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Southern California's Marine Monitoring System Ten Years After the National Research Council

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ABSTRACT
In 1990, the National Research Council (NRC) published two in-depth assessments of marine environmental monitoring effectiveness. The first of these, *Managing Troubled Waters: The Role of Marine Environmental Monitoring,* provided a national perspective and the second, *Monitoring Southern California's Coastal Waters,* examined the specifics of monitoring design and implementation in a densely populated, highly urbanized coastal region. The reports include explicit recommendations about the need for greater regionalization of monitoring efforts, supported by greater standardization of field, laboratory, and data analysis methods. They also identified the need for centralized data management and for greater flexibility in the language of standard discharge permits, flexibility that would permit discharge agencies to more readily participate in regional monitoring and research programs. Other recommendations identified a need for EPA and NOAA to monitoring and research program structured as a network of coordinated local and regional efforts. Finally, the NRC emphasized the need for better reporting and for periodic review of monitoring's relevance to management concerns. In this paper, we use southern California as a monitoring's relevance to management concerns. In this paper, we use southern California as a test case to assess progress made in implementing the NRC's recommendations. We review progress made on each recommendation and discuss the features of the regulatory and management climate that contributed to or impeded this progress. We also consider whether, and to what extent, the NRC's recommendations remain relevant in the present context.

Keywords: regional monitoring, southern California, monitoring design, coastal zone management