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See the Future of Sea Level Rise During King Tides

(San Francisco, CA) - The year's highest tides, known as "king tides," will hit California shorelines January 10-12 and again February 8 and 9, providing a glimpse of what we can expect as sea levels rise.

Anyone with a smartphone or digital camera can contribute to the California King Tides Project, a citizen science initiative to help communities see and plan for future sea level rise. The project asks the public to observe the ultra-high tides and share their photographs of how homes, roads, harbors, beaches, wetlands, seawalls, and public access to the coast are impacted. King Tides are one to two feet higher than an average tide, which is what the State projects California will see within the next few decades.

By documenting and sharing photos and sharing what they notice, participants will help others understand that they're part of a community that cares about climate change. In addition, the images shared by the public are used by State and local officials as well as climate change researchers to validate sea level rise models and better assess local flood vulnerabilities. They are available for educators, students, and the general public to explore flooding impacts on the shoreline and to visualize near-term climate change.

The sea level rise we're experiencing now and anticipate in the future is caused by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas. In simple terms, carbon dioxide in our atmosphere acts like a blanket, trapping in heat that would otherwise escape. When we burn fossil fuels, we're adding more carbon dioxide, thickening the "blanket" and warming the planet and ocean. Sea level is rising because land-based glaciers and ice sheets are melting into the ocean, and also because water expands in volume when it warms. The amount of sea level rise we ultimately experience will depend on how quickly we stop burning fossil fuels.

According to the California Ocean Protection Council's Sea Level Rise Guidance, the seas are rising more and faster than previously anticipated, with significant consequences for the State. While the height and rate of sea level rise will vary along the coast of California, San Francisco for example is projected to see a rise in sea level between 1.1 and 2.7 feet by 2050. By 2100, San Francisco could experience between 2.4 and 6.9 feet of sea level rise, depending on fossil fuel use, with a potential for more than 10 feet of rise if there is extreme melting of the West Antarctic ice sheet.

In addition to participating in the King Tides Project on their own, people can join nearly 50 local community events taking place along the California coast during king tides. These include activities like guided nature walks, informative presentations, and wetland habitat restoration work parties. California State Parks will also present Facebook Live programming on January 10 from 10am to 11am, livestreaming the king tides at six coastal parks from San Diego to the North Coast Redwoods.

Visit california.kingtides.net to see past king tides photos, details on community events and livestream, local king tide times, resources for educators teaching about sea level rise, and to learn how to submit your king tides photos to the project.

Engage on social media, #KingTides:

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