



April 13, 2016

Via email and facsimile: (916) 319-2192

Assembly member Das Williams, Chair
Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
1020 N St, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2139 (Williams) Ocean Protection Council: ocean acidification – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Williams and members of the Committee on Natural Resources:

We are writing to express our support for your bill AB 2139, which would require the Ocean Protection Council to facilitate research, compile data, and adopt recommendations for legislation and executive actions on ocean acidification. While we support the bill in its current form, we strongly urge you to strengthen the bill by adding language to require the adoption of additional water quality criteria specific to ocean acidification.

Ocean acidification is altering the chemistry of the world's oceans, and the coast of California will experience some of the earliest, most severe changes in ocean carbon chemistry. These changes threaten the health of our coastal ecosystems and industries that depend upon the marine environment. While carbon dioxide emissions are a major driver of ocean acidification, there are local and state actions which can be taken now to address ocean acidification. Revising water quality criteria is one of those.

The West Coast Panel on Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia (OAH Panel) recently published its seminal report and presented actions that can be taken now to address ocean acidification at a local level. The OAH Panel specifically recommended that states revise water quality criteria relevant to ocean acidification. According to the 20 leading scientific experts on the OAH Panel, "the existing water quality criteria for pH are not scientifically valid for

application to ocean acidification.” As the OAH Panel recognized, water quality criteria are the management foundation of the Clean Water Act, and provide water quality managers with a basis for assessing water body condition, determining the level of discharge that will maintain a water body in an ecologically acceptable condition, and objectively determining when a water body is impaired. Water quality criteria can also serve as targets for water body planning and mitigation projects.

The science is clear that existing water quality criteria are inadequate to address ocean acidification. Leading scientific experts on the OAH Panel have recommended that water quality managers revise criteria to include other acidification parameters. To initiate the state's efforts to implement the necessary actions, this bill should direct the State Water Resources Control Board to develop and implement new water quality criteria in order to provide water quality managers a threshold to objectively determine the condition of a water body and to set targets for clean-up efforts.

We thank you for your leadership in working to protect California’s ocean from the threats of ocean acidification. We would be pleased to work with you and your staff on addressing this important issue.

Sincerely,

Emily Jeffers
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Center for Biological Diversity

Sean Bothwell
Policy Director
California Coastkeeper Alliance

Angela Howe
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Elizabeth Murdock
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