April 17, 2012

Board of Supervisors
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Support of SB 1066 (Lieu), authorization for State Coastal Conservancy to address climate change in its programs and grants.

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that our Board:

1. Support legislative enactment of SB 1066 (Lieu) that will authorize the State Coastal Conservancy to fund and undertake projects to address climate change, giving priority to projects that maximize public benefits.

2. Authorize the County Executive Office to coordinate with our State lobbyist to send appropriate letters of support on behalf of the Board of Supervisors related to SB 1066.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

DISCUSSION:

Ventura County benefits from projects of the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) including that of the Santa Clara River Parkway and the Ormond Beach Wetlands Restoration Project. In regards to the Ormond Beach Wetlands Restoration Project, Ventura County has the unique ability to witness and be a leader in one of the most important wetland restoration opportunities in Southern California that will improve quality of life, enhance economic growth and accommodate for impacts of climate change. The investment of the SCC improves the quality of wetlands, streams and watersheds in our County for the benefit of all our residents and visitors.

Authorized by the legislature in 1976, the SCC exists to protect and enhance coastal resources and urban waterfronts through grants and other non-regulatory means. As a non-regulatory agency, the SCC contributes $46 billion annually to enhance California’s coastal communities, resources and the economy. Existing law does not expressly authorize the Conservancy to help address the adverse effects of climate change on coastal resources.
SB 1066 clarifies existing ambiguity regarding SCC’s ability to address impacts of climate change in its programs; and improves its ability to protect, restore, and enhance coastal resources and urban waterfronts. There are two major components of the legislation: first, to make clear that the SCC may fund and undertake projects to address climate change and may award grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for these purposes; and secondly, require that the SCC prioritize projects that maximize public benefits.

As we approach Earth Day, it is appropriate that our Board recognize the effects of climate change in California and that by investing in solutions for our coastal resources and urban waterfronts we can save billions of dollars in our state. Please join us in support of this legislation that will help the SCC more effectively achieve its purpose and help reduce the impacts of climate change to people and natural resources along our coast.

Sincerely,

Kathy I. Long
Supervisor
Third District

Steve Bennett, Supervisor
First District

ATTACHMENT: Legislation-SB 1066 (Lieu) as amended dated April 9, 2012
SENATE BILL

No. 1066

Introduced by Senator Lieu

February 13, 2012

An act to add Section 31113 to the Public Resources Code, relating to coastal resources.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SB 1066, as amended, Lieu. Coastal resources: climate change.

Existing law establishes the State Coastal Conservancy, which serves as a repository for coastal lands. Existing law authorizes the conservancy to, among other things, undertake projects and award grants for the purposes of restoration of areas of the coastal zone that are adversely affecting the coastal environment or are impeding orderly development.

This bill would require the conservancy to fund and undertake projects to address climate change, giving priority to projects that maximize public benefits.


The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:
(a) California’s coastal waters, waterfronts, wetlands, harbors, estuaries, bays, ports, marinas, riparian areas, beaches, and agricultural resources are important environmental and economic resources to the state.
(b) The coastal economy contributes $46 billion dollars annually to the State of California.
(c) Eighty percent of California’s 38 million residents live within 30 miles of the coast.
(d) Sea level rise, combined with storm-driven waves, poses a direct risk to the state’s coastal resources, including public and private real property and infrastructure. Rising marine waters threaten sensitive coastal areas, habitats, the survival of threatened and endangered species, beaches and other recreation areas, and urban water front s.
(e) Commercial fisheries and fishing harbors, ports, production of seafood, and related jobs will suffer adverse impacts if steps are not taken to protect them.
(f) The desirability of natural areas, riparian areas, beaches, parks, and urban areas as tourist destinations, and their concomitant economic benefit to the state, depends on protection of their scenic and recreational qualities.
(g) The economic and environmental health of human and natural coastal communities depends on their resilience—their ability to survive and rebound from adverse effects.
(h) Improving the health of coastal rivers, wetlands, beaches, harbors, ports, urban water fronts, fisheries, and agricultural resources in advance of threats can contribute to their resiliency.
(i) Extensive cooperation between governmental and private entities is needed to respond adequately to the effects of climate change.
(j) For well over 30 years, the State Coastal Conservancy, a nonregulatory agency established under Division 21 (commencing with Section 31000) of the Public Resources Code, has worked with public and private entities to protect, restore, and enhance coastal and marine resources and habitats, has addressed deteriorating urban water fronts and poorly designed coastal development, and has provided public recreation facilities and access to the coast and urban waterfront areas.
(k) The conservancy can further contribute to the improvement and management of the state’s invaluable public and private coastal resources, and, in so doing, lessen the degradation and destruction from future effects of a changing climate on natural and built resources and related jobs.
Projects that protect coastal resources from climate change impacts can provide additional valuable public benefits, including, but not limited to, flood protection, improved water quality, and increases in fish and wildlife for food and recreation.

Existing law does not expressly authorize the State Coastal Conservancy to address climate change or its impacts, despite the anticipated adverse effects on the coast.

It is the intent of the Legislature that, in implementing Division 21 (commencing with Section 31000) of the Public Resources Code, the conservancy has adequate authority to work with local governments and private entities to address the effects of climate change on coastal resources, public and private, natural and built, including, but not limited to, coastal beaches, ports, urban waterfronts, infrastructure, the ocean, riparian areas and watersheds, fisheries, forests, wetlands, and public and private real property.

The conservancy’s participation in addressing adverse effects on coastal resources can help to maintain property values for individuals and businesses, aid the tourist industry, and promote business and jobs by facilitating the development and protection of visitor-serving commercial facilities and amenities attractive to skilled and educated workers.

The conservancy’s participation in addressing climate change can help to produce construction and other jobs for Californians, both directly, through conservation and development activities, and indirectly, through increased recreational, business, and tourist use.

The conservancy’s participation can contribute to the resiliency of the natural and built environments, including habitat, beaches, ports, and urban waterfronts, and can facilitate assisted migration of plant and animal species that lack adequate ability to adapt.

To the extent that this act assists the conservancy in obtaining federal and other funds, it may help reduce demand on the General Fund for coastal improvement and resilience activities.

SEC. 2. Section 31113 is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

31113. In implementing this division, the conservancy shall
fund and undertake projects to address climate change, including, but not limited to, planning, adaptation, and mitigation projects.
that address extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surge, beach and bluff erosion, salt water intrusion, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources, and may award grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for these purposes. The conservancy shall prioritize projects that maximize public benefits, including, but not limited to, reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, reducing hazards to harbors and ports, and related jobs, preserving and enhancing coastal wetlands and natural lands, conserving biodiversity, including fish, and related jobs, and providing recreational opportunities.