Higher sea levels are already affecting California's 3400 miles of coastline, millions of coastal residents, economy, buildings, and critical infrastructure. Yet, oddly enough for a state that is a worldwide leader in climate change mitigation, California has only recently begun to focus seriously on sea level rise adaptation. Recent reports have cited a lack of preparedness and a dismal level of coordination between the many actors engaged in sea level rise planning on the California coast.

In response, the California Legislature recently enacted A.B. 2516, one of the state's first laws designed to advance climate adaptation. A.B. 2516 directs the California Natural Resources Agency and Ocean Protection Council to develop an online database of actions taken by state agencies and selected other entities (e.g., ports, utilities, and airports) to plan for sea level rise. These entities must submit relevant information to the database biannually, at the implementing agencies' request. Notably, A.B. 2516 was not accompanied by an appropriation of implementation funds and will sunset in 2018 (unless the legislature opts to extend its requirements). Nonetheless, this pilot project provides a valuable opportunity to track and assess how well prepared the state is to meet the challenges of coastal climate change. Additionally, the database will be the first of its kind; thus, choices about which information to survey and how to share it have the potential to influence the form and scope of future adaptation efforts in California and beyond.

A new report from UCLA Law's Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment explores how California can harness A.B. 2516 to enhance coastal climate change preparedness. ***Tracking Coastal Adaptation: Implementing California's Innovative Sea Level Rise Planning Database***, the latest Pritzker Environmental Law and Policy Brief, offers recommendations on the content, format, and functionality of the new database, including potential survey questions and preparedness indicators to incorporate. With contributions from leading experts in coastal law, climate change adaptation, program evaluation, and survey research, co-authors Susi Moser (Susanne Moser Research & Consulting/Stanford), Sarah Newkirk (The Nature Conservancy), and I outline a vision of how California can most effectively harness A.B. 2516 as a cornerstone of the state's sea level rise adaptation efforts, while educating the public about our preparedness for coastal hazards.

Some of our key recommendations include:

- Collect data that—whenever possible—is **quantifiable** and relates to **metrics regarding entities' adaptation capacity, actions, and progress**.

- As resources allow, design a **user-friendly** database that enables users to view relevant geospatial information in **interactive maps**.
- Secure funding and legislative authorization to **maintain the database indefinitely** and **expand data collection over time** to include an even broader scope of coastal entities (e.g., local governments, coastal businesses, universities, and hospitals).

As we note in the report,

> A fully functional and comprehensive sea level rise planning database ultimately should be able to help answer questions like: *What is the state of adaptation in coastal California today?*, *What exactly are coastal entities doing to adapt to climate change?*, *Is California adequately equipped with the tools necessary to undertake adaptation?*, *Are we doing enough to prepare for the impacts of climate change?*, and *Where do we need to focus attention and resources to make more progress so that all Californians are protected and can continue to live prosperous lives in the face of change?*

We hope that over the next two years, the database will emerge as a useful tool for informing coastal resilience efforts and position California as a national leader.

The Ocean Protection Council is currently soliciting stakeholder input on implementation of A.B. 2516. You can review and comment on draft survey questions for the first round of data collection through May 20, 2015.

***About the Pritzker Environmental Law and Policy Briefs.*** *The Pritzker Environmental Law and Policy Briefs are published by UCLA School of Law and the Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment in conjunction with researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines and the broader environmental law community. They are made possible through a generous donation by Anthony "Tony" Pritzker, managing partner and co-founder of The Pritzker Group. The briefs provide expert analysis to further public dialogue on issues impacting the environment.*