

# **About the California State Lands Commission Sea-Level Rise Program**

The State Lands Commission protects California's navigable waterways and submerged lands for public use and enjoyment, such as commerce, navigation, fishing, recreation, public access, conservation, and much more. As a result of global climate change, California's sovereign lands and shores are at risk from rising seas, more frequent and intense storm events, and prolonged drought. Sea-level rise will also affect many of our State's rivers and streams that are "tidally-in-fluenced," or connected enough to the ocean to experience some daily rise and fall due to tides, such as California's

Bay-Delta region. The Commission is dedicated to managing public trust lands, resources, and assets under its jurisdiction. A new program is in place, following goals in the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, to incorporate sea-level rise and climate change considerations into all the Commission's activities and decision making. It is critically important to plan and prepare for impacts to safeguard the public and ensure the State's coastal regions, including its public trust lands and resources, are protected and preserved for current and future generations.

### **Impacts of Sea-Level Rise**

Sea level rise will have profound impacts on coastal communities, especially low-lying coastal areas, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Some potential impacts in coastal and bay communities include:

- ▶ Damage and/or loss of buildings, roads, and critical infrastructure
- Increased and prolonged flooding
- ▶ Threats to public health and safety
- Loss of beaches, wetlands, trails, shoreline habitat and recreational opportunities
- ▶ Damage to levees, berms, revetments, docks, piers, wharves and other coastal structures

# More Powerful Storm Surges Permanent Inundation Frequent and Intense Floods Shoreline

# Did you know?

- Climate change is the primary cause of rising sea levels and extreme weather
- Sea-level rise will intensify and normalize occasional natural hazards, such as floods, storms, and erosion
- Approximately 80% of California's population lives within 30 miles of the Pacific Ocean, making them vulnerable to sea-level rise and impacts of climate change
- Executive Order B-30-15 calls for state agencies to take climate change into account in their planning efforts

# Taking steps to minimize impacts from flooding is one of the best ways to prepare for sea-level rise.

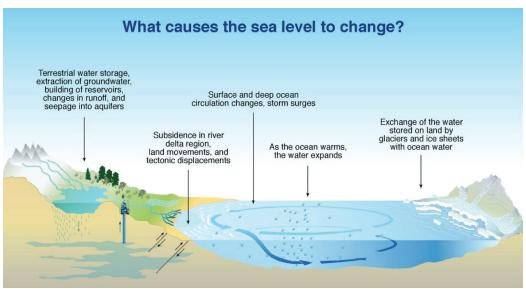
### **About Sea-Level Rise**

Sea-level rise is occurring for two reasons:

- 1. As oceans warm, water expands
- 2. Addition of freshwater to the ocean from the melting glaciers and ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland

Even incremental changes in sea level will impact coastal communities. As sea water moves further inland, it can cause destructive erosion, wetland flooding, agricultural soil contamination, and loss of habitat for fish, birds, and plants.

Higher sea levels combined with bigger and more powerful storm surges can strip away everything in their path. Millions of people living in vulnerable low-lying areas are at risk from flooding and storm damage. Though estimates of how much sea-level rise will occur vary, higher seas will make some locations too risky for housing and will decrease public access and safe recreation opportunities.



Infographic source: IPCC Third Assessment Report, Climate Change 2001 Synthesis Figure 3-4

## **Responding to Sea-Level Rise**

Understanding potential risks to infrastructure, natural habitats, homes, and businesses, encourages communities to identify vulnerabilities and prepare for these anticipated threats. The State Lands Commission works with other state agencies and local and regional governments to assess risk and plan accordingly. The next 20-30 years are critical. Here are some actions you can take today:

- ▶ Check out a free online sea-level rise viewing tool to learn more about the different projections and scenarios for your area and how it may impact your property (see our website below for tool links).
- ▶ Explore what's happening in your community and region. Communities across the state assess local impacts and develop strategies to respond. Call your city or county planning department or check their website to find more information and learn how you can participate in local planning efforts.
- If you are a current lessee or grantee, keep coastal structures in good repair to prevent loss and damage. Track how your property and adjacent sovereign lands are impacted by flooding and storms. Consider structural modifications, alternative placement, or removal to reduce potential hazards.
- ▶ We are available to assist. For more information, please visit http://www.slc.ca.gov/Programs/Sea\_Level\_Rise.html

