

Humboldt  
Baykeeper

Inland Empire  
Waterkeeper

Klamath  
Riverkeeper

Monterey  
Coastkeeper

Orange County  
Coastkeeper

Russian  
Riverkeeper

San Diego  
Coastkeeper

San Francisco  
Baykeeper

San Luis Obispo  
Coastkeeper

Santa Barbara  
Channelkeeper

Santa Monica  
Baykeeper

Ventura  
Coastkeeper

## Prepare California for the Consequences of Climate Change

### In Brief

Climate change is significantly altering California's coastal watersheds and marine ecosystems. Two of the most immediate results are ocean acidification and sea level rise. Ocean acidification, fueled by the ocean's absorption of carbon dioxide emissions, will lower ocean pH and trigger a cascade of impacts to California's water quality and marine life. Sea level rise, combined with shifting precipitation patterns and storm surges, will impact an estimated 480,000 people and \$100 billion of property.



Stairs to nowhere, near Trancas. Source: Santa Monica Baykeeper.

### Legal Landscape

In December 2009, the Governor's Climate Action Team released the California Climate Adaptation Strategy, identifying a wide range of adaptation measures and outlining the legal and policy processes to implement them. The Ocean Protection Council has begun implementing the Climate Adaptation Strategy by convening a Sea Level Rise Task Force and releasing a draft Resolution and Guidance on sea level rise. The State Water Board is also considering how to address warming, ocean acidification, and other impacts to water quality through its Ocean Plan and list of "severely polluted waters."

### Moving Forward

As the consequences of a changing climate unfold for California, federal and state policymakers will need to take swift action to integrate adaptation measures into environmental laws and policies. Many key climate adaptation decisions will need to be implemented at the local level through General Plans and Local Coastal Plans. For example, all Local Coastal Plans should be updated to include a sea level rise analysis and an action plan. In San Diego, Santa Barbara, and the North Coast town of Samoa, this process is already underway. The Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) similarly spearheaded regional sea level rise planning efforts.

**Learn More.** Access a suite of technical and legal resources on CCKA's Climate Adaptation webpage: <http://www.cacoastkeeper.org/programs/healthy-marine-habitats/climate-change>. View photos of the recent "King Tides" (unusually high tides), which illustrate the vulnerability of California's shoreline to sea level rise, at: [www.flickr.com/groups/cakingtides](http://www.flickr.com/groups/cakingtides).

Key Issues: Climate Change Adaptation, Coastal Development and Habitats, Beaches

Questions? Contact Linda Sheehan, Executive Director, California Coastkeeper Alliance  
510.770.9694 • [lsheehan@cacoastkeeper.org](mailto:lsheehan@cacoastkeeper.org)