At least two academic projects supporting California's marine protected areas program have been halted for now by the state's budget crisis.

From Science Insider:

> Researchers were ordered to stop work immediately, says Rikk Kvitek of California State University, Monterey Bay, a principal investigator on a $20 million sea-floor mapping program funded by the state. . . . A major goal of the project is to create high-resolution digital maps to aid in establishing a statewide network of marine protected areas. "We had a 200-foot vessel that was collecting data along the north coast" when the stop-work order came through on 18 December, Kvitek says. "On the 19th, they had to just go into port." Kvitek has managed to find temporary funding so that 15 students and staff members in his lab can keep working on data analysis, but he says that money will last only 2 or 3 months.

> At the University of California, Santa Cruz, marine ecologist Mark Carr has already had to let four technicians go. Carr works on a state-funded project to monitor ecosystems inside and outside marine protected areas on the California coast. The goal of the $8 million, 8-year project is to collect baseline data that can be used to assess whether the protected areas are working as intended. But for now, the entire project is on hold, and Carr says he's worried that the longer the budget impasse continues, the harder it will be to start it up again. . .

These, of course, are truly drastic budget times in California. Still, it's one more reminder of how fragile public funding for monitoring and assessment efforts can be, despite the value of those efforts for rational policymaking.