
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair
2021 - 2022 Regular Session

SB 418 (Laird) - Sea level rise planning: database

Version: March 17, 2021

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: May 10, 2021

Policy Vote: N.R. & W. 9 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Ashley Ames

Bill Summary: This bill would extend the sunset of the Planning for Sea Level Rise Database until January 1, 2028.

Fiscal Impact:

- Ongoing costs of approximately \$65,000 annually (General Fund) for CNRA to continue to maintain and update the database. CNRA was not able to provide a fiscal estimate at the time of this analysis. This estimate is based on fiscal information for the establishing legislation and subsequent sunset extension bills.

Background: The state's recent Fourth Climate Change Assessment found that climate change impacts in the coastal zone already are "unprecedented," and will include the direct impacts of sea level rise, changes in ocean conditions, increased flooding (including from rising groundwater tables, but also high "king" tides), and other hazards. Sea level rise poses an immediate and real threat to coastal ecosystems, livelihoods and economies, public access to the coast, recreation, private property, public infrastructure, water supplies, and the well-being and safety of coastal communities, including vulnerable populations.

The sea level along the state's coastline is currently predicted to rise by as much as one-half foot by 2030 and up to 7 feet by 2100. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 12.3 million people were employed in coastal California in 2015, earning about \$883.5 billion, which corresponds to over \$2 trillion in annual gross domestic product. Just over 2/3s of the state's residents live in coastal counties. Sea level rise puts this at risk.

Recent projections of the impacts of sea level rise on the state include:

- Between \$8 billion to \$10 billion of existing property is likely to be underwater by 2050 with an additional \$6 billion to \$10 billion of property at risk during high tides.
- An increase of four feet or more in Bay levels would cause daily flooding for nearly 28,000 socially vulnerable residents in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Up to 2/3s of Southern California beaches may become completely eroded by 2100.
- According to the US Geological Survey, the cost of building levees, sea walls and other measures to withstand 6.5 feet of sea level rise and a 100-year storm in San Francisco Bay by itself could cost as much as \$450 billion.

- Sea level rise could result in the loss of most of the state's salt marshes with a corresponding decrease in the populations of species that depend upon those for habitat. Coastal bluffs will also continue to erode.

Proposed Law: This bill extends the sunset for the following provisions established by AB 2516 (Gordon 2014):

1. Require CNRA, in collaboration with the Ocean Protection Council, to create, update biannually, and post on an internet website a Planning for Sea Level Rise Database (Database). (Public Resources Code (PRC) §§30961 *et seq*)
 - a. The Database describes steps being taken throughout the state to prepare for, and adapt to, sea level rise. Legislative intent states that the Database is intended to provide the public with an educational tool that will enable viewing of up-to-date information from a single source about actions taken to address sea level rise.
 - b. Among other requirements, certain public agencies and private entities are required to provide to the Natural Resources Agency sea level rise planning information, as defined, that is under the control or jurisdiction of the public agencies or private entities. The Natural Resources Agency is required to determine the information necessary for inclusion in the Database, as prescribed.
 - c. In addition, the California Coastal Commission is required to provide information related to its local coastal program for inclusion in the Database.

Related Legislation:

SB 576 (Umberg, Chapter 374, Statutes of 2019) requires entities to share certain information on the Adaptation Clearinghouse related to climate adaptation, among other things.

AB 65 (Petrie-Norris, Chapter 347, Statutes of 2019) requires the State Coastal Conservancy to prioritize projects that provide natural infrastructure and multiple public benefits when allocating certain state monies.

AB 184 (Berman, Chapter 338, Statutes of 2017) extended the sunset on the planning for sea level rise database for 5 years, until January 1, 2023.

SB 246 (Wieckowski, Chapter 606, Statutes of 2015) created the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program designed to develop a cohesive and coordinated response to the impacts of climate change across state, local, and regional levels, including the State Climate Adaptation Clearinghouse at OPR, among other things.

AB 2516 (Gordon, Chapter 522, Statutes of 2014) created the planning for sea level rise database by the Natural Resources Agency, in collaboration with the Ocean Protection Council, with a sunset data of January 1, 2018.

AB 691 (Muratsuchi, Chapter 592, Statutes of 2013) required certain trustees of granted public trust lands to provide sea level rise assessment information to the State Lands Commission.

Staff Comments: Both the bill establishing the database (AB 2516 [Gordon, 2014]) and the bill subsequently extending its sunset (AB 184 [Irwin, 2017]) estimated costs of \$65,000 annually (General Fund) for CNRA to update and maintain the database. Staff estimates that continuing the database after it otherwise would have sunset would have similar state costs.

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