

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219  
VOICE (415) 904-5200  
FAX (415) 904-5400  
TDD (415) 597-5885



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Contact: Sarah Christie  
916-747-1164

**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****COASTAL COMMISSION APPOINTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Crescent City – The California Coastal Commission has voted unanimously to appoint Dr. Charles Lester to the position of Executive Director, effective today. Dr. Lester has been serving as the Acting Executive Director since former Director Peter Douglas announced his retirement in August.

Dr. Lester will become the fourth E.D. to lead the Commission since its creation in 1972 with the passage of Proposition 20. Prior to his appointment, Charles served as Senior Deputy Director of the Commission, holding that position since 2006. His employment at the Commission began in 1997. Previously, Dr. Lester was an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Dr. Lester received his Ph.D in Jurisprudence and Social Policy from the University of California at Berkeley. In addition, he earned his J.D. at Boalt Hall School of Law and a B.A. in Geochemistry from Columbia University.

“The entire Commission recognized and appreciates the unique experience, unwavering integrity, and clear vision Dr. Lester brings to this position. While Peter Douglas leaves very large shoes to fill, Charles fits into them quite comfortably,” said Commission Chair Mary Shallenberger.

Dr. Lester takes the helm of an agency with 142 authorized staff positions and an annual budget of approximately \$16 million.

Upon accepting the appointment, Dr. Lester emphasized the ongoing importance Californians place on protecting coastal resources and coastal access. He also acknowledged the importance of improving communications and collaboration with public agencies and local governments along the coast to achieve the purposes of the Coastal Act. He thanked Peter Douglas for his unprecedented leadership and cited the deep dedication and professional skills of the Commission’s staff.

“I am deeply committed to implementing the Coastal Act, but I am also a problem-solver, and I look forward to bringing people together around environmentally sustainable solutions that protect coastal resources and provide maximum public access to the coast for all Californians.”