



## California Sea Grant State Fellowship Program 2022

Host Agency: California State Lands Commission  
Location: 100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South, Sacramento, CA 95825  
Position Name: Climate Change/Coastal Resilience/Sea-level Rise  
Fellowship Supervisors: Nicole Dobroski, Chief, Division of Environmental Planning and Management;  
Jennifer Mattox, Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison  
Points of Contact: Nicole Dobroski, [nicole.dobroski@slc.ca.gov](mailto:nicole.dobroski@slc.ca.gov); (916) 574-0742  
Jennifer Mattox, [jennifer.mattox@slc.ca.gov](mailto:jennifer.mattox@slc.ca.gov); (916) 574-1800

### Agency Background:

The [California State Lands Commission](#) (Commission) is an independent and dynamic state agency that works on the cutting edge of integrating science into policy decisions. The three-person Commission is comprised of the State Controller, Lieutenant Governor, and the Director of Finance. One of the Commission's major roles is to act as the landlord for lands within its jurisdiction. This sets the Commission apart from purely regulatory agencies. When California became a state in 1850, it acquired approximately four million acres of land underlying the State's navigable and tidal waterways. These "sovereign lands" include the beds of California's navigable rivers, lakes, and streams, as well as the State's tide and submerged lands along the State's 1,100+ miles of coastline and offshore islands, from approximately the mean high tide line to three nautical miles offshore. The Commission holds these lands in trust for the people of California under the Public Trust Doctrine.

Part of the Commission's trust responsibility includes reviewing and approving or denying lease applications for uses of or activities on sovereign lands (e.g., major energy projects, artificial reefs, piers, etc.). Activities on sovereign lands must be appropriate public trust uses, including commerce, fishing, navigation, environmental preservation, and recreation. The Commission is the main agency tasked with protecting public access and overseeing public trust uses. Valid public trust uses sometimes conflict with each other; the Commission works to manage those conflicts and ensure that the Public Trust Doctrine is upheld on sovereign land. In this way, the Commission, along with its sister state agencies, decides on appropriate uses for California's ocean lands and resources and proactively plans for future issues and conflicts.

In addition, the Legislature has enacted more than 300 statutes granting sovereign public trust lands to over 80 local municipalities (referred to as grantees or trustees) to manage in trust for the people of California. The specific uses permitted in each granting statute vary. All grants reserve to the people the right to fish in the waters over the lands and the right to convenient access to those waters for that purpose. While granted public trust lands and assets are managed locally, the Legislature delegated the State's residual and review authority for granted lands to the Commission. The Commission represents the statewide public interest to ensure that trustees operate their grants in conformance with the California Constitution, applicable granting statutes, and the Public Trust Doctrine.

Recognizing the critical need to evaluate and plan for sea-level rise impacts on granted public trust lands, the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 691 in 2013. This bill required trustees of granted lands with average annual gross public trust revenues exceeding \$250,000 to submit a sea-level rise adaptation strategy assessment to the Commission by July 1, 2019. The assessments are required to inventory vulnerable assets and infrastructure, estimate the

financial costs of sea-level rise, and describe specific sea-level rise adaptation and mitigation strategies. The assessments have been submitted, and Commission staff is preparing a statewide synthesis to inform a set of recommended actions.

**Position Description:**

Under the direction of the Chief of the Environmental Planning and Management Division and the Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison, the Sea Grant Fellow will have the opportunity to work on climate change and coastal resilience issues and initiatives. One of the primary projects includes working with our granted lands trustees (major ports, harbor districts, marinas, and local jurisdictions) and the Commission's scientific staff on AB 691 implementation based on the report and findings from the sea-level rise vulnerability and adaptation assessments. Other projects will include working on initiatives related to developing and implementing policy on the use of nature-based solutions to build resiliency to sea level rise, coastal engineering, erosion, and armoring. The Fellow will also develop and facilitate climate change and sea-level rise education and resources for staff based on recent science and new policy developments. The Fellow may also participate in conferences, interagency meetings, and collaborative projects with other Fellows as opportunities arise.

The Fellow will also work on a variety of short and long-term projects throughout the fellowship year, which may include tracking new policy developments or initiatives (e.g., 30X30 and Cutting Green Tape), integrating the best available science into decision-making processes, and analyzing and compiling scientific materials for a variety of Commission projects. The Fellow will also have the opportunity to work with the Commission's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team and Environmental Justice Liaison.

Many of the fellowship projects are ongoing, and the Fellow will have an opportunity to continue the work started by current and former Fellows. The Fellow will interact with Commission staff from multiple divisions that encompass a wide variety of coastal and marine resource topics. Specific project and program duties will be developed collaboratively among the Fellow, Science Policy Advisor and Tribal Liaison, and Environmental Planning and Management Chief, and will be based on the Commission's needs that arise during the fellowship, as well as the Fellow's interests.

**Desirable Qualifications:**

- Ability to work independently and with diverse interdisciplinary teams
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills;
- Someone who is a self-starter and deadline-oriented;
- Experience with GIS and web-development;
- Ability to develop and apply expertise in natural resources and coastal management issues and regulations (e.g., CEQA and NEPA, California Coastal Act, California Ocean Protection Act, Federal and State Endangered Species Acts, etc.).
- Ability to translate science into layperson's terms;
- Knowledge of/familiarity with resource economics;
- Ability to work toward consensus positions with government, private, and public interest groups;
- Enthusiasm for public policy and lawmaking; ability to work in a complex, fast-paced professional environment;
- An interest or experience in using social media to educate, engage, and communicate with a wide array of audiences



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Location: 100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South, Sacramento, CA 95825  
Position Name: Special Projects/Coastal Resilience/Science Team  
Fellowship Supervisors: Nicole Dobroski, Chief of Environmental Planning and Management Division;  
Jennifer Mattox, Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison  
Points of Contact: Nicole Dobroski, [nicole.dobroski@slc.ca.gov](mailto:nicole.dobroski@slc.ca.gov); (916) 574-0742;  
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The three-person Commission is comprised of the State Controller, Lieutenant Governor, and the Director of Finance. The Fellow will be supervised by the Chief of the Environmental Planning and Management Division and the Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison. These host mentors will provide a highly interdisciplinary environment, consulting with other Commission staff on many issues where science and policy interface and helping staff navigate complex and politically sensitive issues, including adaptation to climate change and sea-level rise; management of California's marine protected areas; development of offshore renewable energy; and the preservation of cultural and tribal resources. This work includes extensive coordination with other Commission divisions, including Legal, External Affairs, Mineral Resources Management, Marine Environmental Protection, and Land Management.

### Position Description:

The Sea Grant Fellow will have the opportunity to work on complex and challenging marine and coastal planning and management projects. Under the direction of the Chief of Environmental Planning and Management and the Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison, the Sea Grant Fellow

will work on complex projects, including offshore renewable energy, platform decommissioning, aquaculture, coastal restoration, underwater infrastructure, and marine spatial planning. These projects encompass a number of challenging and high-profile activities, including participating on interagency teams exploring offshore renewable energy and aquaculture potential; conducting environmental review under CEQA for offshore wind activities; participating in efforts related to the Commission's oil and gas decommissioning activities; evaluating and compiling scientific materials for negotiations on sensitive projects; integrating the best available science into Commission decision-making processes; and collaborating with other state, federal, local, and tribal entities.

The Fellow will likely have a variety of short-term and long-term projects throughout the fellowship year, which may include working with the Commission's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team and Environmental Justice Liaison, tracking new policy developments or initiatives (e.g., 30X30 and Cutting Green Tape), refining climate change and sea-level rise policy and outreach strategies, integrating the best available science into decision-making processes, and analyzing and compiling scientific materials for a variety of Commission projects.

The Fellow will also be welcome to participate in conferences, interagency meetings, and collaborative projects with other Fellows as opportunities arise. Many of these projects are ongoing and the Fellow will have an opportunity to continue the work started by current and former Fellows. The Fellow will interact with Commission staff from multiple divisions that encompass a wide variety of coastal and marine resource topics. Specific project and program duties will be developed collaboratively among the Fellow, Science Policy Advisor and Tribal Liaison, and Environmental Planning and Management Chief, and will be based on the Commission's needs that arise during the fellowship, as well as the Fellow's interests.

**Desirable Qualifications:**

- Ability to work both independently and with diverse interdisciplinary teams
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills;
- Ability to develop and apply expertise in natural resources and coastal management issues;
- Ability to translate science into layperson's terms;
- Familiarity and/or experience with GIS and web-development;
- Ability to work toward consensus positions with governmental, private, and public interest groups;
- An interest or experience in using social media to educate, engage, and communicate with a wide array of audiences; and
- An interest in CEQA and other natural resource laws, rules, and regulations (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), California Coastal Act, California Ocean Protection Act, Federal and State Endangered Species Acts, etc.).