



NATIONAL
ESTUARINE
RESEARCH
RESERVE
SYSTEM

September 12, 2018

California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Laird,

We would like to commend the State of California for their leadership in adopting the Hope for the Coast Vision (“Vision”) and making concrete commitments to ensure California conserves and enhances the statewide extent of our precious coastal habitats. The purpose of this letter is to express our own commitment to helping California achieve this bold Vision.

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System is a network of 29 estuarine areas in the country, all dedicated to long-term stewardship, research and education of these critical natural systems. In California, three Reserves protect vital estuarine systems in the San Francisco Bay, Elkhorn Slough in Monterey County, and the Tijuana River and Estuary that traverses the U.S.-Mexico border. These estuarine systems, provide important benefits to people and nature, and are among the most vulnerable to impacts from climate change in the U.S.ⁱ

The results of the recent study, *Conserving California Coastal Habitats: A Legacy and a Future with Sea Level Rise* (“Coastal Assessment”) conducted by the California State Coastal Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, provides us with stark news – over 55% of state’s coastal habitats are highly vulnerable to sea level rise, with estuarine marshes at nearly 60%. The Coastal Assessment also asserts, however, that California can maintain as much or more coastal habitat with five feet of sea level rise as it has today if we all work collectively and invest in the adaptation and resilience of our coastal habitats.

As such, the NERRs in California hereby resolve to adopt the Hope for the Coast Vision for the protection of coastal habitats: *In science-guided, collective action, we will maintain and enhance California’s coastal habitats in the face of sea level rise, other climate change-induced challenges, and development, ensuring a protected coast for future generations to enjoy, replete with as much or more habitat and wildlife, as well as social, economic, and recreational benefits, as we have today.*

To further this Vision, we further resolve to:

1. Integrate the vision into Reserve programming to help prioritize opportunities to advance coastal resource protection and adaptation within our systems and regions.
2. Work with our local and regional partners to ensure coastal habitat resilience is considered in adaptation of our communities, resources, and infrastructure.
3. Provide learning and education opportunities in our local communities about the important benefits of coastal habitats, their vulnerability to sea level rise and other stressors, and the strategies for conservation.



NATIONAL
ESTUARINE
RESEARCH
RESERVE
SYSTEM

4. Provide leadership and coordinate with cities and partners to advance adaptation planning throughout the state.

Thank you for your important leadership and we look forward to working with the State of California to achieve this vision.

Sincerely,

David Feliz
Reserve Manager
Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
1700 Elkhorn Road
Royal Oaks, CA 95076
Dave.feliz@wildlife.ca.gov
(831) 728-2822

Christopher M. Peregrin
Reserve Manager
Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve
301 Caspian Way
Imperial Beach, CA 91932
Chris.peregrin@parks.ca.gov
619-204-0097

¹Robinson, P., A.K. Leight, D.D. Trueblood, and B. Wood. 2013. Climate sensitivity of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. Report to NOAA's Climate Program Office., pp.79.