sustainable Use of Marine Resources for Small Island Developing States and Coastal Least Developed Countries*. World Bank, Washington DC.)

The blue economy promotes sustainable economic growth that enables optimal use, and increased capacity of, ocean and coastal resources with maximum benefit, protection, and enhancement of the natural environment. The strong link between the blue economy and the Public Trust Doctrine ensures the growth and improvement of the economic and social well-being of California communities while adapting to climate change, enhancing Public Trust lands and resources, and securing healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems for current and future generations.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. This action is consistent with Strategy 1.1 of the Commission's Strategic Plan to deliver the highest levels of public health and safety in the protection, preservation, and responsible economic use of the lands and resources under the Commission's jurisdiction. This action is consistent with Strategy 1.2 to provide that the current and future management of ungranted sovereign lands and resources and granted lands, including through strategic partnerships with trustee ports and harbor districts, is

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consistent with evolving Public Trust principles and values, particularly amid challenges relating to climate change, sea-level rise, public access, and complex land use planning. This action is consistent with Strategy 1.3 to protect, expand, and enhance opportunities for public use and access to and along the State's inland and coastal waterways. This action is consistent with Strategy 1.4 to incorporate strategies to address climate change and sea-level rise impacts to Public Trust resources, uses, and values. This action is consistent with Strategy 2.1 Optimize returns for the responsible development and use of State lands and resources, both onshore and offshore.

2. The adoption of the proposed resolution is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act because it is an administrative action that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21065 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15378, subdivision (b)(5).

EXHIBIT:

- A. Resolution Acknowledging the Importance of Advancing a Vision for California's Blue Economy

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

AUTHORIZATION:

Adopt the Resolution in substantially the form attached as Exhibit A.

**CALIFORNIA STATE
LANDS COMMISSION**

GAVIN NEWSOM, *Lieutenant Governor*
BETTY T. YEE, *Controller*
KEELY BOSLER, *Director of Finance*



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EXHIBIT A**RESOLUTION BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION ADVANCING
A VISION FOR CALIFORNIA'S BLUE ECONOMY**

WHEREAS, the California State Lands Commission has exclusive jurisdiction over approximately 4 million acres of tidelands and submerged lands owned by the State, including approximately 120 navigable rivers and sloughs, 40 navigable lakes, tidal bays, inlets, straits, lagoons and estuaries, and along the State's over 1,100 miles of coastline and offshore islands from the mean high tide line to 3 nautical miles offshore; and

WHEREAS, the Commission serves the people of California by providing stewardship of the lands, waterways, and resources entrusted to its care through the preservation, restoration, and enhancement of natural and cultural resources, responsible economic development, and promotion of public access through balanced management; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is committed to managing and protecting public lands and resources for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations of Californians; and

WHEREAS, the Commission's authority is derived from the Public Trust Doctrine, which ensures the basic right of the public to use its waterways and provides that tide and submerged lands and the beds of lakes, streams and other navigable waterways are to be held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people of California. The Public Trust, as a common law doctrine, is not static but is continuously evolving to protect the public's use and needs in California's waterways; and

WHEREAS, the Public Trust includes the resources, uses, and values related to water-dependent, water-oriented commerce, navigation, fisheries, recreation, and environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the Commission balances Public Trust resources, uses, and values to lease and manage tidelands and submerged lands in the best interests of the State; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has broad oversight authority of tidelands and submerged lands granted by the Legislature to local jurisdictions to manage in trust on behalf of the people of California. These lands include harbors, marinas, ports, wharfs, and piers that support working waterfronts, provide public access, and support the navigational and infrastructure resources necessary for recreational and commercial activities, such as boating, fishing, swimming and the transportation of goods and services; and

WHEREAS, the Public Trust lands of the State are rich sources of natural capital, including estuaries, wetlands, eel grass beds, kelp forests, and reefs, which provide and sustain critical functions and services that support coastal and ocean economies, such as recreation and tourism, food security, water filtration, renewable energy sources, storm protection, flood risk reduction, and climate regulation; and

WHEREAS, the State of California is the fifth largest economy in the world and proudly maintains the highest levels of environmental protection through carefully enacting responsible laws and regulations that increase the quality of environmental resources and allow for sustainable uses that support long-term and high-value economic activities and investments; and

WHEREAS, California's coastal and ocean economies are engines of prosperity that connect to almost every sector and region of the state, the nation, and the globe. The direct ocean economy (conventionally measured for marine transportation, tourism and recreation, living marine resources, marine construction, ship and boat building, and mineral extraction) generated \$44.2 billion or 2.0 percent of the State's GDP in 2013, contributed \$19.3 billion in wages and salaries, and provided 502,073 jobs. In 2014, shore-adjacent counties generated \$1.97 trillion in GDP, or 85.3 percent of the State's total GDP (National Ocean Economics Program, 2016); and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes that the blue economy, and its strong link to the Public Trust Doctrine, must be grounded in sustainable use that enhances ocean and coastal resources while supporting economic growth, improving livelihoods, and promoting ecosystem health; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is committed to developing and supporting science-based decisions for the smart use of ocean and coastal space and continuing to increase its knowledge of ocean and water systems; and

WHEREAS, the State of California has made significant social and financial investments to create the nation's first science-based network of marine protected areas to conserve its invaluable and abundant marine life and habitats, and covering 16 percent of state waters, California's network safeguards ecosystems and economic activities that rely on a healthy ocean, including tourism and commercial fishing, which contribute to making California the nation's fifth largest economy; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is committed to working in strategic coordination with federal, state, local, and tribal partners to safeguard Public Trust resources, uses, and values from the catastrophic impacts of climate change, and to reduce the risks to public safety, health, and access that climate changes poses by focusing on shoreline and coastal resiliency achieved through adaptive planning and management so that high environmental quality is protected, economic growth and opportunity is sustained and undeterred, and vulnerable communities are protected and thrive; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is committed to championing sea-level rise preparedness, with an emphasis on protecting California's Public Trust lands, resources, and assets and the public's right to access and enjoy these lands; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is committed to promoting social equity and advancing environmental justice through more informed decision-making that considers the needs and concerns of all communities, with sensitivity to increased burdens on tribal communities and marginalized and disadvantaged communities that may be disproportionately impacted by climate change; and

WHEREAS, the Commission's resolution advancing a vision for California's coastal future was adopted on August 23, 2018 and is directly linked to the foundation of the blue economy because both seek to enhance the economic and social well-being of California communities while adapting to climate change, enhancing Public Trust lands and resources, and securing healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Commission values effective and creative partnerships, policies, and programs, such as the Port of San Diego's Blue Economy Incubator, AltaSea at the Port of Los Angeles, and the Scripps Institute of Oceanography blue economy research endeavors, that spur innovations and emerging technologies, opening new pathways for economic prosperity and transforming traditional uses to improve efficiency, reduce environmental impacts, revitalize working waterfronts, enhance the marine and coastal environments, and maximize public benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Commission supports local and regional programs and organizations that seek to expand opportunities for education and employment in the blue economy, particularly those that are inclusive of disadvantaged and underserved communities and populations, such as the nonprofit industry association and organizer The Maritime Alliance's 'BlueSTEM' program that develops curriculum, resources, and pathways that prepare and connect youth for exciting and productive careers in maritime industries; and

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the Commission will work with other agencies to promote the blue economy in policies and programs throughout the state through balanced and optimal use of ocean and coastal resources, and is committed to safeguarding the long-term health and resilience of California's ocean and its coastal natural resources to foster economic security, provide opportunities for the workforce of tomorrow, and to enhance healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems for current and future generations.

Adopted by the California State Lands Commission on October 18, 2018