

Date of Hearing: July 7, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Luz Rivas, Chair

SB 418 (Laird) – As Amended March 17, 2021

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Sea level rise planning: database

SUMMARY: Extends the sunset for the Planning for Sea Level Rise Database (PSLRD) managed by the Natural Resources Agency (NRA) from January 1, 2023 to January 1, 2028.

EXISTING LAW: Creates the PSLRD to be managed by NRA. Requires various public and private entities to provide NRA with existing sea level rise planning information that is to be posted and updated biannually on the PSLRD.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, ongoing costs of approximately \$65,000 annually (General Fund) for NRA to continue to maintain and update the database.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **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 two-thirds of the state’s residents live in coastal counties. Sea level rise puts this at risk.

In 2014, AB 2516 (Gordon), Chapter 522, Statutes of 2014, established the PSLRD. The database is overseen by NRA in coordination with the Ocean Protection Council (OPC). The database provides sea level rise planning information, which includes studies, modeling, mapping, cost-benefit analysis, vulnerability assessments, adaptation projects as well as statuses and updates of Local Coastal Programs. The database is an educational tool that is beneficial to the state, local governments, and the public by showing actions taken to address sea level rise, enabling a more effective and coordinated response.

Since the PSLRD was established in 2014, the state’s efforts to collect and make climate adaptation and resilience information available to the public have expanded, as have coordinated efforts between state entities related to climate adaptation and resilience. The Adaptation Clearinghouse website (“resilientCA.org”) came into use in 2018. The

information collected for the PSLRD is now hosted there. (The last PSLRD update on OPC's website is dated August 2018.)

2) Author's statement:

SB 418 will prolong the lifespan of the Planning for Sea Level Rise Database, which has become an effective educational tool benefitting local governments, communities, and the public. Unfortunately, the negative impacts of climate change have become commonplace in California. Communities across the state have been forced to grapple with worsening wildfires, droughts, and a host of other extreme weather events, sometimes impacting critical infrastructure.

Sea level rise is an often-overlooked aspect of climate change, but it has the potential to be one of the most damaging of threats. A 2019 team of U.S Geological Survey scientists found that even a small increase in sea level rise could be an overwhelming force when a storm hits. This database includes information on a variety of project details from a host of different public and private projects; these insights have become a useful tool for stakeholders to stay informed on the actions taken by relevant entities in their policies to combat sea-level rise. Extending this sunset provision is necessary to ensure this invaluable educational tool can be used to assess our most vulnerable infrastructure, and communities.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California State Association of Counties
Heal the Bay
League of California Cities
Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Lawrence Lingbloom / NAT. RES. /