CEA ACTION PROPOSAL

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date: 9/29/2026

2. Department: California Coastal Commission

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Executive Division

4. CEA Position Title

Deputy Director, Sea Level Rise

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (*2-3 sentences)*

Through Budget Change Proposal 3720-032-BCP-2024-MR, the California Coastal Commission requested and received permanent positions, including a new CEA A, to support ongoing workload associated with the implementation of Chapter 384, Statues of 2023 (Senate Bill (SB) 272). The Coastal Commission's new SB 272 implementation team requires high-level leadership and management through a CEA A position.

6. Reports to: (*Class Title/Level*)

Executive Director

7. Relationship with Department Director (*Select one)*

☑ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.

☐ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(*Explain*):

8. Organizational Level *(Select one)*

☐ 1st ☑ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The Coastal Commission regulates land use and development in the coastal zone pursuant to the Coastal Act through the issuance of coastal development permits (CDPs) and the certification of Local Coastal Programs (LCPs). LCPs are the local blueprints for Coastal Act policies, implementing statewide resource protection policies in a locally specific context, consistent with the Coastal Act. There are 76 local governments in the Coastal Commission's jurisdiction, including 15 counties and 61 cities. These local government jurisdictions are divided into 126 geographic coastal zone segments for LCP planning purposes.

As of May 2026, a total of 64 local governments have certified LCPs. These LCPs contain policies and priorities that are tailored to reflect unique aspects of each locality. Currently, it is up to local governments to determine how much to focus on SLR adaptation. Twelve coastal cities have never adopted an LCP, including Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Torrance, Fortuna, Seal Beach, Solana Beach, Goleta, San Clemente, Monterey, Costa Mesa, Aliso Viejo, and Hermosa Beach.

SB 272 requires all local governments to have certified LCPs, and mandates and standardizes the components of SLR updates for all LCPs. Implementation of SB 272 requires a significant amount of planning work and resources from the Coastal Commission to review and certify new and updated LCPs and this CEA will position oversee that work.

The CEA will provide policy leadership on implementation of SB 272, which requires, by 2034: (1) certification of 12 brand new LCPs;, and,; (2) updates to the LCPs in the remaining 64 jurisdictions to address sea level rise. The new CEA A position is needed to oversee the SB 272 implementation, to work with the planning team and across the Commission's six district offices, to coordinate with local governments, to ensure adequate technical assistance is provided, and to engage with stakeholders and the public on the development and adoption of new and updated LCPs. Development of coastal land use policy is extremely controversial and must be tailored to meet the specific needs of the natural environmental and community, and this CEA is needed to help develop and assist local governments with formulation of policies that can be certified consistent with the Coastal Act.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☑ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description:

Sea level rise and associated coastal flooding from severe storms will continue to have widespread adverse economic consequences for California's coastal resources and shoreline development – exacerbating coastal flooding and bluff and beach erosion, and putting critical infrastructure, residential and commercial development, and coastal habitats at risk.

Assessing vulnerabilities and developing and implementing adaptation strategies is a critical step toward preparing for sea level rise. Numerous studies have found that the benefits of proactive planning outweigh the costs of inaction. For example, a recent FEMA study found that society saves roughly $6 for every $1 spent on adaptation and mitigation. Planning and decision making around priorities and funding will be extremely important to inform investment decisions that will protect the state's coast and shoreline. While comprehensive planning for sea level rise will require significant up-front investment by federal, state, and local governments, such planning makes better economic sense than inaction followed by increasingly frequent disaster response.

The Coastal Act provides a comprehensive approach for incorporating sea-level rise into local and regional land use planning, but until the passage of SB 272, there was no mandate for local governments to update LCPs to address sea level rise. This CEA A, in overseeing the implementation of SB 272, will therefore be extremely critical to the mission of the department.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

In 2024, the legislature passed SB 272, requiring certification of all remaining LCPs and updates to address sea level rise statewide. In the past five years, the Commission has certified a total of two new LCPs, and seven LCP amendments that comprehensively address sea level rise. LCP amendments related to sea level rise are often among the most challenging and require the most staff resources, due to the complexity of sea level rise planning. In order to implement SB 272, the Commission will need to certify 12 new LCPs in the next 10 years, which is more than double the current rate, as well as numerous amendments related to sea level rise. The Commission anticipates that all 64 of the currently certified LCPs would need to be updated (to varying degrees) to fully comply with SB 272. If this work is processed steadily, that would equate to six to seven LCPs per year, which is more than five times the current rate. Beyond the initial 10-year period, SB 272 requires LCPs to be regularly updated to address changing sea level rise conditions. Based on best available current information, it is most likely that this will require comprehensive sea level rise updates every five years, resulting in approximately 15 LCP amendments per year, ongoing, which is more than 10 times the current rate. Therefore, the planning work will be ongoing and time sensitive. This CEA is needed to enhance partnerships with local governments and address complex policy and planning issues in order to successfully implement SB 272 efficiently and effectively.

Further, our understanding of the science and impacts of sea level rise is changing so rapidly that it is critical to require planning updates. Frontline communities face particular challenges as they have the most vulnerability, the least resilience, and with the least resources to adapt. Without a mechanism for statewide standardized and updated planning, California will be unprepared for the impacts of sea-level rise. This CEA will play a pivotal role in advancing sea level rise policy with local governments and state agencies, ensuring the state is moving towards achieving a more resilient coast in the future.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

This CEA will be the principal policy maker over local coastal program updates statewide. This includes overseeing policy related to sea level rise planning, as well as other issues that will arise in the development of LCPs for certification of the remaining 12 uncertified cities. Given that the 12 uncertified cities are mostly urban cities with dense development in southern California, issues of housing, public access to the coast, including overnight accommodations and short-term rentals, and transportation are likely to be most prominent.

Sea Level Rise
Sea level rise has the potential to significantly degrade our coastline statewide, leading to damage to life and property, as well as beaches and other recreational and coastal and waterfront industrial assets. Local governments, through their LCPs, and with the support of the Coastal Commission, are on the front lines of planning for sea level rise so that our coastlines can be resilient to sea level rise, reducing these impacts. With careful planning, development can be gradually moved out of harm's way, limiting risks to life and property, and infrastructure can be protected from coastal hazards. This will have a significant benefit to the state's $40 billion coastal economy.

Housing
California's ongoing housing crisis continues to exacerbate housing inequity and affordability, especially in the coastal zone. To address this critical issue, the state Legislature has enacted a number of laws in the last several years that are designed to reduce barriers to providing housing and to encourage construction of additional housing units in appropriate locations.

Public Access
Public access to the coast is protected by the Coastal Act and California's constitution, and this position will have a unique role in ensuring that local governments, through their LCPs, protect access to the coast at the local level. This includes ensuring that overnight accommodations are available for visitors of all income levels, and that transportation to and from the coast is readily accessible.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The proposed SB 272 Planning Director will oversee a broad scope of issues related to LCP planning statewide, which is work that requires a high level of decision-making authority and independence. This position will work closely with local government officials and will speak on behalf of the Coastal Commission to help facilitate and expedite the LCP development and approval process so that local governments can meet their new statutory deadlines related to LCP updates.

The Coastal Commission regularly deals with sensitive, high profile issues, and the CEA will at times be required to make quick, independent decisions, especially related to working with local governments on LCP updates. The position will advise staff, the executive team and Commissioners on LCP updates and all related policy issues.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The CEA position will be both developing and implementing new policy, as well as interpreting and implementing existing policy. The Coastal Act is a state law with policies that the Commission interprets and implements in its regulatory oversight role over local governments. In addition, local governments, with the assistance of the Commission and this CEA, will be developing and implementing new policies to carry out the Coastal Act at the local level. Given current circumstances, including the emergence of climate change and sea level rise, housing shortages, and ongoing challenges for the public to access the coast, this work, and the specific role of this CEA, is crucial.