

California Fish and Game Commission



Compilation of Public Comments on Petition 2023-18MPA

This PDF file compiles public comments that were included as exhibits in meeting materials and supplemental handouts for Commission and Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meetings since November 2023. Additional exhibits and supplemental handouts will be added after each Commission meeting, including those received by the public comment deadline, until the Commission takes final action on the petition.

Note: Commission meeting materials include a representative selection of comments, rather than a comprehensive suite of all related comments received. Given the large volume of public comments received, the Commission has directed staff to summarize comments and provide a representative selection in meeting materials to reflect the range of perspectives shared. Commissioners are able to review a diversity of perspectives while still having access to all individual comments submitted, which are part of the Commission's administrative record. Members of the public may contact staff for access to any written comments not included in this document.

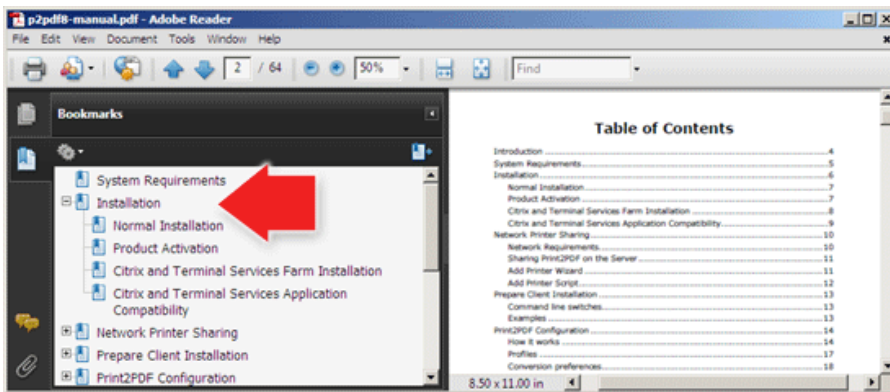
Last updated: through April 21, 2026 FGC


EASY GUIDE TO USING THE PACKET

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7. Do not hesitate to contact staff if you have any questions or would like assistance.

From: Aubrie Fowler <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 5:12 PM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; Ashcraft, Susan@FGC <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Calla Allison <[REDACTED]>; Claire Arre <[REDACTED]>; Jamie Blatter <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FGC Meeting Binder Submission

Hi Susan and Commission staff,

Please see the attached exhibit (saved as a PDF and Excel sheet, whichever formatting is preferred) to please be added to the meeting binder for the February Fish and Game Commission meeting on 2/14-2/15/2024.

The link to the Google sheet can be found [here](#) as well; this was the format that the MPA Collaborative Vetted Regulation Recommendations was previously shared with Commission and Department staff.

Please let me know if there's more context you need from me.

Thank you,
Aubrie

Aubrie Fowler (she/her)
South Coast Specialist
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County	MPA	Current Regs Summarized	Compliance concerns and/or management problem identified	Regulation Recommendation for Adaptive Management	Consensus?	Justification	Supporting Management Suggestion	Petitioner Lead	Contact Information	Recommendation Category	Designation Change?
Del Norte	Pyramid Point SMCA	Rec take of surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net. Tolowa Dee-ni' exempt	Onshore and offshore hook and line fishing, collecting sand crabs as bait, kayak fishers, violations from boaters registered in both CA and OR	Remove allowance for surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net; Change to No-Take SMCA with Tribal exemption for Tolowa Dee-ni'	Yes	Smelt is culturally important species to Tolowa and No Take designation will be clearer to public, reducing violations	Signs being vandalized, ripped out. Outreach to gain compliance needed (Guardian Watchmen)	Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation	rosa.laucci@tolowa.com	Take Allowance Change	Yes, from SMCA to No-Take SMCA with Tribal exemption
Del Norte	Pyramid Point SMCA	Rec take of surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net. Tolowa Dee-ni' exempt	Elk Valley Rancheria is interested in exploring the possibility of being included in exempt status	Add Elk Valley Rancheria to exempt Tribes if requested by Tribal Council	Yes	Elk Valley Rancheria has ancestral ties to the area				Take Allowance Change	
Del Norte	Pyramid Point SMCA	Rec take of surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net. Tolowa Dee-ni' exempt	Boundary is in Oregon	Change northern boundary to align with recognized California/Oregon state line	Yes	Original boundary used a mapping system that does not align with on-the-ground state line.		Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation	rosa.laucci@tolowa.com	Boundary Change	
Del Norte	Point St. George Offshore Reef SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling and Dungeness crab by trap. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and Dungeness crab by trap. Elk Valley and Tolowa Dee-ni' exempt		No change	Yes						
Del Norte	Sea Lion Rock Special Closure	300'	No data	No change	Yes						
Del Norte	Castle Rock Special Closure	300'	Poke poling at Preston Island and Battery Point and Hook Finger Point during extremely low tides. Kayaks near closure	No change	Yes						
Del Norte	False Klamath Rock Special Closure	300' from 3/1-8/31	Low flyovers by US Coast Guard helicopter. Kayaks near closure, kaking kelp. Dogs off leash	No change	Yes		Signs needed at Wilson Creek. Potential site for CoastSnap to crowdsource changes around rock				
Humboldt	Reading Rock SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling; surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net; Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear; surf smelt by dip net; Dungeness crab by trap. Trinidad, Resighini and Yurok exempt	Hook and line fishing and take of sand crabs regularly occur, especially at southern boundary Gold Bluffs beach traditional smelt camp Track amount of surf smelt taken (25 lbs current limit). Hawaiian Type throw net inappropriate	Work with California Tribes and indigenous people to change "Hawaiian type throw net" to a term that is more reflective of Indigenous Californian net based take methods	Yes	Reference to Hawaiian nets when indigenous terms exist for this take type is inappropriate and disrespectful	Monitor Surf smelt as a part of state monitoring plan.			Language Change	

Humboldt	Reading Rock SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling; surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net; Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear; surf smelt by dip net; Dungeness crab by trap. Trinidad, Resighini and Yurok exempt		Recommend implementing limits on commercial take of surf smelt	Yes	Culturally important species				Take Allowance Change	
Humboldt	Reading Rock SMR	No Take	Drifting commercial crab pots	No change	Yes						
Humboldt	Samoa SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling; surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net; Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear; surf smelt by dip net; Dungeness crab by trap. Wiyot exempt	Difficult to determine boundaries	Work with California Tribes and indigenous people to change "Hawaiian type throw net" to a term that is more reflective of Indigenous Californian net based take methods	Yes	Reference to Hawaiian nets when indigenous terms exist for this take type is inappropriate and disrespectful	Monitor recreational and commercial (through landing/block reports) take of salmon by troll and surf smelt by dip net and assess effect on population; Signs with you are here map at Mad River			Language Change	
Humboldt	South Humboldt Bay SMRMA	No Take except waterfowl may be taken. Wiyot exempt	Invasive grasses, loss of eelgrass, general threats to habitat. Non Tribal members clamming. Difficult to identify boundaries within South Humboldt Bay	Determine reason it does not extend to southern water's edge and extend if no reason	Yes	Clearer for outreach purposes to say from southern end of bay to 2nd hunter pull out	Direct enforcement to look for unlawful clamming			Boundary Change	
Humboldt	Sugarloaf Island Special Closure	300'		No change	Yes						
Humboldt	South Cape Mendocino SMR	No Take	Minimal patrol	No change	Yes		Develop a plan for evaluating remote area MPAs to determine impact, such as temporary M2 radar/drone surveillance; support southern Humboldt patrol by LED				
Humboldt	Steamboat Rock Special Closure	300' 3/1-8/31	Confusion on when it is open to swim out to and when it is closed	No change	Yes		Sign that highlights special closure and closure dates				
Humboldt	Mattole Canyon SMR	No Take	Minimal patrol. Some commercial crab pots observed during USCG flyover	No change	Yes		Develop a plan for evaluating remote area MPAs to determine impact, such as temporary M2 radar/drone surveillance; support southern Humboldt patrol by law enforcement division				
Humboldt	Sea Lion Gulch SMR	No Take	Backpackers harvest mussels along entire Lost Coast Trail; people getting too close to new elephant seal colony. No cell connectivity to determine boundaries of MPA	Move southern boundary south to Cooskie Creek	BLM support but need fisher input	Creek is more identifiable feature for land based outreach to fishers hiking the Lost Coast Trail				Boundary Change	

Humboldt	Big Flat SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling and Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and Dungeness crab by trap. Multiple Tribes exempt	Backpackers harvest mussels along entire Lost Coast Trail; surf fishing occurs at Miller Flat. No cell connectivity to determine boundaries of MPA	No change	Yes		More outreach needed for fishers hiking lost coast. Include more detailed information in BLM Lost Coast map				
Mendocino	Double Cone Rock SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling; Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and Dungeness crab by trap	Unknown. Limited patrol. Report of excessive urchin and need for grazer suppression.	Reassess restoration policy in SMCAs impacted by climate change/kelp loss	Yes	Loss of kelp habitat needs to be addressed in this SMCA	Allow for restoration work/grazer suppression to address urchin barrens (reds and purples)	California Sea Urchin Commission - allow for commercial take of urchin		Other	
Mendocino	Vizcaino Rock Special Closure	300' 3/1-8/31		No change	Yes						
Mendocino	Ten Mile SMR	No Take	Primary concern is shore-based fishing (rod and reel at seaside creek beach). Recreational fishers take rockfish and lingcod, crab pots "walk themselves" into MPA at southern boundary. Dogs off leash	No change	Yes		OK/boundary sign needed at northern boundary. Simplify outreach language around MPA clusters				
Mendocino	Ten Mile Beach SMCA	Rec take of Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of Dungeness crab by trap. Many Tribes exempt	Unlawful take of fish (rockfish, lingcod); dogs off leash in snowy plover habitat. Potential sand dump site south side of Ten Mile Beach	No change	Yes		Simplify outreach language around MPA clusters				
Mendocino	Ten Mile Estuary SMCA	Waterfowl may be taken. Many Tribes exempt	Limited access for fishers	No change	Yes		Simplify outreach language around MPA clusters				
Mendocino	MacKerricher SMCA	All rec take allowed. Commercial take allowed except for bull kelp and giant kelp	Multiple violations occur daily since closest to Fort Bragg city center (general fish and game code violations). North boundary (Laguna Point) hotspot for intertidal take	Add protection for intertidal zone, per State Parks, in support for protection of the resource and ease of enforcement/outreach	Many in support but no full consensus	There are limited areas in the county to lawfully take intertidal animals such as mussels, turban snails, limpets, etc.	More enforcement support needed due to limited State Parks personnel. Focus on tidepool education. Intertidal specific take signs are needed	State Parks pending review		Take Allowance Change	
Mendocino	Point Cabrillo SMR	No Take	Lighthouse sees lots of boats fishing offshore of Frolic Cove on northern end of Point Cabrillo SMR or inside	No change	Yes		OK boundary signs would be beneficial on both boundaries for kayak fishing				
Mendocino	Russian Gulch SMCA	All rec take allowed. Commercial take allowed except for bull kelp and giant kelp	General fish and game code violations	No change	Yes						

Mendocino	Big River Estuary SMCA	Rec take of surfperch by hook and line from shore only and Dungeness crab by hoop net or hand. Many Tribes exempt. Waterfowl may be taken	Increased use for swimming and recreation has led to safety concerns, including close calls between swimmers and hunters. Swimmers mixing with motorized boats may lead to accidents	Hunting should be prohibited due to high public use/public safety issues, per State Parks	Yes	Community reported incidents of near misses between hunters/boaters and swimmers		State Parks pending review		Allowed Activity Change	
Mendocino	Big River Estuary SMCA	Rec take of surfperch by hook and line from shore only and Dungeness crab by hoop net or hand. Many Tribes exempt. Waterfowl may be taken	Can MPA restrict motorized vessels if not ecological reserve?	Restrict all motorized vessels with allowance for public safety, per State Parks	Yes, with clarification that motorized vessels are only restricted going east (up river)	West access from launch should be allowed for boaters going out to ocean	Data on crab fishery is needed to determine whether allowance is sustainable. Need clear signage restricting snare traps. Pick up after dog signs needed	State Parks pending review		Allowed Activity Change	
Mendocino	Van Damme SMCA	All rec take allowed. Commercial take allowed except for bull kelp and giant kelp	Overtake and take of undersize fish	No change	Yes						
Mendocino	Navarro River Estuary SMCA	Rec take of salmonoids by hook and line. Many Tribes exempt. Waterfowl may be taken	People illegally breach sandbar (but outside MPA?)	No change	Yes						
Mendocino	Point Arena SMR	No Take	Fishing in SMR reported by lighthouse manager	No change	Yes		OK boundary signs needed				
Mendocino	Point Arena SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear		No change	Yes						
Mendocino	Sea Lion Cove	Rec and commercial take of finfish	Urchin barrens	Reassess restoration policy in SMCAs impacted by climate change/kelp loss	Yes		Allow for restoration work/grazer suppression to address urchin barrens (reds and purples)	California Sea Urchin Commission - allow for commercial take of urchin		Other	
Mendocino	Saunders Reef SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and urchin	Citations issued for people diving and taking at Schooner Gulch; illegal shore fishing from Hearn Gulch	No change	Yes		Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed				
Sonoma	Del Mar Landing SMR	No Take	Fishing at north end	No change	Yes		Trail pamphlets with MPA information				
Sonoma	Stewarts Point SMR	No Take	Poaching at 3 mile line. Difficult for fishers to determine where 3 mile line is and difficult to enforce from land	Allow for trolling of salmon. Change to SMCA?	No. Discussed with no strong opposition but more info needed	Impact to commercial salmon fishing can be addressed with minimal impact to other resources	More signage needed at public access points			Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change SMR to SMCA. No consensus
Sonoma	Stewarts Point SMCA	Rec take from shore only of marine aquatic plants other than sea palm, marine invertebrates, finfish by hook and line, surf smelt by beach net, species authorized by hand-held dip net	Tribal based MPA	Prohibit all take and add Kashia Pomo to Tribal exemptions to make affirmative rights of Tribal Members re: collection, harvesting, and research	Yes	MPA is only accessed by Kashia Tribal members from shore (owned by Tribe) so would be same protection while acknowledging Tribal rights				Take Allowance Change	Yes, change from SMCA to No-Take SMCA with Tribal exemption

Sonoma	Salt Point SMCA	Recreational take of abalone and finfish allowed	Take of abalone during closure; poaching of intertidal species. Confusion regarding intertidal take	No change	Yes		Needs more signage on collecting/take of shellfish and other non finfish				
Sonoma	Gerstle Cove SMR	No Take	Excessive intertidal take. Rec fishers fishing the line	No change	Yes		Need for good tidepooler rules signs to address harmful tidepooling				
Sonoma	Russian River SMRMA	No take except waterfowl may be taken	Marine mammal disturbance occurring. County of Sonoma needs to conduct restoration work as part of management plan	Allow for restoration work in SMRMA	Yes	Restoration will not impact haul out sites, marine mammals or birds			Other		
Sonoma	Russian River SMCA	Rec take of Dungeness crab by trap, and surf smelt by hand-held dip net or beach net. Commercial take of Dungeness crab by trap	Illegal onshore and offshore fishing; seal disturbance "seal selfies" near Goat Rock. Trash/dogs off leash	No change	Yes		More outreach for out of town fishers/permanent signage				
Sonoma	Bodega Head SMR	No Take	Take of rockfish and trolling for salmon; fishing on northern boundary off rocks Difficult "fan" shape and hard to identify northern boundary makes enforcement difficult	No change	Yes	Would require new outreach					
Sonoma/Marin	Bodega Head SMCA	Rec take of pelagic finfish by trolling, Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by hand-held dip net. Commercial take of pelagic finfish by troll fishing gear and round haul net, Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by round haul net	Take of rockfish and trolling for salmon; fishing on northern boundary off rocks Difficult "fan" shape and hard to identify northern boundary makes enforcement difficult	No change	Yes						
Sonoma/Marin	Estero Americano SMRMA	No take except waterfowl may be taken	Confusion as to boundary "high tide line" and who manages strip of beach between ocean and estuary that is often closed; Difficulty identifying eastern boundary. No way to see boundary from shore	No change	Yes		More signs needed at access points here to address compliance concerns				
Marin	Estero de San Antonio SMRMA	No take except waterfowl may be taken	Some take (animal remains) and illegal fishing	No change	Yes						
Marin	Point Reyes SMR	No take	Sand dollar and fossil take, rod and reel fishing from vessels, party boats troll for salmon; violations are limited offshore	No change	Yes		Signage and more enforcement needed, especially at Drakes Beach and Coast Guard Station. Consolidated mixed messaging signs, with dog information.				

Marin	Point Reyes SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling and Dungeness crab by trap. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and Dungeness crab by trap	Commercial crabbers set coonstripe shrimp traps on top of crab traps; Boundaries in MPA cluster hard to identify; NPS jurisdiction limited to	No change	Yes						
Marin	Point Reyes Headlands Special Closure	No access from mean high tide line to a distance of 1000 feet seaward	Recreational vessels fishing in summer; Disturbance spiked in 2020; USFW continues to monitor this area	No change at this time	Yes	Might need to revisit making adjustments in the future if data shows changes/increases in disturbance					
Marin	Estero de Limantour SMR	No take	Difficult to determine boundary between SMR and Drakes Estero SMCA makes enforcement difficult. There are suspicions that poaching of clams occurs in the SMR from people on kayaks from Drakes Estero	Extend SMR designation all the way into Drakes Estero	Yes	NPS in support of expanding SMR because federally designated wilderness, major harbor seal haul out, and critical nursery habitat for leopard shark and bay rays		EAC Marin with NPS letter of support		Boundary Change	
Marin	Drakes Estero SMCA	The recreational take of clams is allowed	Difficult to determine boundary line between Drakes Estero SMCA and Estero de Limantour SMR leading to poaching. Cows accessing/pooping from NPS ranch leased land	Prohibit clamming in Drakes Estero SMCA. Merge with Estero de Limantour SMR.	Yes	SMCA designation was originally due to oyster farm that is no longer there. NPS in support of making into a SMR due to federally designated wilderness area	Give people direction/ outreach materials on where they CAN clam safely	EAC Marin with NPS letter of support		Take Allowance Change	Yes, change from SMCA to SMR
Marin	Point Resistance Rock Special Closure	No access from mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of rock	Seabird flushing by vessels. USFW monitoring area.	No change	Yes	GFNMS thinks current regulations are good, very important to their mission and public outreach					
Marin	Double Point/Stormy Stack Special Closure	No access from mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of rock	Seabird flushing by vessels and surfers, who enter harbor seal rookery. Increased visitation due to people hiking to Alamere Falls	No change	Yes	GFNMS thinks current regulations are good, very important to their mission and public outreach and don't want to extend to shore to allow shore access	Put signs with regulations and text about importance of special closure at trailhead; more outreach to boaters about special closures needed				

Marin	Duxbury Reef SMCA	Recreational take of finfish from shore and abalone* is allowed	Difficult to enforce and outreach about why you can take finfish but not invertebrates. Beach Watch data at this site for 30 years show slight decrease in activities in last 10 years, but take of invertebrates has been observed, and the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent has provided information about the need to consider additional conservation measures at Duxbury Reef. Maria Brown (NMS) submitted a letter saying Duxbury Reef would benefit from increased protection of unique and important habitat of entire reef (largest shale reef in N. America). EAC MPA Watch data shows	Change to SMR because of difficulty of interpretation and enforcement. Extend southern boundary further out to sea (south) and northern boundary to Double Point to fully cover reef	No	No agreement on extending boundaries to cover the reef and changing to SMR. More research needed on benefits of changing existing ribbon from SMCA to SMR; Might be important fishing access point for public	More signs needed and more support for onsite education and enforcement from CDFW to agate beach and land-side terrestrial Duxbury	EAC Marin	Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change SMCA to SMR. No consensus
Marin	Duxbury Reef SMCA	Recreational take of finfish from shore and abalone* is allowed	Heavy use and impacts, intertidal take – buckets and tools (e.g., crow bars, tire jacks) used to take black turban snails and purple urchin that are nestled into cracks. People need to break the reef to get to purple urchin	Potential compromise would be to add specific tidepool protections, similar to OC	TBD	NMS would like to continue conversation to explore potential compromises	Research other tidepool docent programs in MPAs with mixed use of allowed fishing/tidepool protections		Language Change	
San Francisco	North Farallon Islands SMR	No Take	Commercial crab case here	No change	Yes	More data needed for this MPA cluster	Increase CDFW LED patrols during peak months. Need for CCFRP program here			
San Francisco	North Farallon Islands Special Closure	No vessel shall be operated or anchored at any time from the mean high tide line to a distance of 1000 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of North Farallon Island, or to a distance of 300 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of the remaining three southern islets		No change	Yes					

San Francisco	Southeast Farallon Islands SMR	No Take	Small recreational boats. A number of encroachments occur into SMR during better weather months	No change	Yes		Increase patrols from LED and consider M2 radar at this location				
San Francisco	Southeast Farallon Islands SMCA	Recreational take of salmon by trolling and commercial take of salmon by troll fishing gear	Salmon fishers use salmon gear to fish for halibut	No change	Yes						
San Francisco	Southeast Farallon Islands Special Closure	Closed 300 feet seaward year-round, except Fisherman's Bay to East Landing, southeastern tip of the island and southeastern side of Saddle (Seal) Rock, which is closed from December 1 through September 14. 5 mile per hour speed limit 1000 ft seaward of mean lower low tide of any shoreline Exhaust system requirements for commercial dive boats	Boats cut across the special closure	No change	Yes		Precedes MLPA process, careful consideration went into crafting special closure regulations				
San Mateo	Egg (Devil's Slide) Rock to Devil's Slide Special Closure	A special closure is designated from the mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of any of the three rocks comprising Egg (Devil's Slide) Rock; Transit in between the rock and the mainland between these points is prohibited at any time.	Reported violations include fishing boats inside boundaries and low flying aircraft/drones	Change name to "Devil's Slide Special Closure"	Yes		Egg rock is no longer a name used/recognized locally. Devil's Slide is more appropriate and simpler for outreach				Language Change
San Mateo	Montara SMR	No Take	A top cited MPA in Central Coast, highest in San Mateo; fishing offshore and tidepool take; Difficulty interpreting southern boundary	Move Montara SMR onshore southern boundary to current Pillar Point SMCA southern boundary (north end of Maverick's Beach), then extending out to current offshore southern SMR boundary point	Yes		Easier for enforcement and makes SMR boundaries consistent with Fitzgerald Marine Reserve boundaries				Boundary Change

San Mateo	Pillar Point SMCA	The recreational take of pelagic finfish by trolling, Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by hand-held dip net is allowed. The commercial take of pelagic finfish by troll or round haul net Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by round haul net is allowed.	Unclear boundary leads to poaching in intertidal Difficult for local law enforcement to ensure compliance of tidepool take regulations due to high volume of consumptive visitors	Extend southern SMCA boundary further south to edge of harbor jetty, extending out to existing offshore southern point. Onshore northern boundary would be same as Montara SMR onshore southern boundary	Yes	Would cover entire reef in MPA for ease of allied agency outreach and enforcement.				Boundary Change	
San Mateo	Pillar Point SMCA	The recreational take of pelagic finfish by trolling, Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by hand-held dip net is allowed. The commercial take of pelagic finfish by troll or round haul net Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by round haul net is allowed.		Change regulations to allow for recreational hook and line take of finfish from shore and take of mussels, crabs, snails and seaweeds for equity and access purposes	Yes	Allowing for shore based hook and line and some intertidal take maintains access for consumptive users while applying some protection for a heavily impacted habitat				Take Allowance Change	
San Mateo/Santa Cruz	Año Nuevo SMR	No Take	Unlawful take of snails; fishing; wildlife disturbance. Boats driving squid out of MPA. Confusion because sign at top of trail to Greyhound Rock says fishing beach but must go left at bottom to legally fish	Move southern boundary line to have whole of Greyhound Rock in SMR	Yes, at both Santa Cruz and San Mateo Collaborative meetings	Clearer boundary makes enforcement easier	Ensure sign with map at bottom of trail. Utilize social/digital/traditional media for public outreach	State Parks pending review		Boundary Change	
San Mateo/Santa Cruz	Greyhound Rock SMCA	Rec take of giant kelp by hand harvest only, market squid, salmon. Other finfish by hook and line only from shore. Commercial take of giant kelp by hand harvest only, salmon and market squid	Take of mussels at southern boundary Confusion with Año Nuevo SMR boundary/whether fishing is allowed at Greyhound Rock Split between 2 counties	Move northern boundary line to have whole of Greyhound Rock outside of SMCA and in SMR; Move southern boundary south to beginning of Scott Creek bridge	Yes, at both Santa Cruz and San Mateo Collaborative meetings	Reef should be fully protected or fully open. Preference to cover reef but either way will have clearer boundary for outreach/enforcement. Move of southern boundary would cover reef to address intertidal impacts	Need for sign with map at Scotts Creek	State Parks pending review		Boundary Change	
San Mateo/Santa Cruz	Greyhound Rock SMCA	Rec take of giant kelp by hand harvest only, market squid, salmon. Other finfish by hook and line only from shore. Commercial take of giant kelp by hand harvest only, salmon and market squid	Confusing regulations	Replace comma with semi-colon in regulations after "giant kelp by hand harvest only", or otherwise edit	Yes	Clearer language needed to clarify you are not required to catch salmon and squid by hand harvest only		State Parks pending review		Language Change	Section 100 change
Santa Cruz	Natural Bridges SMR	No Take	Hard to identify boundaries; safety concerns with fishers and swimmers at Natural Bridges State Park beach	Shift both boundaries south to more identifiable features (4 mile point and Natural Bridge)	Yes	State Parks would like SMR to cover the beach at Natural Bridges SP for public safety reasons	Need for interpretive signs with maps/good tidepooler rules, why MPAs, etc.	State Parks pending review		Boundary Change	
Santa Cruz	Soquel Canyon SMCA	Rec and commercial take of pelagic finfish	Split between 2 counties	No change	Yes						

Monterey	Elkhorn Slough SMR	No Take	Fishing occurs regularly at Kirby Park pier/dock, was originally built for fishers with disabilities with SFRA grant. Inconsistent enforcement.	Move northern boundary south of Kirby Park pier/dock. Shift entire MPA to maintain size	Yes, at both Santa Cruz and Monterey Collaborative meetings	Opens fishing area as originally intended to limit poaching; supports increased enforcement presence in area	If Kirby is open, must be concerted cross-jurisdictional effort to enforce shore waste of fish/debris and other F&G Code violations. Need for good fishing practices outreach	Elkhorn Slough Foundation		Boundary Change	
Monterey	Elkhorn Slough SMCA	The recreational take of finfish by hook and line only and clams is allowed. Clams may only be taken on the north shore of the slough in the area adjacent to the Moss Landing State Wildlife Area [subsection 550(a)].	Difficult to determine where SMR/SMCA boundary is (i.e., where kayak fishers can no longer fish).	Move SMR line to bird watching platform (eastern side)	Yes, at both Santa Cruz and Monterey Collaborative meetings	Bird watching platform provides a clear boundary for shore and kayak fishers and would maintain size of SMR with shift off Kirby		Elkhorn Slough Foundation		Boundary Change	
Monterey	Elkhorn Slough SMCA	The recreational take of finfish by hook and line only and clams is allowed. Clams may only be taken on the north shore of the slough in the area adjacent to the Moss Landing State Wildlife Area [subsection 550(a)].	Clamming disturbs sea otter rafts. Huge amounts of trash (fishing receptacles full)	Removing allowance for clamming to address impact to otters and human health considerations	Maybe?	Need more info on impact to recreational clambers and safety of consuming clams	Need for more trash receptacles/removal	Elkhorn Slough Foundation		Take Allowance Change	
Monterey	Moro Cojo Slough State Marine Reserve	No take	Some access on eastern end. Agricultural influence. Elkhorn Slough NERR in support of no change	No change	Yes						
Monterey/Santa Cruz	Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of pelagic finfish is allowed	Many violations, especially illegally set crab traps (commercial) and rockfish take (recreational). Whale disturbance. More impact due to depth restrictions lifted	No change	Yes						
Monterey	Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of pelagic finfish is allowed	Many violations, especially rockfish take (recreational). Whale disturbance	No change	Yes						
Monterey	Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish by hook and line. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	Fishing debris from Coast Guard pier. Abalone and other intertidal poaching at breakwater	Explore regulations to limit fishing gear loss from Coast Guard pier (such as requiring use of breakaway leaders or no braided line)	Yes	Fishing gear loss impacts wildlife, habitat, and safety of divers due to entanglement	Partner with MBNMS on outreach of litter/delict fishing gear			Language Change	
Monterey	Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish by hook and line. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	New regulations may restrict fishing for rockfish from boat close to shore after October 1	Change to SMR and join with Lovers Point Julia Platt SMR	Maybe	No strong opposition but no fishing reps present		Giant Kelp Restoration Project (G2KR)		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from SMCA to SMR

Monterey	Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish by hook and line. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand		Allow restoration/urchin culling without requiring SCP	No	May lead to destruction of healthy urchins		Giant Giant Kelp Restoration Project (G2KR) - applies to Ed Ricketts, PG Gardens, and Carmel Bay SMCAs, and will include suggestion for buoys on sites		Other	
Monterey	Lovers Point- Julia Platt State Marine Reserve	No Take	Fishing off Lovers Point rocks, undersize and immature fish, spearfishers and fishing boats catch halibut, illegal tidepool take; confusion around northern boundary line	Move southern boundary line so Lovers Point is either all in or all out (with preference for all in reserve)	No	Disagreement about where to move line	Boundary marker or fishing/no fishing arrow sign needed if boundary doesn't change			Boundary Change	
Monterey	Lovers Point- Julia Platt State Marine Reserve	No Take		Move southern boundary to end of Lovers Point, splitting point equally in half	Yes	Fishing/No fishing arrow signs would make sense/be more accurate	Fishing/no fishing arrow sign needed at Lovers Point			Boundary Change	
Monterey	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	Spearfishing violations, especially from kayaks and dinghies; illegal take of scallops and crustaceans; undersize and immature fish taken Point Pinos is key oystercatcher nesting habitat	Move both boundary lines so Lovers Point and Point Pinos are all out of SMCA and in SMRs because both are key oystercatcher nesting sites	No	Rock outcropping and buoy at Point Pinos (southern boundary) are currently good boundary indicators for boaters				Boundary Change	
Monterey	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand		Move northern boundary to end of Lovers Point	Yes	Fishing/No fishing arrow signs would make sense/be more accurate	Fishing/no fishing arrow sign needed at Lovers Point and Point Pinos			Boundary Change	
Monterey	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	New regulations may restrict fishing for rockfish from boat close to shore after October 1	Change to SMR, join with Lovers Point SMR	Maybe	No strong opposition but no fishing reps present		Giant Giant Kelp Restoration Project (G2KR)		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from SMCA to SMR
Monterey	Asilomar State Marine Reserve	No Take	Onshore and offshore fishing common, hook and line from nooks and crannies; harmful tidepooling, tidepool take; wildlife disturbance common Northern boundary at Point Pinos is confusing, splits rocks in half	No change	Yes		Fishing/No Fishing arrow signs needed at Point Pinos				
Monterey	Carmel Pinnacles State Marine Reserve	No Take	Offshore violations common	No change	Yes						
Monterey	Carmel Bay State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	Intertidal take common, including abalone and mussels. Golf balls go into MPA and are not collected. Some kelp take at Stillwater Cove	No change	Yes		Work with Pebble Beach on reducing golf ball litter either through requiring biodegradable balls at key holes or ensuring balls are collected by divers				
Monterey	Point Lobos State Marine Reserve	No Take	Take occurs. Boundaries are confusing	No change	Yes						

Monterey	Point Lobos State Marine Reserve	No Take		Allow restoration/urchin culling	No	Difficult for enforcement/interpretation in no-take area		Giant Kelp Restoration Project (G2KR)		Other	
Monterey	Point Lobos State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of salmon and albacore and the commercial take of salmon, albacore, and spot prawn is allowed		No change	Yes						
Monterey	Point Sur State Marine Reserve	No Take	Violations common between SMR and SMCA, southern corner is hard to enforce. Abalone case reported	Encompass the whole coastline of Point Sur in MPA	No	Keep boundaries as is				Boundary Change	
Monterey	Point Sur State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore		Add bluefin tuna to list of species allowed for take	No	Lessens protection				Take Allowance Change	
Monterey	Big Creek State Marine Reserve	No Take	L-shape of SMR within SMCA is confusing	No change	Yes						
Monterey	Big Creek State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of salmon and albacore. Commercial take of salmon, albacore	Potential unlawful fishing off Marine Lab	No change	Yes						
San Luis Obispo	Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve	No take	Missing signs. Onshore fishing violations (poaching mussels at Point Sierra Nevada). Wildlife disturbance. Extreme angle makes kayak fishers look like they are fishing in SMR	No change	Yes		Use boundary images on signs to help reference angle at pullout.				
San Luis Obispo	Piedras Blancas State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore	Occasional poaching observed. Fishing for rockfish. No albacore, limited salmon observed by fishers/wardens	No change	Yes						
San Luis Obispo	Cambria State Marine Conservation Area	All recreational take is allowed	Harmful tidepooling occurring throughout MPA. Difficult to message good tidepooler rules without designated protections	Add tidepool protection language similar to Crystal Cove and Dana Point SMCA	Yes	Would make it easier to message about responsible tidepooling and reduce inadvertent take	Tools for existing SP tidepool docent program needed here, such as Natural Bridges State Park tidepool cart	State Parks pending review; Environment California?		Take Allowance Change	
San Luis Obispo	Cambria State Marine Conservation Area	All recreational take is allowed	Boundary between Cambria SMCA and White Rock SMCA is confusing, leading to accidental poaching by kayak fishers putting in at boundary at Wedgewood	Shift White Rock SMCA northern boundary to end of neighborhood at Lampton Park. Shift southern boundary south 1/2 mile accordingly to not lose any protection and cover some kelp habitat	Yes	May be some pushback from commercial live rockfish fishery for southern shift but recreational anglers in support		Environment California?		Boundary Change	
San Luis Obispo	Cambria State Marine Conservation Area	All recreational take is allowed	No commercial take allowed but there is an existing kelp lease?	Remove kelp lease 209 OR clarify that lease holder cannot harvest within Cambria SMCA	Yes	Commercial harvest of kelp is incompatible with MPA regulations that allow recreational take only		Environment California?		Other	

San Luis Obispo	White Rock State Marine Conservation Area	Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp with valid lease	Boundary between Cambria SMCA and White Rock SMCA is confusing, leading to accidental poaching of kayak fishers putting in at boundary at Wedgewood	Shift White Rock SMCA northern boundary to end of neighborhood at Lampton Park. Shift southern boundary south 1/2 mile accordingly to not lose any protection	Yes	May be some pushback from commercial live rockfish fishery for southern shift but recreational anglers in support		Environment California?		Boundary Change	
San Luis Obispo	White Rock State Marine Conservation Area	Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp with valid lease		Prohibit commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp with valid lease and change to an SMR	Yes	Original intent was a reserve but there was existing kelp lease. Current lease holder is fine with relinquishing/ disallowing take of kelp		Environment California?		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from SMCA to SMR
San Luis Obispo	Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area	Waterfowl hunting allowed. Recreational take of finfish north of line at Pasadena Point. Aquaculture allowed	Poaching occurs at southern side that does not allow take of finfish. Line is confusing and unclear on maps and outreach materials. Illegal invertebrate take (e.g., sea stars at jetty, ghost shrimp at Windy Cove). Signs needed at blue pier	Shift no fishing boundary 150 yds north to public access at Pasadena Park (between Santa Ysabel and Baywood Way)	Yes	Makes it easier for county to manage and educate more accurately about fishing/no fishing line	Signs needed, especially at Blue Pier. County can install sign at Pasadena Park			Boundary Change	
San Luis Obispo	Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area	Waterfowl hunting allowed. Recreational take of finfish north of line at Pasadena Point. Aquaculture allowed	Hunting "within" a bird sanctuary (City of Morro Bay) is confusing, safety concerns for paddlers with increased visitors who are unaware hunting is allowed. Concern about safety issues around hunting around neighborhoods. Trampling of plants occur on shoreline in Baywood Park.	No change to regulations at this time	Yes	Important hunting area. Confusion should be addressed through outreach	Overlay hunting map on SMRMA for outreach purposes Mixed message signs/more education needed about estuary impacts/erosion: "tread lightly" in Los Osos				
San Luis Obispo	Morro Bay State Marine Reserve	No Take	Some hunting violations, hugging line; Boardwalks work to protect birds! Might be good to have one at Baywood Park at 1st Street	No change (reluctantly)	Yes	Some desire to extend SMR west and into bottom part of bay beneath Baywood Peninsula but do not want to impede on aquaculture	More education and outreach needed				
San Luis Obispo	Point Buchon State Marine Reserve	No Take	Regular poaching offshore, trolling, and stopping to drop a line in water. Busiest MPA in SLO, most violations observed/cited	Move northern boundary to actual Point Buchon	Yes	Clearer boundary for fishers coming from Port San Luis	Boundary marker needed here. Make "flagpole" more visible (hang flag?) if boundary doesn't change	State Parks pending review		Boundary Change	
San Luis Obispo	Point Buchon State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore allowed	Regular poaching, rockfish and lingcod, maybe some squid boats?	No change	Yes						

Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Vandenberg SMR	No Take	Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) allows active-duty officers, their dependents/families, and guests to fish off Vandenberg. Leads to confusion since officially a no-take area. Regulations should match take allowed. Petition has been submitted by City of Lompoc to allow shore fishing at Surf Beach	Change designation to SMCA that allows hook and line for finfish from shore only	Yes	Would increase actual protection due to past 5 Base Commanders' decision to allow all legal take on base and would address equity concerns by allowing access for non-military at Surf Beach		Greg Helms to propose intertidal ribbon		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from SMR to SMCA
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Vandenberg SMR	No Take		Reevaluate MOA with VSFB that is being interpreted as allowing for full military recreational take in a no-take SMR	No, not needed if designation is changed to SMCA	Vandenberg conservation officer will enforce updated take regs on military personnel				Other	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Point Conception SMR	No Take	Recent groundfish case. Difficult for enforcement to access from land through Dangermond Preserve. M2 radar at Pt. Conception shows a lot of boating activity, may	No change	Yes		Provide continued support for M2 radar with ground truthing and continued coordination/info sharing between agencies				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Kashlayit SMCA	Rec take of finfish, invertebrates (except rock scallops and mussels) and giant kelp by hand harvest. Santa Ynez band of Chumash exempt	Illegal and dangerous access down the bluffs on Gaviota. Fishing without a license. Access issues for pier fishers with Gaviota pier closed. Difficult to interpret	Reword regulations for clarity of outreach: "Recreational take of finfish, invertebrates, and giant kelp allowed"	Yes	Simpler regulations will make outreach easier, increasing compliance, with minimal impacts to the resources	Have FGC/State push for pier repair at Gaviota Pier (SB County/State Parks) for safety/access reasons	State Parks pending review/Greg Helms		Language Change	Section 100 change
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Naples SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp by hand or mechanical harvest. Santa Ynez Band of Chumash exempt	Hook and line fishing and access issues occur here, and most days there are at least two vehicles for fishing or surfing parked near Naples. Impact to hook and line fishers	Add hook and line to allowed method of take	No	Numbers/impact/level of take different between hook and line and spearfishing. Would drastically reduce protection				Take Allowance Change	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Campus Point No-Take SMCA	No Take	Onshore and offshore hook and line fishing continues to be observed	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR		Greg Helms		Other	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Goleta Slough No-Take SMCA	No Take	Trespassing (e.g., illegal swimming, dogs). People occasionally use nets to fish here and/or fish off bridges at the finger boundaries of the slough. Dumping of sediment still occurs in Goleta Bay	Consider water quality designation for Goleta Bay	Yes	Goleta Bay is between two MPAs and there is a need to address impacts of sediment dumping to subsistence fishers off Goleta Pier		Greg Helms		Other	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Goleta Slough No-Take SMCA	No Take		Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR		Greg Helms		Other	

Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Richardson Rock SFMR	No Take		No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	San Miguel Island Special Closure	Allowance for sea urchin divers between Castle Rock and Judith Rock SMR western boundary (Point Bennet) between 3/15-4/30 and 10/1-12/15.	Commercial urchin poaching. Purpose to reduce disturbance to pinniped populations. Is closure still necessary? Point Bennet has one of the largest pinniped (six species) rookeries on the West Coast of North America	Reevaluate need for special closure (SC); Clean up language to address confusion between 300 yards describing SC and 100 yards keeping boats from whole Island 102 A.1.(a)	Yes		M2 radar at NMFS marine mammal station	Greg Helms		Language Change	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Harris Point SFMR	No Take	CDFW sees some fishers that are taking from shore, although it is not common	No change	Yes		Use land-based range markers (e.g., O & K) to mark boundaries				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Judith Rock SFMR	No Take		No change	Yes		Use land-based range markers (e.g., O & K) to mark boundaries				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Carrington Point SMR	No Take	Confusing angle relative to pier	No change	Yes	NPS outreach on angle has been good	More permanent boundary markers/signage is needed				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Skunk Point SMR	No Take	Difficult to determine how far offshore boats are (in or out)	No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	South Point SFMR	No Take		No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Painted Cave SMCA	Rec take of spiny lobster and pelagic finfish	People are taking non-pelagic fish species, rockfish, California sheephead, and live fish	No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Gull Island SFMR	No Take		Have state discuss with NMS changing federal area to FMCA to allow for take of pelagics	No	More data/justification needed				Take Allowance Change	Yes, would turn federal MRs into federal MCAs. No consensus
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Scorpion SFMR	No Take	Fishing/take in little coves at eastern boundaries. Lobster traps	No change	Yes		More on-island enforcement presence needed				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Anacapa Island Special Closure	No net or trap may be used in waters less than 20 feet deep. Brown Pelican closure from Portuguese Rock to Frenchy's Cove 1/1-10/31	Brown pelican area makes it difficult for Island Packers and others to land legally at Frenchy's	Add exemption to allow access/landing Frenchy's Cove	Yes	Intent was to allow landing at Frenchy's Cove but aligning brown pelican closure with SMR/SMCA boundary closed off access to safe landing		Greg Helms		Allowed Activity Change	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Anacapa Island Special Closure	No net or trap may be used in waters less than 20 feet deep. Brown Pelican closure from Portuguese Rock to Frenchy's Cove 1/1-10/32	Depth hard to enforce due to sheer drop off from island	Reassess need for Special Closure and consider removing if not justified	Yes	May only need brown pelican closure rather than full island special closure to protect seabirds		Greg Helms		Allowed Activity Change	Yes, would remove special closure

Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Anacapa Island SFMCA	Rec take of spiny lobster and pelagic finfish. Commercial take of spiny lobster. Santa Ynez Band of Chumash exempt	Confusion regarding what "pelagic" means may lead to unlawful take	No change	Yes		Outreach needed around pelagics				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Anacapa Island SFMR	No Take	Violations for unlawful take	No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Footprint SFMR	No Take	Lots of violations. Boats drift in because they cannot anchor	Have state discuss with NMS changing federal area to FMCA to allow for take of pelagics	No	More data/justification needed				Take Allowance Change	Yes, would turn federal MRs into federal MCAs. No consensus
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Begg Rock SMR	No Take	The MPA violations here are commercial and come from experienced	No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Santa Barbara Island SFMR	No Take	Osborne Bank. CPFV/commercial lobster poaching. Overlapping jurisdictions	Have state discuss with NMS changing federal area to FMCA to allow for take of pelagics	No	More data/justification needed	M2 radar needed to monitor remote MPA			Take Allowance Change	Yes, would turn federal MRs into federal MCAs. No consensus
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Dume SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat. Santa Ynez band exempt	Frequent noncompliance with MPAs and limited enforcement	Delete allowance for commercial take of Swordfish by harpoon	Yes	Swordfish fishing does not occur that close to shore	Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed	State Parks pending review; Heal the Bay		Take Allowance Change	
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Dume SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat. Santa Ynez band exempt		Allow hook and line fishing for allowed method of take of white seabass and pelagic finfish	No	Lessening of protection/unclear impacts				Take Allowance Change	
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Dume SMR	No Take	Angle of eastern boundary is confusing/extends due west and is close to shore	No change	Yes		Use of surveyed boundary images in outreach can help address confusion with eastern boundary at Paradise Cove				
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Vicente No-Take SMCA	No Take	Frequent noncompliance with MPAs and limited enforcement	No change	Yes		Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed				
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Vicente No-Take SMCA	No Take	Confusion of significance of purple designation	Keep allowance for maintenance but change color from purple to red for ease of public interpretation	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	

Los Angeles (Mainland)	Abalone Cove SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish; and market squid by hand-held dip net. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat	Harmful tidepooling impacts/take from tidepools. Frequent noncompliance with MPAs and limited enforcement	Delete allowance for commercial take of swordfish by harpoon	Yes	Swordfish fishing does not occur that close to shore	Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed	Heal the Bay		Take Allowance Change	
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Abalone Cove SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish; and market squid by hand-held dip net. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat		Allow hook and line fishing for allowed method of take of white seabass and pelagic finfish	No	Lessening of protection/unclear impacts				Take Allowance Change	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Arrow Point to Lion Head Point SMCA	All rec and commercial take allowed. Take of invertebrates prohibited	Poaching lobster and abalone. Hoop nets. Difficult to identify 1,000 feet from shore at Indian/Endemic Rock	No change	Yes		Need for a locally managed (research) buoy to mark 1,000 feet point				
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Blue Cavern Onshore No-Take SMCA	No Take. No anchor area in original refuge boundaries	Fishing/using hoop nets close to shore at Big Fisherman Cove. Poaching at Yellowtail Point and Bird Rock; Confusion around no anchor zone	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes, only if all current maintenance/access activities are still allowed	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR	Need for some boundary marker at Yellowtail Point. MPA Watch transect would help identify use/ compliance issues here			Other	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA	Rec take of pelagic finfish by hook and line and spearfishing and white seabass by spearfishing and market squid by hand held dip net. Commercial take of pelagic finfish by hook and line and swordfish by harpoon	Take via illegal gear types	No change	Yes						
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Long Point SMR	No Take	Trolling through MPA occurs. Misconception that MPA is only close to shore. Rental boats go past Long Point and fish	Make a distance from shore rather than lat/long for ease of outreach. Cut off corner and flip and move west (offshore) to maintain size	Yes	Clearer outreach to trollers to stay certain distance from shore, IF maintains size				Boundary Change	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Lover's Cove SMCA	Rec take by hook and line from the Cabrillo Mole is allowed. Feeding fish allowed	Fishing from shore at the ramp near the Mole. Angle is difficult at eastern boundary. Food torpedoes are shot from tourist subs to attract fish to windows	Remove allowance for feeding of fish	Yes	Against intent of MLPA, affecting behavior of fish/habitat; public safety issue as fish become more aggressive and bite				Allowed Activity Change	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Casino Point No-Take SMCA	No Take. Feeding fish allowed	Boundaries don't match dive park buoys. Feeding fish may be incompatible use. 40-50' depth at MPA line.	Remove allowance for feeding of fish.	Yes	Against intent of MLPA, affecting behavior of fish/habitat; public safety issue as fish become more aggressive and bite	Might need to utilize a weaning off process for fish used to being fed			Allowed Activity Change	

Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Casino Point No-Take SMCA	No Take. Feeding fish allowed		Change purple to red for outreach purposes for outreach	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Farnsworth Onshore SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish; marline, tunas and dorado by trolling and market squid by hand held dip net. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon, coastal pelagics by roundhaul net, brail gear and light boat	More difficult to assess whether poaching is occurring on the backside. Challenging/confusing for fishers	No change	Yes				More outreach to fishers needed on why deep habitat/fish are protected here		
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Farnsworth Offshore SMCA	Rec take of pelagic finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing; white seabass by spearfishing; marlin, tunas and dorado by trolling and market squid by hand held dip net. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon, coastal pelagics by roundhaul net, brail gear and light boat	CPFVs (party boats) are seen illegally fishing in Farnsworth Offshore SMCA, moving out if they see the CDFW patrol boat approaching. Regs restricting take of rockfish can be confusing for fishers/challenging to prove rockfish on board was taken outside	No change	Yes						
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Cat Harbor SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing, market squid by hook and line, and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea cucumbers by diving only and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Aquaculture of finfish	Some take of undersized fish	No change	Yes						
Orange	Bolsa Bay SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line from shore in designated areas only	Confusion between Bolsa Bay and Bolsa Chica Basin MPAs	Potentially combine Bolsa Bay with Bolsa Chica Basin MPAs?	No	State Lands requirement to have fishing				Boundary Change	Yes, would change from SMCA to SMR. No consensus
Orange	Bolsa Chica Basin No-Take SMCA	No Take. Allows for maintenance of artificial structures	Water management infrastructure is failing - needs management and repairs. Shoaling and potential closing of inlet - need cost effective alternative to dredging and \$ to implement. Could ultimately change boundaries of MPAs	MPA should cover all waters in ecological reserve. Move northeastern boundary to Graham	Yes	Makes enforcement easier so CDFW can cite for unlawful fishing using 632 instead of no trespassing		OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Boundary Change	
Orange	Bolsa Chica Basin No-Take SMCA	No Take. Allows for maintenance of artificial structures	Confusion between Bolsa Bay and Bolsa Chica Basin MPA regulations and whether take is allowed. Bridge inconsistency	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR		OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Other	

Orange	Upper Newport Bay SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line from shore in designated areas only	Ecological Reserve and MPA overlapping jurisdiction. Fishing from floats by PCH bridge and using gill nets at Jamboree	No change	Yes		Harbor and estuary signs needed at Newport Dunes. Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed				
Orange	Crystal Cove SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear and light boat	Harmful tidepooling and undersized lobster. Nighttime poaching. Angle is difficult at southern boundary	Better define tidepool definition to encompass rocky intertidal habitat	Yes	"Area encompassing the rocky pools" is confusing, makes it sounds like it is only the pools, not intertidal zone when dry	Night vision for State Parks officers to address nighttime poaching	State Parks pending review; OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Language Change	
Orange	Crystal Cove SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear and light boat		Add "non-living, geological or cultural" marine resource to tidepool take prohibition for consistency with 632(a)1(C)	Yes	Clarifies tidepool protections to include rocks and shells		State Parks pending review; OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Language Change	
Orange	Laguna Beach SMR	No Take	Poaching in gated/private communities; angle is difficult at northern boundary	No change	Yes		More enforcement needed in private community. Bring back community scientist/anglers (i.e., CCFRP) to OC				
Orange	Laguna Beach No-Take SMCA	No Take. Maintenance allowed	Angle is difficult at southern boundary	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR	Produce map that has layer that shows allowed maintenance/artificial structures and scientific take	OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Other	
Orange	Dana Point SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear and light boat. Tidepools protected	Fishing without a license. Night poaching at 3 Arch. Take of limpets at north end. Shift in fishing pressure. Angle is difficult at southern boundary. Harmful tidepooling	Add "non-living, geological or cultural" marine resource to tidepool take prohibition for consistency with 632(a)1(C)	Yes	Clarifies tidepool protections to include rocks and shells		OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Language Change	
Orange	Dana Point SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear and light boat. Tidepools protected		Better define tidepool definition to encompass rocky intertidal habitat or utilize a different term.	Yes	Tidepools are specific to pools but intertidal habitats protected can be free of pools in some cases. "Area encompassing the rocky pools" is unclear whether all rocky intertidal habitat is included here.		OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Language Change	
San Diego	Batiqitos Lagoon No-Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited	Confusion between ecological reserve regulations west of 5 and MPA regulations east of 5	Expand SMCA west of I-5 bridge to encompass all of ecological reserve	No	Expands MPA size, unclear on impacts to recreational fishing				Boundary Change	

San Diego	Batiquitos Lagoon No-Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited		Change to blue SMCA with designated fishing areas	Maybe	If does not reduce fishing opportunities under I-5 and 101 bridges, or lessen existing protections				Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from No-Take SMCA to SMCA
San Diego	Batiquitos Lagoon No-Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited		Change purple to red for outreach purposes if boundaries remain the same	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	
San Diego	Swami's SMCA	Rec take by hook and line from shore and rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish	Harmful tidepooling, especially at Seaside reef. Enforcement for take of lobster is hard at southern boundary since it splits 2 jurisdictions and the reef (hard to know where they are actually taking from and who is responsible for enforcing what.)	Move southern boundary to jurisdictional boundary between State Parks and City of Solana Beach for full tidepool protection of reef	No	Increases size of MPA, reducing fishing access, and may impact take of halibut				Boundary Change	
San Diego	Swami's SMCA	Rec take by hook and line from shore and rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish		Shift entire shape south (lifeguard tower to state/Solana Beach line to cover tidepool on south side)	Yes	Compromise. Keeps same size MPA but covers impacted tidepool area on southern boundary. Lifeguard tower clear boundary at north end		State Parks pending review; Wildcoast		Boundary Change	
San Diego	San Elijo Lagoon No-Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited	Lots of people fishing at entrance to San Elijo lagoon under bridge and in channel	Move boundary to west side of the bridge (prohibiting fishing under the bridge) as long as accommodations are allowed for dredging	Yes	Signs are currently posted on west side of bridge to prohibit people from entering the San Elijo Lagoon. Makes outreach clearer		State Parks pending review; Wildcoast		Boundary Change	
San Diego	San Elijo Lagoon No-Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited		Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	
San Diego	San Dieguito Lagoon SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line from shore. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited	Confusion between ecological reserve boundaries and regulations and MPA boundaries and regulations. Speculation that extent of water has changed since restoration. Original intent of 632 was to align with 630 in overlapping waters. Non-MPA areas are more restrictive which leads to confusion	Have MPA cover all water within ecological reserve.	Need more information	Check with Joint Power authority because would lessen protections if SMCA (that allows fishing) is expanded to all state waters	Sea level rise impacts should be considered			Boundary Change	
San Diego	San Diego-Scripps Coastal SMCA	Rec take of coastal pelagic species, except market squid, by hook and line only	Harmful tidepooling. People using gear types for fishing for species other than coastal pelagics but gear type cannot assume intent. Makes enforcement difficult. Also safety concerns with surf casters into high use swim/surf area	Add, "except from shore" to prohibit surf hook and line	Yes	Surf fishing from shore causes safety concerns (hooks getting caught on surfers/swimmers). Still allows kayakers to fish for bait fish on way out, which was original intent				Take Allowance Change	

San Diego	Matlahuayl SMR	No Take	Harmful tidepooling. Kayak fishing. Caves are being defaced/graffitied	Add place name (La Jolla) to traditional Kumeyaay name (Matlahuayl)	No	Keep Kumeyaay name only for Tribal acknowledgement. Would also add confusion between other La Jolla MPAs	More focused patrols on caves in La Jolla to address littering/defacement of MPA			Language Change	
San Diego	South La Jolla SMR	No Take	Most highly cited MPA. Poaching of lobster and offshore fishing. Harmful tidepooling. Challenges of parking and access (coastline related challenges due to sea level rise, climate disturbance)	No change	Yes	Focus on local management/outreach/enforcement	Need for more focus on tidepools (outreach/enforcement). More staff for allied agencies to help enforce. Encourage city to maintain safe accessways and deal with coastal erosion problems. More education on marine mammal disturbance				
San Diego	South La Jolla SMCA	Rec take of pelagic finfish by hook and line only		No change	Yes						
San Diego	Famosa Slough No Take SMCA	No Take	Homeless encampments. Construction run-off. Dogs and cats disturbing birds	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	
San Diego	Cabrillo SMR	No Take	Harmful tidepooling. Offshore boats but NPS unable to contact other than through megaphone	Work with Kumeyaay to rename MPA to traditional Kumeyaay name	Yes	Kumeyaay name exists for this location. Need to confirm spelling	Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed			Language Change	
San Diego	Tijuana River Estuary SMCA	Rec take of coastal pelagic species, except market squid, by hand held dip net. Commercial take of coastal pelagics, except market squid by round haul net	Difficult take regulations to interpret in the field and take by hand held dip net not really occurring, per Imperial Beach lifeguards	No change							

Cell: K138

Note: was not sure about this categorization

-MPA Collaborative



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
CALIFORNIA



February 8, 2024

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor,
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: Discussion Item 10 - Regulation change petitions (marine)

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Zavaleta & Commissioners,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the numerous petitions under consideration at the February meeting of the California Fish & Game Commission, and we offer the perspective of the many hundred thousand supporters of our organizations to the Commission. We express grave concerns regarding several of the proposals to eliminate fishing access along large stretches of the California coast and argue that many of the petitions lack adequate scientific support and documentation to substantiate their positions.

The Decadal Management Review (DMR) of the Marine Protected Area Network (MPA) has offered important insights for MPA managers to help shape the adaptive management of MPA regulations, including promising research that MPAs may increase biomass and provide resiliency against the impacts of a changing climate for some species. The intent of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and the stewardship of our coastal resources are of paramount importance to California's heritage. However, these laudable goals and conservation benchmarks should not preclude access to harvest coastal foods where state and federal fisheries managers have demonstrated robust and resilient fish stocks without any current threat of overfishing, nor for those species where targeted fishing and active management would benefit the overall ecosystem balance.

There are numerous, seemingly well-intentioned petitions currently before the Fish & Game Commission that seek to preserve California's coastal waters citing anthropogenic impacts to biodiversity and ecosystems such as pollution, rising sea temperatures, disease, development and overfishing. While we support the intent to safeguard our fish stocks, biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity, we strongly disagree with the all-or-nothing approach adopted by many of the petitioners who proffer the wholesale elimination of fishing access without adequate scientific rationale or the acknowledgement of regulatory mechanisms already in place such as those established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act working through the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Fish & Game Commission, and the additional state/federal laws and agencies dedicated to this task. Simply put, many of the petitions referenced below seek to advance preservation at all costs, pushing for wholesale closures that circumvent the regulatory processes already in place, ultimately bludgeoning access for the diverse angling communities that have revered these coastal traditions for generations.

Anglers and consumptive users will often be the first and loudest voices to advocate for restrictions or even closures to ensure the sustainability of a fishery, as evidenced by the numerous fishing groups and organizations advocating for the closure of the 2023 salmon season following the data and dismal projections provided by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council and CDFW. However, a Californian

constitutional right to fish seems to stand in conflict with the presumption that restriction of access is permissible where there is a lack of scientific evidence or data to justify the closure. Section 1, Article 25 of the California Constitution states, “the people shall have the right to fish upon and from the public lands of the State and in the waters thereof,” and the courts in *re Quinn* (1973) defined “public lands of the state” referenced in this article to include “access to fish in the inland streams and coastal waters of the state.”

Shore fishing, diving/spearfishing, kayak/boat fishing and coastal gathering are low impact activities that reflect the broad spectrum of California’s diverse community and constitute a valuable resource for individuals across the economic divide to access nature and provide food for their families. We encourage the Commission and MPA managers to consider the numerous communities that enjoy the state’s many sustainable food resources when considering protections and recommendations that might unnecessarily exclude these groups. We feel that these considerations are in line with the California Natural Resources Agency’s Outdoors for All initiative and its commitment in the Pathways to 30x30 document to “implement projects that do no further harm or pose unintended consequences to historically marginalized communities.”¹ Specifically, we wish to highlight this issue with regards to the expansion of California’s MPA network which restricts shore-based diving, foraging, and fishing access for all Californians – especially historically marginalized communities, communities of color and Native American tribes. From California’s Constitutional Right to Fish:

Anglers from historically marginalized communities may be less able to travel to fishing locations and are more likely to require shore access, as opposed to access from a boat. Anglers in communities like this need accessible shore-fishing, particularly given the importance of subsistence fishing in poorer communities. Moreover, fishing opportunities offer physical and psychological benefits to disadvantaged communities, not just access to fish as food.²

It is within this context that we urge the Commission to take the following actions with regards to the petitions they have received.

Petition 2023-14MPA: *Allow commercial take of red sea urchins in nine state marine conservation areas (SMCAs)*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-15MPA: *Reclassify three northern Channel Islands state marine reserves (SMRs) to SMCAs and allow take of highly migratory species, pelagic finfish, and/or coastal pelagic finfish*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation, but are encouraged by the proposal and the potential opportunity to gather more data on limited take MPAs and long-term MPA monitoring at the Channels Islands.

¹ https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/30-by-30/Final_Pathwaysto30x30_042022_508.pdf

² Coats, Francis, and Karrigan Bork. “CALIFORNIA’S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO FISH.” *Environmental Law*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1085–147. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48647570>. Accessed 22 Mar. 2023.

Petition 2023-16MPA: *Reclassify Stewarts Point and Bodega Head SMRs to SMCAs and allow commercial take of salmon.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-18MPA: *Modify allowed uses for four marine protected areas (MPAs) in Santa Barbara Channel and eliminate two special closures.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-19MPA: *Designate new "Chitqawi" SMCA near Morro Bay for California-Chumash co-management*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-20MPA: *Reclassify and rename Point Buchon SMR to "Chumash SMCA" for co-management with tribal take exemption.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-21MPA: *Modify Pyramid Point SMCA to remove recreational take of surf smelt and allow tribal take exemption for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-22MPA: *Define "rocky intertidal zone," add research, monitoring, restoration and education allowance, and clarify protections in several Orange County MPAs.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-23MPA: *Reclassify three SMCAs to SMRs, designate one new SMR in Monterey, and make various changes related to kelp restoration.*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

While the petitioner's intent to restore kelp forests and ecosystem integrity at tankers reef and in the surrounding waters is laudable, this broadly proscriptive petition would unnecessarily restrict access for anglers where there is no clear scientific rationale. In fact, the petitioner submitted a very similar petition seeking to close access for groundfish along a large stretch of the coast in this region in 2023 which the Department of Fish & Wildlife rejected citing a lack of scientific evidence to support the claim. We support the ongoing efforts to restore kelp forests through urchin culling and other means, however we oppose reclassifying these SMCAs to SMRs and the establishment of a new SMR in Monterey.

Petition 2023-24MPA: *Expand Laguna Beach no-take SMCA southward to border of City of Laguna Beach and modify Dana Point SMCA boundaries*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

We oppose this petition on the basis that it lacks scientific documentation or justification to eliminate fishing access in the proposed area. The petitioner argues primarily for administrative ease that the no-take closure be extended to the edge of city limits. During the implementation of the MLPA, MPAs were sited utilizing careful selection criteria based on habitat type, proximity from other MPAs, impact to communities and more. The petitioner argues that all beaches within the City of Laguna Beach should be no-take MPAs in order to streamline enforcement and that homeowners “feel that it is not equitable to have only the north and central beaches protected.” It should be noted that the petitioner also states clearly in the Economic or Fiscal Impact section of the petition that “estimated resident property values gain an increase of 20% from proximity to a fully protected MPA” which may explain more robust support from the city and homeowners.

The petitioner also cites kelp forest health as justification for eliminating fishing access, however the 100 + page report included with the petition doesn't reference fishing pressure or boat activity with regards to kelp forest health and instead focuses on water temperature, nutrients, wave height, upwelling, rainfall and other stressors. As such, we recommend the Commission deny this petition since there is no scientific documentation to support its claims, and it would only negatively impact anglers who would be forced to travel further to reach fishing grounds.

Petition 2023-27MPA: *Reclassify a portion or all of Anacapa SMCA to an SMR to protect eelgrass*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation. We recognize the value of eelgrass beds for overall ecosystem health and habitat; however, it should be noted that many recreational anglers who target pelagic fish do not anchor and instead prefer to drift fish or troll instead which would have zero impact on the bottom habitat and eelgrass.

Petition 2023-28MPA: *Designate a new SMR at Point Sal, or designate as an SMCA with a tribal take exemption based on tribal consultation*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

While the petitioner takes time to identify the important habitat types, larval transport zones, and cultural significance of the Point Sal area, and they reference potential threats to the region from coastal development and industry, they fail to elaborate in any substantive way why fishing access should be removed from this wild and iconic central coast fishing destination. The petitioner states: “current [commercial] fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara.” They also admit that they have no data or analysis with regards to recreational fishing and state, “our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.”

A limited google search of “Point Sal fishing” also uncovers a large number of recreational fishing blogs and videos detailing the remote and adventurous hike to fish this area from a diverse population of anglers. In 2023 one blogger wrote, “had a great time hiking miles and miles and miles to fish Point Sal with Martin Mansera from Mansera Outdoors... It's such a remote location and so difficult to access, it

makes for a really rad adventure.” Recreational fishing trips to the area by boat are also common, and fishing is noted in nearly every travel guide or city/county website that talks about visiting Point Sal.

Regarding access and disadvantaged communities, the petitioner writes, “the California Environmental Protection Agency identifies the adjacent city of Guadalupe as “disadvantaged” under CA Senate Bill 535, and their synthesis of environmental and socioeconomic indicators further reveals that Guadalupe – alongside Santa Maria and Lompoc – are underprivileged communities that experience significant cumulative impacts from pollution. Given these communities’ close proximity to Point Sal, implementing an SMR at the proposed site could enhance access for disadvantaged populations to valuable coastal resources and fishing opportunities.”

To justify this confounding claim that removing fishing access could somehow *enhance fishing opportunities* for disadvantaged communities, the petitioner cites a study of commercial lobster fishing and the concept of “spillover.” They write, “California’s MPAs have been shown to increase the biomass of fishery-targeted species and promote “spillover” into nearby coastal areas, benefitting nearby fishing grounds.”

Spillover and the positive impacts to fisheries located in waters adjacent to MPAs are often referenced in association with the MPA network, and the limited, initial science has demonstrated some positive correlations with spillover of invertebrates like lobsters to adjacent fishing grounds in select study areas and commercial fishing for tuna in Hawaii. However, there remains an opportunity to further study this hypothesis and to promote scientific research that successfully documents spillover of targeted finfish across the MPA network in California. Some data from MPA monitoring along the Central California Coast indicated limited evidence of spillover from targeted finfish that were tagged and recaptured at a later point during the study period as evidenced from the Starr et al study: Variation in Responses of Fishes across Multiple Reserves within a Network of Marine Protected Areas in Temperate Waters:

As of July 2014, a total of 251 individual tag recaptures have been reported (Table 8). Tagged fishes were recaptured by commercial and recreational hook-and-line fishermen, commercial trap fishermen, SCUBA divers, and during our fishing surveys. Of all the tagged fishes recapture and reported, 71% were recaptured in the same site and grid cell as they were released, and 22% of recaptured fishes were caught within the same site but outside the original grid cell where they were released. Only 18 fish, or 7% of the recaptured fishes, were recaptured beyond the boundaries of the MPA or REF site in which they were released. The mean net distance moved by eight of nine species recaptured was less than half the length of the MPAs we studied.³

While we do not seek to draw conclusions regarding the overall merits of spillover to adjacent fisheries from the results of one study, we do encourage additional research to evaluate the impacts that MPAs have on local fisheries and fisheries as a whole, especially within the context of varied siting and disparate habitat types evidenced across the MPA network. As the Forcada study indicated, “We conclude that spillover effects are not a universal consequence of siting MPAs in temperate waters and they are related to the distribution of habitats inside and around MPAs.” (Forcada et al., 2009).

Due to the limited scientific understanding of spillover as it relates to the Marine Protected Area Network as a whole, especially with regards to finfish which would be the primary target of recreational shore and

³ 4 Starr RM, Wendt DE, Barnes CL, Marks CI, Malone D, et al. (2015) Variation in Responses of Fishes across Multiple Reserves within a Network of Marine Protected Areas in Temperate Waters. PLOS ONE 10(3): e0118502. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0118502>

boat-based anglers at Point Sal, we disagree with the petitioner's logical assumptions and the argument as a whole. In fact, when considered in the context presented from the *Constitutional Right to Fish* article, the discussion is turned on its head entirely. "Anglers from historically marginalized communities may be less able to travel to fishing locations and are more likely to require shore access, as opposed to access from a boat. Anglers in communities like this need accessible shore-fishing, particularly given the importance of subsistence fishing in poorer communities."⁴

With the two large no-take SMRs located just South of this newly proposed MPA (Vandenberg SMR & Point Conception SMR) and Point Buchon to the North, it would seem the opportunities to fish and forage the coast for residents of Guadalupe, Lompoc and Santa Maria are already few and far between. In fact, in 2022 the City of Lompoc petitioned the Fish & Game Commission to allow for shore-fishing access along a ½ mile stretch of beach within the Vandenberg SMR, citing a lack of access to historic fishing grounds for the local communities.

We share the petitioner's concerns regarding habitat disruption from off-shore energy production and the associated infrastructure, however, we note the likely establishment of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) designation which would effectively curtail any development or offshore energy production in this region. Planning for the CHNMS has included fishing access as a key component of the proposed designation.

As a result, we recommend the Commission deny this petition.

Petition 2023-29MPA: *Designate a new SMCA with a tribal take exemption for and co-management with Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians in Santa Barbara*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

We oppose the petitioner's request to designate a new, no-take SMCA in Carpinteria for several reasons. First, the petitioner argues that spacing and connectivity is a key concern in this location with the distance between the Campus Point and Point Dume SMCAs at 64 nautical miles (nm) instead of the recommended 54 nm to ensure ecological connectivity. When this request is examined within the broader context of MPA siting, it is clear that the target spacing between MPAs could be easily achieved by moving the Campus Point SMCA South or the Point Dume SMCA North, since both are located well-within the recommended 54nm from adjacent MPAs on either side.

Additionally, the petitioner cites the location as important nursery habitat for juvenile great white sharks as justification for establishing a no-take SMR. They write, "Research conducted in the Southern California Bight has found that fisheries bycatch is likely the main source of mortality for JWS." However, the article they cite to support this claim, John F. Benson et. al., discloses that for great white sharks they captured and tagged, "mortality risk was substantially greater off the coast of Baja, Mexico compared with California." Importantly, the research paper also states, "that incidental gillnet capture continues to be the primary source of mortality for juveniles. The lower mortality risk we documented in California waters suggests that full closure of gillnet fishing close to shore is a more effective management strategy than simply banning targeted fishing to reduce mortality risk due to bycatch."⁵

⁴ Coats, Francis, and Karrigan Bork. "CALIFORNIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO FISH." *Environmental Law*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1085–147. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48647570>. Accessed 22 Mar. 2023.

⁵ Benson JF, Jorgensen SJ, O'Sullivan JB, et al. Juvenile survival, competing risks, and spatial variation in mortality risk of a marine apex predator. *J Appl Ecol*. 2018; 55: 2888–2897. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13158>

As the petitioner is undoubtedly aware, gillnet fishing is banned in state waters and therefore the proposed MPA would have no impact on the gillnet fishery or likely the mortality risk to great white sharks.

The petitioner notes the location's popularity with recreational lobster divers and the likely opposition from stakeholders who would oppose the additional loss of access. The mortality risk to great white sharks from the recreational lobster fishery is zero, similar to the risk from spearfishing, yet the petitioner seeks to eliminate access entirely without providing any scientific rationale for the closure. As a result, we request that the Commission deny this petition.

Petition 2023-31MPA: *Reclassify Drakes Estero SMCA to an SMR and combine with Estero de Limantour SMR as a single SMR:*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation but encourage the Commission to maintain access for clamming unless there is a clear threat to the fishery or surrounding ecosystem.

It is worth noting that the National Park Service mentions in their comment letter that the area is now Congressionally Designated Wilderness and that "recreational take of shellfish appears to be very rare, [and] requires long kayak trips in wilderness area." Just because something is difficult doesn't mean it should be illegal.

Petition 2023-32MPA: *Reclassify Duxbury Reef SMCA as an SMR and expand northern and southern boundaries*

We recommend that the Commission deny or refer this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation but emphasize maintaining fishing access for local communities at Duxbury Reef. The vast majority of complaints regarding Duxbury reef are related to enforcement and compliance, rather than a scientific justification for eliminating access. Shore fishing is an important past-time for the diverse communities that comprise the North Bay Area, and removing access to a popular fishing destination should not be justified simply based on the actions of a few bad apples.

Petition 2023-33MPA: *Expand the boundaries of five SMRs and one SMCA, and designate a new SMR off Pleasure Point, in Santa Cruz*

We recommend that this petition be denied or referred to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation due to its broad scope and complexity. The petitioner seeks to enhance protections for kelp forests, but does so with an overly broad brush. Rather than advocating for reducing fishing pressure for predators of kelp grazers, like lobster and sheepshead, the petition advocates for the closure of all fishing, including the harvest of grazer species like urchins that have been documented to decimate kelp forests.

The petitioner argues that eliminating fishing pressure within the proposed MPA areas would somehow bolster kelp populations, but the claim is not well documented by scientific research in this petition. A noteworthy case study, by comparison, is the ongoing Tanker's Reef kelp restoration project, where volunteers have been culling purple urchins within study plots and tracking kelp recovery within the study area and a control site nearby. The initial data for the last three years shows a clear correlation between the removal of purple urchins and kelp recovery in the study plot with no kelp recovery in the adjacent control where urchins were not removed. Fishing is permitted in the Tanker's reef area, however, in adjacent MPA's that have not permitted active restoration and where fishing is not allowed, urchin barons persist and kelp recovery remains minimal.

Kelp forest health and resiliency is a complex and multi-variable equation that can be impacted by numerous factors including water temperature, disease, pollution, algal blooms, wave energy, commercial harvest and more. We support efforts to restore kelp forests across the coast and recognize the role they play in the overall ecosystem health of fisheries, especially the abalone fishery that remains closed until 2026. We urge caution, however where broad fishing closures are enacted in the attempt to solve a problem that requires a more nuanced and carefully crafted multidisciplinary approach.

It should also be noted that the petitioner indicates support for recreational hook and line fishing and spearfishing as an acceptable alternative in several of the MPAs referenced in the petition.

Petition 2023-34MPA: *Reclassify Point Buchon SMCA to an SMR and modify take at Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs to only allow recreational spearfishing.*

We recommend that the Commission deny this petition and we emphasize the substantial impacts to current fishing access. The petitioner argues that since the salmon season was closed in 2023 it will likely be closed in perpetuity, which would justify eliminating salmon and albacore fishing access at the Point Buchon SMCA. Salmon populations often decrease during drought years and can rebound with increased precipitation or water allocation as was the case in 2008 and 2009 when the fishery was closed and then reopened. We are cautiously optimistic that the salmon numbers will once again bounce back following the increased precipitation received over the past two years.

In the draft Pathways to 30x30 document, the CNRA writes: “It should be noted that limited-take State MPAs provide an excellent model for other jurisdictions looking to balance biodiversity conservation with sustainable well-managed commercial and recreational fishing.” We feel that reclassifying the Point Buchon SMCA as an SMR and eliminating fishing in this area would be inappropriate; however, we support any attempts to improve enforcement and compliance with existing regulations.

Furthermore, the proposal to modify take at Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs would disproportionately impact a broad variety and collection of user groups who may not be physically able or inclined to spearfish. For this reason and the lack of concrete scientific data to justify the additional restrictions, we recommend the Commission deny this petition.

Sincerely,

Devin O’Dea
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Wayne Kotow
Coastal Conservation Association California

Keely Hopkins
Congressional Sportsman’s Foundation

Rachel Fischer
National Marine Manufacturers Association

James Stone
Nor-Cal Guides & Sportsman’s Association

Larry Phillips
American Sportfishing Association

February 8, 2024

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor,
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Discussion Item 10 - Regulation change petitions (marine)

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Zavaleta & Commissioners,

As an organization dedicated to ensuring our North American heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting with over 350,000 supporters, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers expresses serious concerns regarding several of the petitions currently before the California Fish & Game Commission that would eliminate fishing access along large stretches of the California coast.

The intent of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and the stewardship of our coastal resources are of paramount importance to California's heritage. However, these laudable goals and conservation benchmarks should not preclude access to harvest coastal foods where state and federal fisheries managers have demonstrated robust and resilient fish stocks without any current threat of overfishing, nor for those species where targeted fishing and active management would benefit the overall ecosystem balance.

There are numerous, seemingly well-intentioned petitions currently before the Fish & Game Commission that seek to preserve California's coastal waters citing anthropogenic impacts to biodiversity and ecosystems, such as pollution, rising sea temperatures, disease, development and fishing. While we support the intent to safeguard our fish stocks, biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity, we strongly disagree with the all-or-nothing approach adopted by many of the petitioners who proffer the wholesale elimination of fishing access without adequate scientific rationale.

Simply put, many of the petitions seek to advance preservation at all costs, pushing for wholesale closures that circumvent the regulatory processes already in place, ultimately bludgeoning access for the diverse angling communities that have revered these coastal traditions for generations.

Shore fishing, diving/spearfishing, kayak/boat fishing and coastal gathering are low impact activities that reflect the broad spectrum of California's diverse community and constitute a valuable resource for individuals across the economic divide to access nature and provide food for their families at the same time. We encourage the Commission and MPA managers to consider the numerous communities that enjoy the state's many sustainable food resources when considering protections and recommendations that might unnecessarily exclude these groups.

It is within this context that we urge the Commission to deny those petitions (outlined in our detailed letter to the Commission on 2/1/24) that would unnecessarily erode our longstanding coastal fishing and foraging traditions.

Date	Prefix	First	Last	Title	Address	City	State	Zip	Country	Action Taken
2024-02-09 00:56:52.913		George	Day						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-09 00:42:11.303		Mark	Ginsberg						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-09 00:28:34.06		Ryan	Murray						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-09 00:14:18.207		Vincent	Doyle						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 23:10:18.873		Steve	Rodriguez quijano						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 22:52:30.193		Darrin	Gambelin			San Mateo	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 22:33:50.663		Mark	Sanders						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 21:30:32.08		Tim	McPherson						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 21:26:32.267		Donna	Butler						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 21:09:16.39		Julian	escalera						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 18:30:10.123		Chris	DeHaven						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 18:15:57.91		Daniel	Marthey						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 18:04:03.19		Matthew	DeAmico						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 17:05:41.52		Tim	Harris						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 16:04:04.57		Dana	Wilburn						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 14:33:46.347		Robert	Del secco						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 14:26:31.143		Domingo	Escamilla III						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 13:27:58.967		Tim	Martin						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 13:24:19.56		Kyle	Pruett						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 12:43:45.757		John	Mattimoe						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 11:50:07.073		Robert	Moore			Wake Forest	NC		US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-08 11:16:29.523		Jacob	Pickett						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 10:38:39.953		roger	lees						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 09:44:48.333		Alin	Iacob						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 09:41:02.807	Mr.	Stone	Miller			Indianapolis	IN		US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-08 08:24:12.98		Andrew'	Collins						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-08 01:03:22.4		Lance	Bauer						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-08 00:46:49.423		Reid	Coultas						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 23:12:25.23		Erik	Rivas						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 22:47:38.227		Eric	Shipley						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 22:45:00.32		Richard	Estes						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 22:24:02.453		Manuel	Gil						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 22:23:34.157		Kyle	Carroll						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 21:59:09.033	Mr.	Ed	Fiedler			Austin	TX		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 21:33:02.84		Wes	Smith						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 21:31:05.667		Edgar	Albarracin						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 20:00:12.467		Stephen	Duke						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 19:56:31.663		Collin	Ewing						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 18:59:25.567		Joshua	Ott						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 18:23:11.943		Mary Ann	Viveros			Mayfield Hts.	OH		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 18:18:48.657		David	Valle						US	Petition Signed

2024-02-07 16:52:22.8	Mr.	Robert	Mowen			Clear Spring	MD		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 16:43:06.197		Christopher	Morrison						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 16:20:00.137		Rick	Ammerman						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 16:13:52.693	Mr.	Bruce	Williams			Bandon	OR		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 15:56:35.417		Charles	Pugh						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 15:33:15.917		Robert	Brusavich						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 15:16:24.077	Mr.	Daniel	Fernandez			Salinas	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 15:15:28.717		Gary	Applebee						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 13:38:03.147		Brent	Taft						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 13:30:19.807	Mr.	Shawn	Hauptman			Sacramento	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 13:29:40.317		John	Cooper						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 13:26:50.6	Ms.	Rochelle	Gravance			Columbus	MT		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 13:26:29.103		Jeremy	Olmscheid			Albany	MN		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 13:23:29.913		Zachary	Brady						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 13:21:14.497	Mr.	Jeremy	Meshew			Gobles	MI		US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-07 13:18:18.17		Ken	Porter						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 13:18:01.783		Jessica	Valentin						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 13:14:36.687	Mr.	James	Childress			Morgantown	KY		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-07 13:06:01.387		Nick	Neverisky						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-06 23:48:16.81	Stephen	Konig						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-06 22:25:31.447	Anton	Kamby						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 22:19:05.267	Nathan	Love						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 22:10:02.02	Aaron	Koseba						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 21:58:17.843	James	Russell						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 21:55:48.797	Michael	Raabe						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 21:55:31.353	Karl	Tyczynski						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 21:41:16.223	Ted	Torgerson						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-06 18:27:29.883	Kevin	Engstrom						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 18:25:22.76	Fernando	Guillen			Anaheim	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 16:41:32.783	Cal	Straub						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 16:07:35.737	Robert	Leih						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-06 15:57:15.343	Chad	Mahalich						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-06 15:55:20.943	Christine	Van peurse						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-06 15:50:14.67	john	kern						US	Petition Signed

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2024-02-05 23:50:53.107		Bob	Nelson						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 23:27:03.35	Mr.	Christopher	Reiger			Santa Rosa	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 23:20:30.843		Fredrick	Robinson						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 23:18:20.8		Michael	Snyder						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-05 22:44:52.897		Paul	Rodriguez						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-05 22:14:29.21		Michael	Schubert			San Anselmo	CA		US	Petition Signed

2024-02-05 21:59:03.873		Jordan	Nim						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 21:49:57.96		Daniel	Guentert						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 21:44:00.633		Jeffrey	Reed						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 21:33:06.14		Jim	Velazquez			San Diego	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 21:21:19.297		Reid	Lamson						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 21:12:35.05	Mr.	Nick	Zagaris			Auburn	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 21:00:30.373		Mike	Gorski						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-03 22:13:07.423		Michael	Skehen			Arroyo Grande	CA		US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-02 16:25:01.977		Matt	Rose						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-02 15:56:10.45		Charlie	de la Rosa						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 15:55:01.117		Nicholas	Angus						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-02 14:09:23.547		Mike	Costello						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:03:34.583	Mr.	Hunter	Miller			Kuna	ID		US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-02 13:48:06.903		Clayton	Thornton						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-02 13:40:12.057		Richard	Owens						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:37:41.607	Mr.	Blane	Markham			Carmel	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:36:49.903		Connor	Weber						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:35:29.397		Logan	Gillingham						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-02 13:12:08.623		Philip	Adornato						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:10:44.163		owen	shapiro						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:10:37.263		Steve	Dolan						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:09:39.617		Nick	Garcia						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-01 21:14:07.19		Keynan	Hobbs						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-01 19:52:19.6		Allen	Noren						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-01 19:31:26.837		Devin	O'Dea						US	Petition Signed

From: California Fishermens Resiliency Association <californiafishermensresiliency@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 3, 2024 06:44 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: [REDACTED] Steve Scheiblaue

<[REDACTED]>; Dave Colker

<[REDACTED]>; Jake Mitchell <[REDACTED]>;

Subject: MPA Petitions Support/Object

CALIFORNIA FISHERMEN'S RESILIENCY ASSOCIATION

1118 6th St.
Eureka, CA 95501

California Fish and Game Commission
PO Box 944209
1416 Ninth Street Suite 1320
Sacramento, California 94244-2090

July 3, 2024

Re: MPA Petitions/Support/Object

Commissioners:

The California Fisherman's Resiliency Association (CFRA) expresses its support for the following Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions:

2023 - 14 MPA
2023 - 15 MPA
2023 - 16 MPA
2023 - 18 MPA
2023 - 30 MPA

Our support is based on research conducted by the University of Washington (sustainable fisheries- us.org) which exactly states that MPA's have no positive affect on threats to marine life posed by ocean acidification, global warming, coastal development, terrestrial and urban run-off and human pollution of the world environment. "Recent reviews of the extensive MPA network in California have concluded there is no evidence for a regional increase in biodiversity, or targeted fish abundance, nor is there evidence for MPA's providing climate resiliency"

We provide no support for the following MPA petitions:

2023 - 19 MPA
2023 - 20 MPA
2023 - 21 MPA
2023 - 22 MPA
2023 - 23 MPA
2023 - 24 MPA
2023 - 25 MPA
2023 - 26 MPA
2023 - 28 MPA
2023 - 29 MPA
2023 - 31 MPA
2023 - 32 MPA
2023 - 33 MPA
2023 - 34 MPA

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Ken Bates, Executive Director
California Fishermen's Resiliency Association Member Associations

Crescent City Commercial Fishermen's Association
Trinidad Bay Fishermen's Association
Shelter Cove Fishermen's Preservation, Inc.
Salmon Troller's Marketing Association of Noyo
Bodega Bay Commercial Fishermen's Association
San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association
Half Moon Bay Commercial Fishermen's Association
The Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara
Santa Cruz Commercial Fishermen's Association
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

Cc: Dave Colker
Peter Halmay
Steve Scheiblaue
Jake Mitchell

From: BELL, DAVID C CIV USAF AFMC AFCEC/CZPW <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, August 28, 2025 9:02 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: YORK, DARRYL L CIV USSF SSC 30 CES/CEIE <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Comments on proposed 2023-18MPA

California Fish and Game Commission

Per directions on how to submit comments on proposed Regulations,

<https://fgc.ca.gov/Regulations/Submit-Comments>

We are pleased to provide the attached from the Department of Air Force in support of 2023-18MPA.

If possible , a return receipt is appreciated.

//SIGNED//

DAVID C. BELL, Ph.D., NH-04, DAF

AFCEC / CZPW - AF Regional Environmental Coordinator, Region 9 (AF REC 9)

Travis, AFB CA

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR, REGION 9
510 HICKAM AVENUE, BUILDING 250A
TRAVIS AFB, CA 94535**

Aug 28, 2025

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Also via e-mail to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Subject: DEPARTMENT OF AIR FORCE SUPPORT TO 2023-18MPA Vandenberg SMCA

Dear Dr. Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2023 -18MPA submitted by the Ocean Conservancy. As the Department of Air Force (DAF) Regional Environmental Coordinator (REC) in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9, I provide coordinated responses to various environmental policies and regulatory matters for the DAF.

Petition 2023-18 MPA will create a narrow alongshore State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) allowing shore fishing for finfish by hook and line only. This SMCA will address and rectify an inconsistent application of allowable shoreline fishing that will benefit the morale and welfare of the Vandenberg Space Force Base community and other visitors. Thus, the DAF supports 2023-18MPA.

Sincerely,

DAVID C. BELL, PhD
DAF REC Region 9

cc:

Darryl York, SLD 30 Environmental Chief
Jason Golumbfskie-Jones, DOD REC 9
Karla Meyer, AFCEC /CZTQ



Planning and Development

Lisa Plowman, Director
Jeff Wilson, Assistant Director
Elise Dale, Assistant Director

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson,

As Secretary of the Santa Barbara County Fish and Wildlife Commission, I am submitting the attached letter containing formal comments regarding the current Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions under consideration. This letter reflects the collective position of the full Commission, which includes signatures from all nine appointed members, representing diverse stakeholder groups within Santa Barbara County.

Our Commission has thoroughly reviewed the details of Petitions 2023-14MPA, 2023-15MPA-AM, 2023-18MPA, 2023-28MPA-AM, 2023-29MPA-AM, and 2023-33MPA-AM. As outlined in the attached document, our positions and recommendations were developed through numerous public meetings and extensive local input, based on decades of combined experience in fish and wildlife matters across the county.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the discussion surrounding MPA management and thank the California Fish and Game Commission for its continued commitment to public engagement and science-informed decision-making. Should you or your staff require any further clarification or supporting materials, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Secretary, Santa Barbara County Fish and Wildlife Commission

Phone: 805-934-6297

Email: castrot@countyofsb.org





Planning and Development

Lisa Plowman, Director
Jeff Wilson, Assistant Director
Elise Dale, Assistant Director

October 20, 2025

To: Ms. Melissa Miller-Henson

Executive Director

California Fish and Game Commission

715 "P" St. 16th Floor Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Santa Barbara County Fish and Wildlife Commission

c/o Santa Barbara County Planning and Development

624 W. Foster Road. Santa Maria, CA 93455

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson,

The Santa Barbara Fish and Wildlife Commission is a county commission consisting of nine members appointed by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. The commission, among other things, aids the county board on active fish and wildlife related matters with our combined hundreds of years of local fish and wildlife experience between our fellow commissioners.

This comment letter serves to provide our input regarding the current MPA petitions requesting changes be made to the MPA network specifically around the Santa Barbara Channel and Channel Islands. We feel our county fish and wildlife commission's input on the MPA petition process may prove especially valuable due to our local experiences and local understanding of the ecosystem, as well as our variety of backgrounds, consisting of non-consumptive users, fishermen, and biological scientists. This letter serves as a culmination of many public meetings learning about the MPA petitions that have been proposed as well as fellow commissioners observations being involved in local discussions about the petitions outside of official meetings to gauge public input and sentiment. This county commission appreciates the opportunity to provide the following feedback on these local MPA petitions.

Petition2023-14MPA

Petition2023-14MPA requests changes to several State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCAs), one of which, the Naples SMCA, is within the County. Generally, SMCAs already allow for some form of limited take, this petition requests adding commercial take of sea urchins to the allowable methods list inside of the SMCAs in the petition.

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Sea urchins are primarily taken commercially and are a core part of the County's commercial fishing sector. Urchins, and their tendency to graze on the root systems of local kelp forests, have recently posed problems with kelp rebuilding efforts after El Niños in the 2010's reduced kelp forest size noticeably. Local fishermen cite urchin barrens inside of MPAs that cannot be touched and continue to spread to the surrounding area with no possible measures existing to remove the main mass from the MPA.

Recommendation: While cases may vary across different MPAs and counties, for the above reasons, this commission finds it reasonable to allow the proposed change and supports the petition for allowed sea urchin take at the Naples SMCA to help facilitate kelp forest regrowth. We kindly recommend this change be allowed at Naples.

Petition2023-15MPA-AM

Petition2023-15MPA requests changes to three joint State and Federal Marine Reserves (SMRs/FMRs), all of which, the Footprint SMR/FMR, Gull Island SMR/FMR, and Santa Barbara Island SMR/FMR, border the county. These MPAs, and others around the Channel Islands, are unique to the State network in that they were established through a joint process between State and Federal agencies before the coastal MLPA under the CINMS. The resulting network was a series of state and federal MPAs at the Channel Islands that covers federal water up to 6 nautical miles from the islands. All SMRs and FMRs the petition addresses are currently no-take areas.

The petition requests changing these areas to joint State and Federal Marine Conservation Areas, SMCAs and FMCAs, and proposes several options that allow for various forms of the limited take of pelagic finfish or highly migratory species recreationally and commercially. In addition, the petition provides possible sub-divisions of the Gull Island and Santa Barbara Island State MPAs into nearshore and offshore areas, similar to other State MPAs elsewhere. The primary arguments of the petition are the minimal impact pelagic fishing effort has on the local MPA ecosystem and goals, and the support of pelagic areas in the State's MPA Master Plans and other documents seen in the broader coastal network but apparent lack thereof in the pre-Master Plan Channel Islands network.

Several members of this commission were part of the original process at the Channel Islands over 20 years ago and the southern MLPA in 2012. We all understand that the primary factor for the MPA implementation at these island sites offshore was to originally protect species like groundfish and structure groundfish live on to rebuild overfished populations at the time. While MPA goals have changed since the 2000s, this fact is still key to understanding why these areas are the way they are today.

Pelagic fish, and the methods used to target them, are predominantly fished near the surface of the water column, offshore, and off the bottom. This type of effort avoids the nearshore or offshore rocky-bottom ecosystems local nearshore species or groundfish are predominantly found in. In addition, the pelagic species that would be taken in these areas are significantly less affected by these MPAs and the broader network due to them being very mobile, their relative abundance is not concentrated in an MPA compared to out of one. The MPA Master Plans from 2008 and 2016 discuss this, citing the lower effects that MPAs have on pelagic species and the need to have areas that allow for some form of limited pelagic take, aligning the petitioner's arguments with the Master Plans. In addition, the petition does point out an imbalance in pelagic allowed areas between the MLPA's coastal implementation phases that came after the first MPA Master Plan in 2008 and the Channel Islands Network implementation that came well before the first MPA Master Plan in the early 2000's.

Outside the Channel Islands, in the coastal network that came afterwards, most MPAs that overlap deeper waters pelagic species pass through allow for some form of take of pelagic finfish. Observing the Channel Islands, we can see a significantly higher overlap with offshore waters, namely due to the federal sections

of these MPAs. However, even with this significantly larger offshore encroachment, almost no pelagic allowed areas exist. Whether this difference was due to the Channel Islands process pre-dating the coastal process and the 2008 MPA Master Plan's outlook on pelagic species is up to debate, but the fact of the matter is the difference is noticeably present, and for no abundantly clear reason.

Recommendation: The subject of island MPAs allowing pelagic take, specifically these three, has been raised by the public several times prior at our meetings, and local MPA collaboratives our commissioners have attended. For these reasons, and those above, this commission supports this petition, and believes it should be accepted by the State Commission through one of the proposed "options" the petition lists that best fits the existing network.

Petition2023-18MPA

Petition2023-18MPA requests multiple changes to a variety of coastal and island MPAs within the county. Some of the changes are listed as "non-regulatory requests" by the Department while others make modifications to, or remove existing MPAs. All but one of the MPAs in the petition are within the County, they are the: Vandenberg SMR, Point Conception SMR, Kashtayit SMCA, Campus Point SMCA, and San Miguel Island Special Closure.

Of the changes, the proposal at Vandenberg SMR and San Miguel Island Special Closure are the two MPAs that would have the largest regulatory changes. At Vandenberg the petition requests a coastal SMCA be made that allows for only shore-based fishing by hook-and-line, citing an equity and enforcement concern between military base personnel and members of the public. Because military personnel are allowed to fish the shore of the SMR while members of the public outside the base cannot due to the SMR, both the equity and enforcement concerns are certainly present and should be addressed. The proposed solution of a shore based SMCA does seem to be a reasonable way to correct this problem.

At San Miguel and Anacapa (outside of the county) the petition requests the Special Closure(s) be removed in its entirety citing its original goal being to reduce disturbance to pinniped rookeries and seabird populations has been far exceeded and better methods have been developed on-site.

The remaining MPA requests are non-regulatory and include supported use for M2 radar monitoring at Point Conception SMR for better enforcement, a refined regulatory language for allowances at the Kashtayit SMCA, and using the color red instead of purple for distinguishing the Campus Point No-Take SMCA.

Recommendation: This commission finds all of the above modifications and requests more than reasonable, gives its support for them all. We recommend the FGC accept the petition in full.

Petition2023-28MPA-AM

Petition2023-28MPA requests to create a new MPA around Point Sal, designating it the Point Sal SMCA or a Tribally named SMCA, and listing it as a limited-take area with only an exception of a shore based finfish take allowance and tribal take allowance. The petitions driving reasons for the new MPA are that the area is ecologically significant in terms of local upwelling and relative to the landings that occur there the area is a small fraction of the State's commercial output, under 1%. The petition also cites tribal inclusivity and significance in the area as justification for its closure.

While the petition is accurate in the broader economic analysis, locally Point Sal is a very important area for both recreational and commercial operations out of Port San Luis (Avila), the local port to Point Sal.

Point Sal, and its surrounding waters, are essential for year-round and seasonal fisheries such as salmon, Dungeness crab, groundfish, and halibut. This new MPA in addition to the existing network will significantly affect the local port's economic health due to Point Sal's being a significant fishing area for local commercial and recreational anglers. Namely, crab and groundfish boats out of Avila would be significantly affected by this change as per their testimony, over half their time is spent in the proposed area.

Recommendation: While the shore-based allowance is a welcome allowance, we believe this is still too costly on the local economy of Avila and its recreational and commercial fisheries to warrant its allowance. For this reason this commission has decided to be against this petition, and recommends the FGC deny it.

Petition2023-29MPA-AM

Petition2023-29MPA requests to create a new MPA around Carpinteria, designating it the Mishopshno SMCA. The petition asks to make take regulations for the area the same as the Point Sal petition, with an allowance of shore fishing of finfish and a tribal exception for those in the federally recognized Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians which would be able to still use tribal take methods inside of the SMCA. The proposed area's size was reduced when the petition was amended to include the shore allowance.

The petition's primary reasons for this MPA include this tribal allowance and co-management model along with the added reasons of MPA connectivity, spacing, and protecting juvenile great white shark nursery grounds. While this commission does agree that Tribal inclusion is a warranted piece of MPA and coastal management, we do not believe that a new MPA altogether is needed to accomplish this. MPAs across the coast can be modified themselves to allow for such co-management but the existing area offshore Carpinteria is currently open to the entire public, Tribes included.

Carpinteria's coast has been the subject of several MPA proposals over the years. During the MLPA the same area was looked into but was ultimately not selected, trading off two other SMCAs instead of establishing one at Carpinteria in a separate MLPA planning alternative. In 2020 this commission also followed a similar MPA petition in a smaller area to the current proposal that similarly advocated to protect juvenile great white sharks. That petition was ultimately rejected by CDFW due to the larger footprint white sharks, a pelagic species, covered relative to the coast of Carpinteria/California in general, and we believe the same reasons from 2020 are still relevant in 2024 against the petitioner's arguments.

Additionally, it should be said that Carpinteria Reef, the reef that would be almost entirely inside the MPA, is one of the last open reef areas to the fishing community. Removing this reef will see the end of local fishing access to coastal reefs, forcing anglers to travel further, coastally or to the islands, and burning more fuel to have similar opportunities. Commercial members of this commission are concerned for the areas of the proposed MPA that overlap the state halibut trawl grounds. These grounds are minimal already and have been reduced continuously over the years. This proposed MPA would cut a significant portion of the current open trawl area harming this unique fishery that the commission has repeatedly stated is well managed. Lastly, there is an overwhelming amount of public outcry on this petition specifically citing lost access to one of the last open reefs on the coast by boat and especially kayak.

Recommendation: For all of these reasons this commission has decided to be against this petition, and requests the FGC deny it.

Petition2023-33MPA-AM

Petition2023-33MPA requests for multiple MPA expansions and one MPA creation throughout the California coast, of which, three MPA expansions are within Santa Barbara at the Point Conception SMR, the Gull Island SMR, and the South Point SMR. Of the three expansions the South Point SMR expansion would be the largest, including all of the southwest side of Santa Rosa Island in the MPA and adding over 27.5 square miles to the SMR. This is followed by Point Conception SMR's expansion eastward adding over 14 more square miles to the SMR, and lastly by Gull Island SMR's smaller northward expansion adding over 1.5 square miles to the closure.

The driving force behind Petition2023-33MPA is kelp restoration. The petition claims growing these MPAs would allow for the now protected areas to rebuild their kelp forests under no fishing pressure which would also mean less traffic in general. Kelp restoration is a very important subject in Santa Barbara County as several sectors, consumptive and non-consumptive, depend on healthy levels of kelp for commercial and recreational use. That being said, this commission believes removing fishing access in these areas will do little to nothing to promote kelp regrowth and more-likely prevent kelp rebuilding projects (seeding, artificial reefs, and sea urchin removal programs) from directly assisting in the rebuilding of our kelp forests. Besides fishing, factors such as water quality, water temperature, storms, and swell need to be considered as larger drivers of kelp loss, not larger closed areas. There are several active projects locally and statewide dedicated to kelp rebuilding, none of which remove fishing access from areas in order to rebuild the kelp because there is no reason to. We believe the same applies in the areas this petition looks at. There are no reasons these specific areas need a fishing closure to help kelp forests regrow; therefore, there is no justification for their expansion, especially into waters predominantly too deep for kelp to root and grow. Similar to petition 29, there has been specific public outcry against this petition for all of the above reasons at MPA collaboratives, and public meetings.

Recommendation: For these reasons this commission has decided to be against this petition and recommends the FGC deny it.

Signed, the Santa Barbara County Fish and Wildlife Commission,

Phil Beguhl (Chair) - 2nd District

Scott Cooper (Vice Chair) - 3rd District

Frank Abatemarco - 1st District

Chad Thomas - 4th District

David Morgan - 5th District

Jeff Landers - Santa Maria Sportsman's Association Representative

Whitney Uyeda - Santa Barbara Sport Fishing Representative

Jeff Maassen - Commercial Fisherman Representative

Steve Adam - Santa Ynez Valley Pistol and Bow Club Representative

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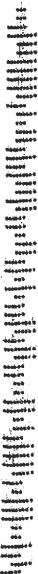
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Ms. Melissa Miller-Henson Executive
Director
California Fish and Game Commission

715 "P" St. 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

958148512 0303



From: Matthew Bond <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Monday, January 19, 2026 8:11 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: Tonie Bangos <[REDACTED]>; Devin O'Dea

<[REDACTED]>; Christopher Killen <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Comment Regarding MPA Petitions for the February 11-12, 2026 Commission Meeting

Dear members and staff of the California Fish and Game Commission,

Please find attached our letter representing the voice of a broad coalition of individuals, organizations, businesses, and scientists with opinions and related rationale on each of the Bin 2 MPA petitions.

Thank you for your time and service,

Matt Bond

Allwaters Protection and Access Coalition

January 2026
Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions



Santa Barbara Freedivers



GET HOOKED



January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

To the California Fish and Game Commission (FGC) and Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW),

This letter serves as a joint comment, representing a mass consensus reached by the undersigned groups and individuals representing tens of thousands of stakeholders from recreational, commercial, and scientific backgrounds on all of the Bin 2 MPA petitions. While some of us may submit our own individual comments in addition, or have already, we would like the FGC and CDFW to understand that this diverse community of statewide stakeholders are all united regarding the following comments on these petitions. We all would like to share our common beliefs outlined in the below letter to you as this united group. With the adaptive management process of our MPA network underway, we ask to please take the below input deeply into account when determining the outcomes of the following bin 2 MPA petitions.

Petition2023-14MPA – Accept

Petition 14 proposes the allowance of commercial urchin take inside of a group of SMCAs that already have allowable limited-take restrictions, with the exception of one no-take SMCA. This petition has not been amended since submission. We believe this petition's rationale to have enough merit to warrant its acceptance in part or in full.

At a time where there are mass interests in helping kelp forests regrow, allowing sea urchin take in areas already partially open to other fisheries is a minimally invasive step we can take, especially in SMCAs that already allow some forms of take. By being allowed to harvest and remove sea urchins that are currently protected in these areas, we allow the kelp the chance to grow back. While we cannot locally control global factors affecting kelp growth such as water temperature or swell meaningfully, we can still promote regrowth of kelp by being allowed to at least remove one of kelp's largest predators, the sea urchin.

Per SeaSketch, we may accept this petition whilst also maintaining the same relative level of protection (LOP) in six of the eight total SMCAs in the proposal: Double Cone, Salt Point, Stewarts Point, Sea Lion Cove, Naples, and Anacapa. This means any MPA connectivity benefits will be maintained as is in the current network. For the Point Dume and Point Vicente SMCAs, while the MPA LOP does drop, we believe the allowance of sea urchin take in these SMCAs will greatly benefit the entire area through restored kelp growth, and additional workable area for local urchin divers. However, we understand if a loss in connectivity for these two areas is something the commission is against, that just these two MPA be excluded. At a minimum, this petition should be granted for the SMCAs where the network as a whole does not lose any existing connectivity benefits.

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Petition2023-15MPA-AM2 – Accept

Petition 15 proposes allowing limited take of pelagic or highly migratory species at three joint State-Federal MPAs at the Channel Islands. The petition was amended twice, and proposes several possible options for limited-take of pelagic finfish or highly migratory species (HMS). The petition brings forward three gear types: hook-and-line, spear, and harpoon swordfish; additionally, it includes possible nearshore-offshore MPA options to mitigate bycatch in the more biodiverse nearshore areas and maintain high MPA LOPs for network connectivity. While it is up to the commission and department to determine what the best combination of choices may be, we all believe this petition should be accepted under a preferred option that retains a high LOP for these MPAs, maintaining existing ecosystem level protection/connectivity, that consists of an offshore SMCA and nearshore SMCA or SMR.

The petition is founded on a longstanding scientific basis and MLPA goals that the MPAs in our network are primarily intended to benefit our nearshore waters and non-pelagic species the most. This has been established since the MLPA MPA Master Plan (MMP) in 2008 where MPA benefits to pelagic species were explained to be weak at best, rather focusing the network toward non-pelagic species that benefit the most from MPAs per the MMP documents. This led to the coastal network outside of the Islands process allowing some form of pelagic access in over 40% of our existing MPAs, and no-take in the remaining 60%. Of the currently 60% of MPAs that are no-take, most areas are nearshore, cover predominantly shallow water, and would not provide much pelagic benefits if they were even partially open. The approximately remaining 40% of the network that is limited take, most of which is pelagic take, are set in areas where pelagic effort is reasonable enough to avoid any nearshore or bottom interactions, or does not allow hook-and-line, just spear.

This sets a clear precedent, based on the science, that we can allow reasonable pelagic fishing access in the areas where it makes sense to allow it, and fully protect areas where pelagic fishing is less realistic or interferes too much with nearshore areas. This precedent was again reiterated in the 2016 MMP in a regional objective that explicitly states to allow for forms of pelagic take across the network in all bioregions, something the coastal MPA phases included but the Channel Islands network specifically lacks. The commission then upheld this mass precedent in 2020 when it denied a petition to create an MPA for white sharks, citing specifically that MPAs in our network are not meant for highly migratory or pelagic species, they are for ecosystem level protections, which can still exist in pelagic allowed MPAs. We simply ask that this precedent continue to be upheld for the MPAs that can reasonably allow for pelagic or HMS take and network maintain connectivity. This has no better use case to be applied than at the Channel Islands. That region of the network was designated prior to all of the primary MPA guiding documents, covers mostly offshore waters, and provides the least pelagic access of all the MPA designation regions, a clear case of adaptive management.

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Because the Channel Islands MPA network is the oldest region in the modern network, designated now over 20 years ago in 2002, it pre-dates the coastal MLPA implementation phases, the MLPA LOP frameworks, both MPA Master Plans, and all other frameworks and processes that established this pelagic allowance elsewhere during the 4 coastal phases. In the early 2000s during the Channel Islands process, the primary concerns driving the island MPAs involved groundfish species and recovering their overfished populations. This fact was a main driver in justifying the federal sections of the island MPAs, as the federal expansions cover deep water rocky bottom or reefs where groundfish frequent. Today, federal outlooks of no-take MPAs are almost non-existent. With the exception of the Channel Islands, federal protected areas off the west coast only protect non-pelagic bottom dwelling species (groundfish), and allow pelagic fishing access, aligning exactly to what the petition proposes.

We believe this to be an adaptive management case of modernizing MPAs that predate all guidance documents, and updating them to better align to these well established frameworks in the same way the rest of the network already has. In the case of pelagic access, this shift is clearly seen as the more-modern coastal MPAs allow significantly more pelagics access (40%), compared to the Channel Islands MPAs (3%). In the case of The Footprint MPA specifically, it is the only MPA in the State that is disconnected from land, is entirely deeper than 50m, and has no limited take allowance for pelagics. The Channel Islands MPAs as a whole are justifiably the most equipped to handle pelagic allowance in them, especially offshore, due to the depths covered allowing a massive buffer between pelagic fisheries in the mid to upper water column and non-pelagic fisheries on the bottom. Any take beyond State waters in the federal portions of these MPAs would affect the nearshore region even less than already existing State pelagic allowances present in the current coastal network. Most of the federal portions of these MPAs are well over 1000 feet in depth, and in some cases over 4000 ft in depth.

Per SeaSketch, LOP tiers from the original MLPA state pelagic take maintains MPA connectivity due to the take allowance's high LOP in offshore waters. At the islands specifically this is seen as only allowing hook-and-line take in waters deeper than 50 meters (164ft), with harpoon or spear gears allowed anywhere due to their high selectivity and lack of any bycatch. A high LOP can be maintained and connectivity still upheld if the petition is accepted with the proposed "nearshore" SMCAs or SMRs at Gull Island and Santa Barbara Island that restrict nearshore hook-and-line, along with any SMCA option in The Footprint and the proposed "offshore" sections of Gull Island and Santa Barbara Island. With all of this precedent and SeaSketch LOP information in mind we believe there is more than sufficient rationale, federal and state evidence, and MLPA/MMP support to allow for this adaptive management change.

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Petition2023-16MPA – Modify then Accept

Petition 16 requests the allowance of the commercial take of salmon by troll in two SMRs in the northern bioregion, Bodega Head and Stewarts Point, making them SMCAs. The petition argues similarly to petition 15, on the lack of interference allowed pelagic access would cause. While we do stand by this petition's core arguments, we also believe that this allowance should be accompanied with a similar recreational allowance of salmon by troll in these MPAs too.

Recreationally or commercially the salmon troll fisheries mirror each other with similar gear use, lack of gear conflicts with unintended species, and lack of interactions with the bottom environment due to the nature of the troll gear always moving and being in the upper section of the water column. There are no reasons to not allow recreational troll access in these areas as well because of this. This is further supported by the bordering and nearby pelagic allowed SMCAs in the area giving both recreational and commercial allowance for salmon trolling. A joint allowance would also help to solve any possible confusion on the water of only a specific group being able to troll in the area while others may not, reducing any possible enforcement problems.

Per SeaSketch, the LOPs of these areas as SMCAs allowing any kind of salmon trolling retains existing MPA protections for their respective connectivity benefits. While these MPAs in the northern bioregion are more-modern of MPAs, coming after initial MMPs, MPA frameworks, and processes, unlike those in Petition 15, we see this change allowance as reasonable for consideration. With the recreational troll allowance added to this petition, we see its arguments as more equitable and in-line with existing MPAs in the surrounding northern bioregion of the network.

Petition2023-18MPA – Accept

Petition 18 makes several requests across the Santa Barbara Channel to 6 MPAs in total, and some requests were non-regulatory requests. We support all of the prescribed changes in the petition to better regulatory language, provide better MPA regulation clarity through color corrections, and to make fine tune changes to better the overall MPA network. Of all the requests in petition 18, the most controversial is the creation of a shore region SMCA in the Vandenburg SMR. This would be called the Vandenburg SMCA and would allow shoretake of finfish. This case of a shore allowance is a unique case for our MPA network, as the bordering military base with the SMR allows shore fishing already anyway. This shoretake allowance would clear up any enforcement confusion by the public for the SMR and give some access back to the public in general. We believe this petition's regulatory and non-regulatory requests should be accepted in full.

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Petition2023-19MPA – Reject or Modify

Petition 19 requests the creation of a tribal co-managed SMCA at Morro Bay that only allows for the recreational take of finfish and invertebrates except rock scallops and mussels by hand harvest, also including a tribal take exemption within the SMCA. We believe the petition should be either rejected or amended to allow for more general recreational and commercial take as well.

We believe tribal co-management to be a great step forward in managing California's waters and should be present in all MPAs; however, creating a new MPA that restricts exclusively commercial groups and most recreational fishing access from such an essential area should not be warranted. The commercial blocks overlapping the proposed SMCA account for 6.2% of Morro Bay's landing revenue alone. More specifically, these blocks represent 25% of the area's squid landings, 8.8% of the groundfish landings, and 15% of the area's salmon landings, per the MFDE. While not an exact correlation, recreational access in the area is likely comparable (with the exception of squid) and will likely be equally affected in the MPA regions, as this petition affects all fisheries not involving direct hand harvesting.

Additionally, there is concern that the proposed offshore wind energy program has its proposed electrical lines connecting the Morro Bay power bank stations to the offshore array crossing through the SMCA. If passed, this would need to be addressed and an additional allowance added.

Petition2023-20MPA – Reject Nearshore and Clarify/Accept Offshore

Petition 20 requests changes to the MPA cluster, the nearshore and offshore MPAs, at Point Buchon. The petition requests the offshore SMCA allow the hand harvest of finfish and invertebrates except rock scallops and mussels, allow the maintenance of artificial structures under the correct permits, and provide a tribal take exemption for federally recognized tribes. However, it is unclear if these requested allowances to the offshore SMCA at point Buchon are replacing or adding to existing recreational and commercial allowance for the take of albacore and salmon. Pursuant to the allowances being additive and not replacing the existing take allowances in the offshore MPA we support the request for the offshore region of the MPA cluster to have the added take allowances. This example in the offshore region is a clear example of how tribal components can be added to the existing network, not requiring creation of more MPAs to involve tribes.

Regarding the petitioner's request to the nearshore SMR being expanded, we believe this request should be rejected. The expansion of only the SMR section of the Point Buchon nearshore/offshore cluster would unnecessarily remove all access from the added area. The justification for this addition comes from MPA Collaborative meetings citing enforcement concerns, stating that moving the northern boundary to the physical

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

point will provide a better reference for enforcement. The core reason the existing MPA does not go to the physical point on land is because the nearest whole decimal degree value was used as the northern boundary instead, following MLPA guidelines. This usage of a round Lat/Long number for an MPA that does not experience much shore fishing opportunity is supported by the MLPA MPA design criteria to explicitly help, not hurt, enforcement. The current northern boundary gives those fishing beyond shore an easy to understand GPS reference point to know where the boundary is. Additionally, expanding only the nearshore SMR may cause further enforcement problems with the offshore SMCA remaining its original size. The expansion of the nearshore only leads to a case of an unevenly sized MPA in the nearshore and offshore regions.

Petition2023-21MPA – Accept

Petition 21 requests the Pyramid Point SMCA in the northern bioregion be modified to remove its existing recreational allowances for take of surf smelt and give additional tribal exemption to the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation on top of its existing tribal exemption. The petition also requests the border of the MPA be moved south to the true CA-OR state boundary line, slightly shrinking the MPA.

While this petition does remove some recreational access to take surf smelt, that access was already relatively limited and small scale. The change to the border to shrink the SMCA to align to the actual state border clears up any possible confusion or issues the overlap currently causes. Overall we are supportive of this change, and addition of another Tribal component to the existing Pyramid Point SMCA.

Petition2023-23MPA-AM1 – Reject or Modify

Petition 23 requests multiple changes to 3 existing SMCAs, the Carmel Bay SMCA, Pacific Grove SMCA, and the Edward F. Ricketts SMCA, requesting all three SMCAs become closed to take of finfish during “active kelp restoration permits” and to create a new SMR at Tankers Reef, the area of this SMR was reduced during amendments.

We believe the petition has reasonable goals, restoring kelp, but goes about this in the incorrect way. Regarding the specific MPA changes requested, we believe this petition should be rejected or modified. Acceptance would come at the additional loss of recreational fishing access to these SMCAs. Fishing has no significant impact on kelp restoration compared to environmental factors (e.g., water quality, water temperature, swell) and would be closed when a “kelp restoration permit is active.” This also raises further enforcement concerns as regulations would effectively be in constant flux depending if a permit is active or not, there would need to be new paths created to inform all on the water when said permit is active or not. Additionally, existing restoration efforts at Tankers Reef would immediately stop if an SMR is designated there for the lack of allowable take inside of an SMR, even the reduced in size SMR.

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

If the petitioner wishes to accomplish the outstanding goals of this petition, then a similar approach to that in Petition2023-14MPA should be considered. Such an approach could consist of keeping the 3 SMCAs as SMCAs with the same allowable take regulations, but only adding a new allowance for the recreational and commercial take of sea urchins, removing the finfish closures during “active permits.” Regarding Tankers Reef, we believe no MPA, SMR or SMCA, should be designated there as existing restoration efforts would be able to continue there without requiring any closures or special allowances be made inside of a new MPA. Leaving Tankers Reef as is will also allow any future restoration methods to be deployed at the location without having to modify the SMCA allowances again as we continue to learn how to restore our kelp forests.

Petition2023-24MPA – Reject

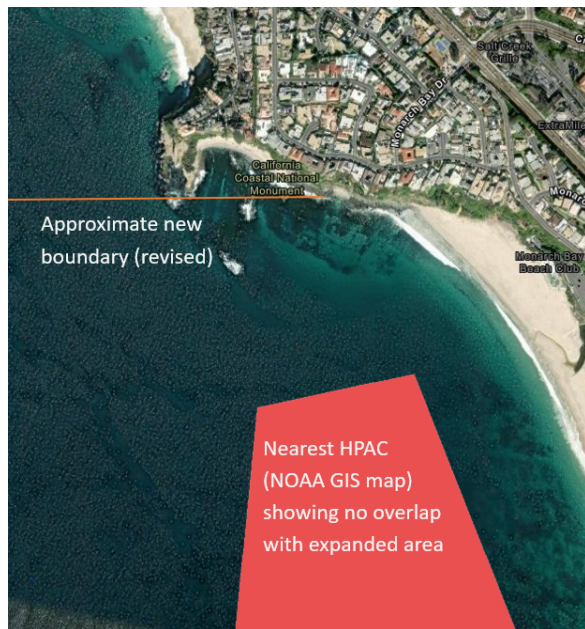
Petition 24 requests expanding the existing Laguna Beach SMCA into the Dana Point SMCA. We believe Petition 24 should be rejected for several reasons. Petition 24’s core argument claims enforcement concerns of the MPAs by lifeguards, when in fact, the primary enforcement of the MPAs is warden officers. Wardens are the only individuals that may issue citations for MPA compliance and are most notably, not bound by city limits. The idea of moving this border to allow for better enforcement will only create more of an enforcement problem due to where the proposed border lies versus the existing one. The existing border of the Laguna SMCA and Dana Point SMCA is a rocky point, a physical barrier between two areas. This allows the border to be clear as it is marked by an obvious, physical landmark, this is a guiding objective of the MLPA in MPAs that justifiably have a large shore fishing presence. The proposed new border would sit along the mean high tide line in the middle of a rocky beach. Simply put, removal of a physical barrier landmark to an invisible line on a public beach would only create more of an enforcement compliance problem, not reduce it along shore. (See Below images)



January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

The petition then cites the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 and its 2002 update where essential fish habitats (EFH) and habitat areas of particular concern (HAPCs) were designated along the west coast of California, Oregon, and Washington.



Essential fish habitats (EFHs) are defined by NOAA as areas where specific fish species, including groundfish, pink salmon, king salmon, coho salmon, coastal pelagic species, and highly migratory species, can feed, spawn, or grow to maturity. These habitats are extensive, the three EFHs overlapping the proposed expansion area—groundfish, CPS, and HMS—cover the entire coast of California, Washington, and Oregon. Because of their broad geographical scope, EFHs alone do not indicate a need for MPAs off the coast, or this proposed expansion.

Habitat areas of particular concern (HPACs), as the name implies, are sections of the EFH that are more important in providing the ecological functions that the general EFHs offer. These are more selective in their designation and display highlighted areas of concern within the EFHs. While these areas are more important in participating in these biological processes, the petitioner's proposed MPA expansion does not overlap with any existing HPACs (see above image). The arguments of the petition involving any EFHs or HPACs to protect this additional area are irrelevant for these reasons.

The petition additionally presents a rationale similar to that of Petition 2023-33 regarding the protection of kelp beds. It claims that conserving these areas is essential for the health of kelp forests. However, like the counterarguments we will see in Petition 2023-33, it is important to note again that fishing effort and so-called “anchor drag” does not significantly reduce kelp biomass; rather, factors such as water temperature, water quality, and swell conditions primarily drive changes in the kelp population. Additionally, any concerns raised in the petition about “anchor drag” damaging kelp beds would equally apply to non-consumptive vessels, not just fishing boats.

The petition references the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) concerning potential marine mammal entanglements from lobster traps in the area. While recreational and commercial lobster fishing occurs in the region, there have been little to no reported entanglement incidents involving whales or dolphins locally, showing in reality there is little need for concern. While it's important to acknowledge the possibility of such events, the absence of previous occurrences suggests that the likelihood of entanglements is extremely low. Furthermore, if the area were to be protected, lobster traps would simply be relocated, meaning the risk of entanglement would persist

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

regardless of where the traps are ultimately placed. Lastly, the adoption of ropeless fishing technologies, such as those developed by Sea Sonics, indicates a future where entanglement issues could be further mitigated.

Concerning the MLPA itself, it should be noted that the proposed expanded area would give the MPA an “L-shape.” This shape is specifically called out in the MLPA as a poor MPA design for enforcement and is just another reason we have concerns for this petition.

Petition2023-27MPA-AM1 – Reject

The original petition 27 and its amendments only look at lobster taken from the Anacapa SMCA. We believe this request should be rejected. Petition 27, similar to petitions calling for protections to increase kelp beds, calls for additional protections at the Anacapa Island SMCA, the difference being that 2023-27’s focus is on eelgrass, not kelp. While a trap sitting on the bottom does have a larger footprint than a pelagic hook and line configuration which is also allowed in the SMCA, traps fished in the area are not significantly impacting eelgrass beds due to there already being a 20 foot depth closure for traps around Anacapa in its Special Closure. This area contains already a large amount of the existing eelgrass beds as the SMCA and special closure overlap making the key rationale of this petition redundant as protections are effectively already in effect.

Petition2023-28MPA-AM1 – Reject

Petition 28 requests the establishment of a new MPA around Point Sal. This MPA would significantly impact local fisheries, recreational and commercial, despite the petitioner's claim that the effects would be minimal. For this primary reason we believe the petition should be rejected, even as amended to allow for shore based take of finfish.

The petition includes an economic analysis of the proposed area but overlooks the devastating local impacts this MPA would have economically. While the petition accurately states that the overlapping commercial fishing blocks contribute to 1.1% of the central coast's total landings by value, it fails to consider the actual local implications of that 1.1% and what it represents. Using the same time range (2012 to 2022) on the MFDE, the local port nearest to the proposed MPA, Port San Luis/Avila, derived 28.12% of its total commercial revenue from the overlapping blocks 631 and 632. More specifically, 25.92% of the port's groundfish revenue and 57.79%, over half, of its crab revenue came from these areas. If recreational effort even somewhat mirrors commercial effort in the area, not only is Point Sal relevant commercially, but recreationally too offshore. Establishing an MPA at Point Sal will significantly harm the community of Avila and other nearby ports, threaten local businesses, harm or remove

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

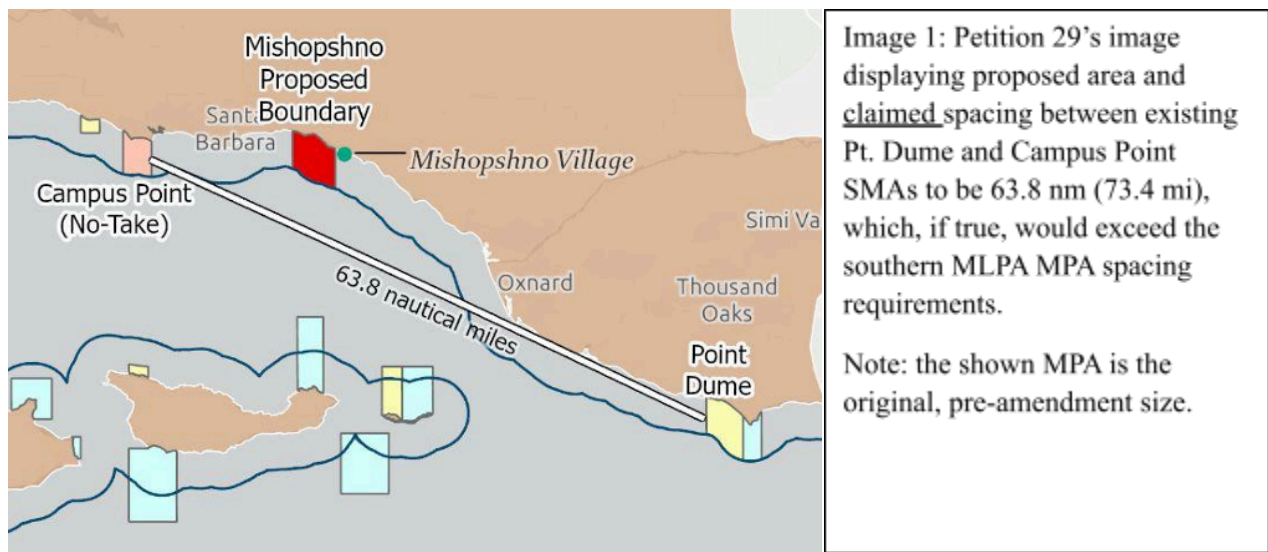
people's sources of income, and remove recreational and subsistence access to the area by boat.

Providing shore based take of finfish would allow for beach anglers to continue fishing as they have been, but would do so at the loss of all offshore activity. More notably, this also results in a drop of the LOP of the SMCA to moderate-low. This LOP ranking per the MLPA fails any connectivity requirements making the final proposed SMCA a protected area that does not add to total MPA network connectivity. This brings into question the main argument of the petitioner to add this MPA in order to maintain MPA connectivity, as the final amended SMCA would not accomplish this.

Petition2023-29MPA-AM1 – Reject

Petition 29 requests a new MPA be created at Carpinteria. This MPA would be a tribally allowed SMCA that would be closed to non-federally recognized tribal fishing (general recreational and commercial fishing); the petition was amended to reduce its overall size and allow shore-based take of finfish. The petition’s three primary arguments for the new SMCA are to meet habitat connectivity/MPA spacing requirements, to protect habitat surrounding juvenile white shark grounds, and to allow for tribal access. While tribal co-management of all California MPAs should be considered, we believe for the following reasons this specific MPA proposal should be rejected.

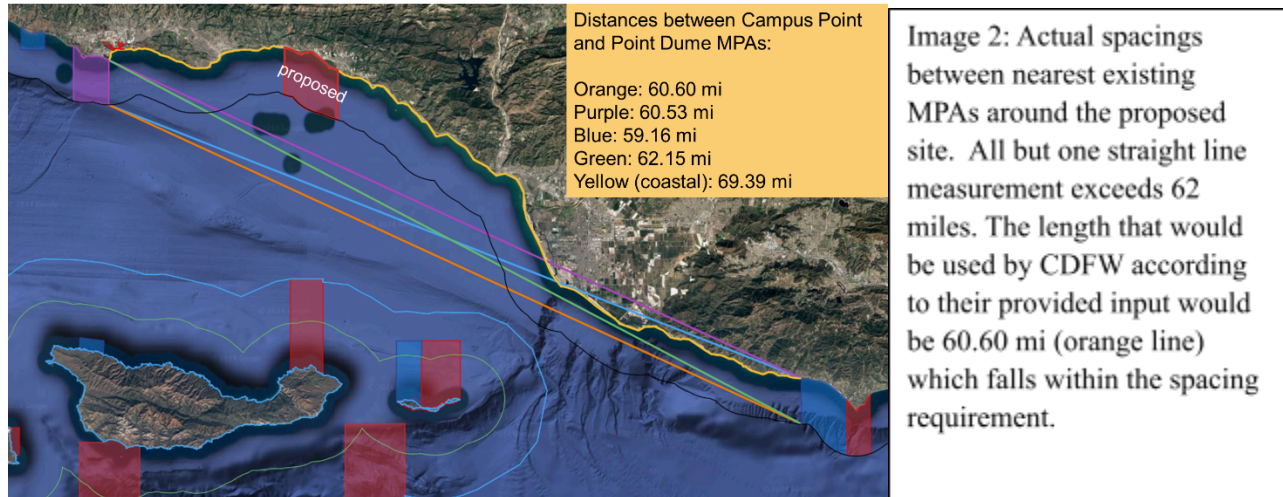
Regarding habitat connectivity, the petition asserts that the spacing of the existing MPA network exceeds the recommendations set by the MLPA scientific advisory team, which suggests a minimum spacing of 31 to 62 miles. The petition argues that the nearest coastal MPAs, Campus Point and Point Dume, are too far apart, claiming they are separated by 63.8 nautical miles or 73.4 miles (Image 1).



January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Discussions with the CDFW clarified that MPA spacing is measured by the, “shortest distance over water between two MPAs.” When measuring the distance between Campus Point and Point Dume, we find that it is in fact less than 62 miles, indicating that the current spacing distribution is adequate along the coast (see below Image 2).



Following the CDFW and MLPA guidelines, the shortest water distance between the two existing MPAs is ~60.60 miles, viewable by the orange line. This distance falls within the 31–62-mile MLPA spacing requirement. None of the provided measurements, including a measurement along the coastline (yellow) exceeded 73.4 miles of separation as the petitioner claims, again bringing into question the purpose for the new MPA if connectivity is already met.

In addition, the provided shore based take of finfish does allow for some form of recreational take but this now raises connectivity concerns. As mentioned in previous petitions, allowance of shore fishing of finfish reduces an MPAs LOP to moderate-low, losing its MPA connectivity with the network, this is confirmed by SeaSketch. Connectivity was a major reason for this MPAs proposal. With connectivity now lost due to these allowed take methods begs to question the purpose for this implementation in the first place if its foundational goals are not even accomplished. The LOP chart for the southern bioregion, moderate low protection is provided below.

Mod-low	SMCA SMP	Shore fishing (H&L, hoop net); kelp bass, barred sand bass, lingcod, cabezon, and rockfish (H&L, spearfishing); sheephead (H&L, spearfishing, trap); spotted sand bass and halibut (H&L); lobster (trap, hoop net, diving); urchin (diving); rock crab and Kellet's whelk (trap); catch and release (H&L-general)
		In water depth <10m: Catch and release (H&L-single barbless hooks and artificial lures)
		In water depth <50m at islands and <30m on mainland: pelagic finfish, bonito and white seabass (H&L);

Regarding the protection of juvenile white shark nursery grounds, a similar petition was submitted in 2020 (Petition 2020-012 AM1) to close off a smaller section of beach at Carpinteria for the same purpose. Like Petition 29, this earlier petition aimed to protect

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

juvenile white sharks within the currently proposed area. This 2020 petition was rejected by the Department and the Fish and Game Commission (FGC), which stated that MPAs are designed to protect nearshore ecosystems rather than individual species, especially highly migratory species like white sharks. Given that this issue was previously addressed at the same location just four years ago, the same arguments against the current petition apply today regarding white sharks.

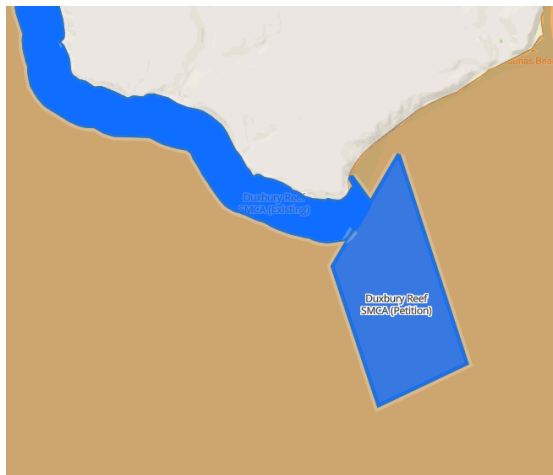


Lastly, regarding the tribal access portions of the petition, while tribal access and co-management should be explored across the entire MPA network, current access to the area by tribes is not limited in any way. Regardless of a tribal MPA designation or not, federally recognized tribes will have access in the area just like the public. Closing this area off to all groups except those of the federally recognized Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians would have the additional side effect of restricting any non-federally recognized tribes, as the petition does mention. In addition to the above counter reasons of the petition's primary claims, there exists additional effects to be considered at the proposed MPA site. The proposed area was considered during the MLPA for the southern section but was

traded off for two other SMCAs on the coast, Naples and Kashtayit that were present in different MPA alternatives that Carpinteria was not in. If allowed, the new MPA would essentially break the agreements struck during the MLPA. Lastly, the pre- and post-amended boundaries overlap existing oil infrastructure that is maintained year round, no existing exemptions or conversations have been had regarding this infrastructure overlap. For these reasons we believe the petition should be denied.

Petition2023-32MPA – Reject

Petition 32 requests expanding the Duxbury Reef SMCA north, south and converting the SMCA into an SMR. The petition cites apparent drops in biodiversity in the areas, confusion on take regulations, and, as a result, high incidence of accidental poaching.



We believe this petition to be well intentioned but do not believe it should be accepted. The petition's claims that there was a local drop in biodiversity are all based on local surveys on no actual data displaying a measurable drop in the biodiversity in the area.

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Observations by MPA Watch on potential MPA violations comes from observers seeing “anyone with buckets,” citing even children with buckets counting as a possible violation. While it is understandable to ascertain data this way, we would like the commission to understand that someone simply with a bucket on one of the most popular beaches in the area does not mean they are violating MPA take regulations. This method of data collection possibly is why the self-reported values of possible violations at Duxbury are so high, when actual enforcement reports show infractions at Duxbury being so low they do not even make it to the yearly MRC report. Enforcement reports on MPAs from the yearly March MRC give insight into MPA violations in the state, of which Duxbury Reef never was in the top MPAs in violation (top 35) or top 5 in the northern region specifically in 2024 or 2025. Letters from partner agencies such as state and national parks as well as national marine sanctuaries all cite possible issues with the SMCA, all requesting it expand, but no agency goes so far as to support making the area an SMR. No hard data whatsoever has been provided to demonstrate a need to expand the SMCA to include these highly inaccessible areas in the north or south as well. The petitioner’s claim that visitors walking through the existing southern border with legal catch from outside the SMCA is merely speculative. Access to the reef in this southern section is blocked by an inside channel except during extreme low tides, making further regulatory protection unnecessary and a niche case at best.

Regarding the original MPA expansion proposals, and even specifically the southern expansion (image above), the new covered area has a very asymmetric shape. This goes directly against MLPA guidelines for designating MPAs which state that MPAs with odd-asymmetric shapes are difficult to enforce and confusing to the public, possibly even adding to the confusions the petitioner claims is present at Duxbury. At the bare minimum, this border must be modified in a way that adheres to the MLPA MPA design guidelines before even being considered for final action. Because any possible additional area included or removed from the proposed expansion needs to be considered by all stakeholders, we must see what this final border actually is before providing further input. In December 2025, the petitioner did submit an informal request (“informal” was tagged by FGC staff) to change the border post-petition deadline, which could solve this odd shape issue. It is currently not known whether amendments like this can be considered. If the informal request is ultimately considered, the existing counter arguments still exist with exception of course of the expansion border shape.

Petition2023-33MPA – Reject

Several groups and individuals have expressed opposition to this petition, and we all stand by the majority of their comments, even after the limited number of amendments to certain MPAs in petition 33. While there are various pathways for kelp restoration, the establishment of new or larger MPAs is not one of them. It is widely accepted that the growth and abundance of kelp are dependent on water quality and temperature. Even under ideal growing conditions, a large swell can damage kelp forests, ripping the

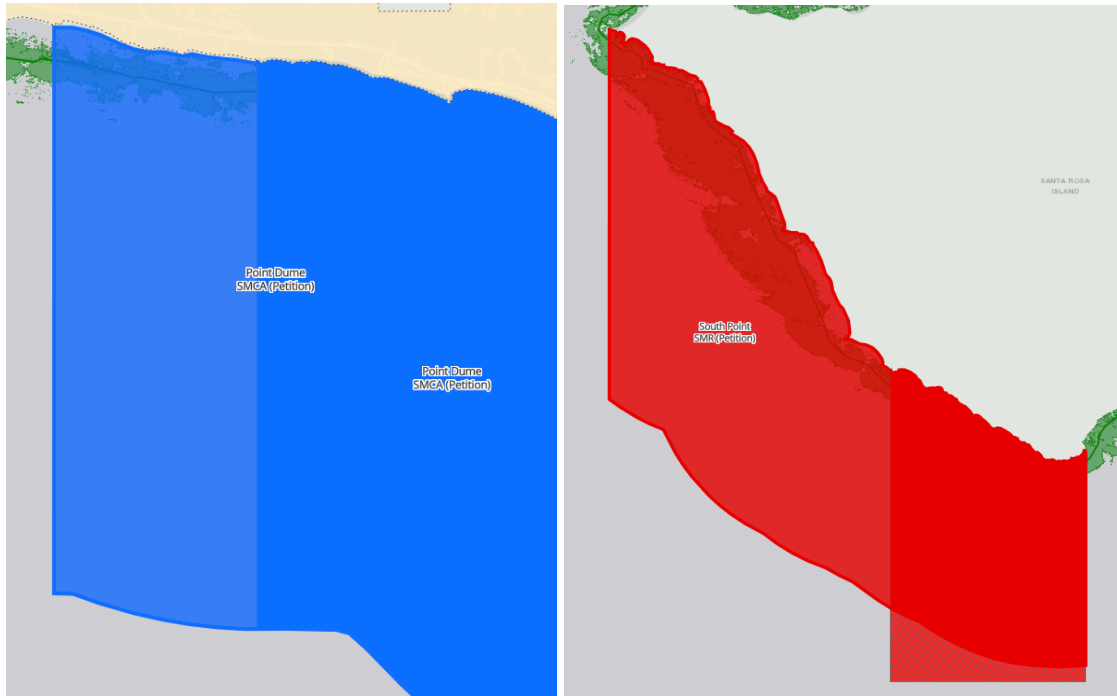
January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

largest, most buoyant, stalks off the seafloor. Fishing activities have little to no impact on kelp health as seen by thriving kelp populations throughout history pre-dating even the MLPA when fishing access was less restrictive. It is well documented how we came to this spot in the first place for our kelp, the rolling El Ninos in the mid-2010s removed a substantial amount of our state's kelp forests, not fishing, and fishing restrictions are not what it will take for the forests to regrow. The creation or expansion of MPAs resulting from this petition will have a negligible effect on the recovery of kelp forests, but a permanent and lasting effect on those that have a livelihood on the water or those that want to simply fish and enjoy a day on the water. In some instances, such expansions may hinder restoration efforts by obstructing human interventions aimed at encouraging kelp growth, such as seeding areas or urchin barren removal efforts.

Furthermore, the petition does not adequately explain why most of the proposed expansion areas cover waters that are simply too deep for kelp to grow. All but one of its expansions (Gull Island) have this problem, covering waters well beyond kelp's natural growing depth. Many of the proposed expansions extend to the state line, covering areas with depths exceeding 1,000 feet when kelp cannot grow any deeper than 150ft. For a petition focused on kelp restoration, this deepwater coverage is illogical and appears to be an attempt to limit area access to our already managed fisheries while protecting an area outside of the scope of the petition. Below are some of the petition's proposed expansions on SeaSketch with the kelp max extent per landsat and flyovers enabled (green layer under proposed expansions). This shows most of the expansion area does not even cover the absolute maximum kelp could grow. Any justifiable MPA expansions regarding kelp recovery at the bare minimum should be more targeted, covering specifically areas kelp can grow, not mass areas covering mostly water kelp cannot grow.

January 2026
Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions



Lastly, the added amendments only pull back on one expansion, the Cabrillo SMR, and add in shore based take of finfish and general spearfishing of finfish at the proposed Pleasure Point SMCA and Point Dume SMCA. As mentioned previously, the shorebased allowance would reduce Pleasure Point and Point Dume to moderate-low levels of protection per the MLPA, losing their local MPA connectivity, making the proposed expansions weaken MPA connectivity rather than strengthen them. Specifically for Point Dume, that MPAs connectivity appears centrally important under the SeaSketch model and should be maintained. While the reduction in size at the Cabrillo expansion is a positive, we still believe any expansion in the first place is not warranted, especially for kelp restoration purposes.

Petition2023-34MPA – Reject

Petition 34 requests the redesignation of one offshore SMCA to a no-take SMR, merging it with the nearshore SMR at Point Buchon to make one no-take SMR. The petition also requests combining the nearshore and offshore SMCAs at Farnsworth into a single SMCA that would permit only pelagic finfish spearfishing, removing various pelagic fishing allowances existing there. The primary justification for these changes is enforcement concerns. Enforcement has effectively managed the existing MPA network without significant issues which already contains nearly 40% limited take SMCAs. The situations at Farnsworth and Point Buchon are similar to several other MPAs along the coast that successfully integrate nearshore and offshore components. The concept of allowing pelagic finfish targeting offshore—where interactions with the MPA's intended

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

protections are minimal—has been recognized since the first and second MPA Master Plans where it explicitly states the lesser effect pelagic fish have on themselves and the MPA ecosystem, and to allow for areas that have pelagic take respectively. Pelagic fishing should be permitted in MPAs that overlap with offshore waters, provided that fishing practices minimize interactions with local and nearshore species, which they inherently do. Additionally, if enforcement was truly the only concern, commercial harpoon at Farnsworth is just as enforceable, if not easier to enforce than recreational spear methods, and should be left in as an allowance in the SMCA. This petition also conflicts with Petition 20 and its requests at Point Bucheon.

The two MPA systems at Farnsworth and Point Bucheon are no different from other nearshore/offshore configurations, so-called “MPA clusters”, and we see no compelling reason to change them specifically. Both MPA clusters currently meet regional sizing guidelines for the total cluster area and LOP requirement to count them both for connectivity as is, with their current access. For these reasons, we believe this petition should be rejected.

Thank you,

AllWaters - AWPAC *(recreational)*

-Chris Killean (President)

-Matt Bond (Board Member)

Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara - CFSB *(commercial)*

-Chris Voss (President)

-Ava Schulenberg (Assistant Director)

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers - BHA *(recreational)*

-Devin O’Dea (Western Policy & Conservation Manager)

Coastal Conservation Association California - CCA Cal *(recreational)*

-Chris Arechaederra (Executive Director)

-Tonie Bagnos (Assistant Director)

Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association - VCCFA *(commercial)*

-Dave Colker (Executive Director)

-Jason Woods (President)

-Eric Hodge, Mike Kenny, Tim Athens (Board Members)

LA Rod and Reel Club *(recreational)*

-John Ballotti (President)

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association (*commercial*)

-Chris Pavone (President)

Santa Barbara Sportfishing Club (*recreational*)

-Whitney Uyeda (President)

Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries (*recreational/commercial*)

-Alan Alward (Co-Chair)

San Diego Fishermen's Working Group (*commercial*)

-Pete Halmay (President)

Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Organization (*commercial*)

-Bill Blue (President)

-Tom Hafer (Secretary)

The Tuna Club Foundation (*recreational*)

-Chase Offield (Board Member)

Santa Barbara FreeDivers Club (*recreational*)

-Dave Huebner (President)

-Bradley Pirmen (Chair)

BD Outdoors (*recreational business*)

-Ali Hussainy (President)

The California Association of Harbor Masters and Port Captains (*commercial*)

-Tim Petrick (President)

Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching (*recreational*)

-Donna Kalez (Co-Owner)

Santa Barbara Landing and Stardust Sportfishing (*recreational business*)

-Jamie Diamond (CEO/owner)

Monterey Bay Tritons (*recreational*)

-Brandon Burke (President)

NorCal Underwater Hunters (*recreational*)

-Matt Mattison (President)

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Fathomiers (*recreational*)

-Paul Romanowski (Conservation Officer)

The Catalina Seabass Fund (*recreational/commercial*)

-Jock Albright (Director)

The Laguna Maritime Alliance (*recreational/commercial*)

-Chase Offield (Chair)

Santa Cruz Kelp Stalker (*recreational*)

-Hans Haveman (Chair)

San Diego Freedivers (*recreational*)

-Ryan Moore (President)

OC Spearos (*recreational*)

-Hidenori Iwagami (president)

Long Beach Neptunes (*recreational*)

-Terry Maas (Chair)

Save Duxbury Access (*grassroots recreational/commercial*)

-Chris Martinelli (Local Lead)

American Fishing Tackle Company - AFTCO (*recreational/commercial business*)

-Bill Shedd (CEO)

-Casey Shedd (President)

Get Hooked Seafood (*commercial business*)

-Kim Selkoe and Victoria Voss (Co-Founders)

Pacific Coast Sportfishing (*recreational business*)

-Bill DePriest (Publisher / Editor)

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Dedicated Researchers/Scientists:

UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science & Management

-Dr. Dawn A. Murray (PhD. Ocean Sciences - UCSC)

UCSB & UCSC Conservation Scientist

-Dr. Jason Johns (PhD. Ecology and Evolutionary Biology - UCSB)

UCSB Marine Scientist

-Dr. Kim Selkoe (PhD. Ecology and Evolutionary Biology - UCSB)

Private Marine Scientist

-Ethan Estess (M.S. Earth Systems (Marine) - Stanford University)

Senior Marine Scientist and previous marine biologist for the Channel Islands NPS

-Derek Lerma (B.S. Biological Oceanography - Humboldt State University)



01/26/2026

**California Fish and Game Commission
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090**

Subject: Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Dear Melissa Miller-Henson,

Please add the San Diego County Wildlife Federation (SDCWF) to the CCA Coalition letter regarding Bin 2 MPA petitions being considered. We were unfortunately a bit late getting our logo and signature added to the letter represented below. The San Diego County Wildlife Federation represents over 20,000 sportsmen and women in San Diego County, and we are active in conserving our inland and aquatic habitats in a manner which allows both conservation protection with consumptive use of the waters of our state.

The SDCWF agrees with the recommendations of Coalition listed below.

Thank you for the work you and the Commissioners do for California outdoorsmen and women.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary F. Brennan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Gary F. Brennan
President, San Diego County Wildlife Federation
P.O. Box 3886
Ramona, CA. 92065

Copy to: CCA California

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

February 6, 2026

Re: Retraction of signature and clarification of position on California MPA petitions

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners,

I am a marine scientist and environmental studies professor advising graduate students at Antioch University and teaching undergraduate courses in the Environmental Studies Department at UC Santa Barbara. I work in resource management and conservation realms to protect habitats and to amplify Indigenous voices in conservation initiatives. I also work locally with NOAA on intertidal marine sampling and support locally-rooted conservation efforts, including curriculum development and weaving Indigenous and Western Scientific Knowledge into system solutions. I have worked with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) supporting the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) designation and Chumash cultural values, wisdom, and traditions in marine and land management practices. I currently serve on the NOAA CHNMS Advisory Committee as a Research Seat Alternate.

My research focuses on participatory conservation and co-designing conservation methods that equitably integrate local communities in multi-pronged conservation solutions. I value coalition-building, listening to and incorporating multiple perspectives in conservation planning. I work with fishermen around the world, including supporting the Miloli'i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA), south of Kona, Hawai'i, which includes the waters and submerged lands from the shoreline to the 100-fathom depth contour. The Miloli'i community leads the regulation creation and enforcement in their "last Hawaiian fishing village". In addition, I support the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara in their continued efforts to practice local eco-friendly, sustainable fishing, sell locally caught fish in the Saturday market to our community, promote science and monitoring, and their stewardship of our coast via numerous annual beach and island clean-ups.

Over a year ago, I was asked to add my name to a joint letter about the MPA adaptive management proposals from commercial and recreational fishermen. I did so because of my relationships with many in the California fishing community. Recently, [the letter](#) was submitted to the Fish & Game Commission. Unfortunately, I had not kept up with the revisions, updates, or additions to the letter in the last 13 months and the in-depth amendments to each MPA petition. The letter contains recommendations that I am unable to endorse due to my expertise as a marine scientist. I need to retract my signature from that letter and clarify my position.

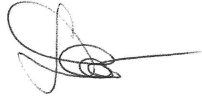
Clarifying my current perspectives on the MPA petitions:

- I submitted a letter in November 2023 endorsing Petition 2023-33MPA, and I am a supporter of protecting California’s kelp forests because they provide invaluable ecological and environmental benefits. These dynamic and biodiverse ecosystems serve as critical nurseries for a wide variety of marine species, providing shelter and food for numerous fish, invertebrates, and marine mammals. Healthy kelp forests support thriving commercial and recreational fisheries and can help dampen the impacts of coastal erosion and storm impacts. With the declines in kelp forest cover across the Pacific West Coast, including California, from natural and human-induced factors, MPAs are a critical tool for supplying the population of recruits and supporting the resilience of kelp ecosystems in the face of these stressors.
- To achieve the stated goals of conserving biodiversity and ecosystem health, I encourage the state to consider increasing protections for MPAs that are currently only lightly or minimally protected as defined by The MPA Guide,¹ especially in places where weaker or more complicated regulations lead to poor compliance and enforcement. An example of what I support are the clarifications on Kashtayit regulation language and Campus Point SMCA color coding (Petition 2023-18MPA).
- I support strengthening the MPA network through the addition of new MPAs where they would protect critical habitat and advance Tribal co-stewardship. To that end, I endorse Petition 2023-28MPA designating Point Sal SMCA, which provides an opportunity to strengthen protections within the CHNMS and offers a pathway for meaningful co-stewardship between the state and NCTC. In addition, I support Petition 2023-29MPA designating Mishopshno SMCA, which would protect a special place culturally and ecologically, and similarly offer a pathway for meaningful co-stewardship between the state, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, and potentially other Tribes. I appreciate that the petitioners were responsive to feedback from the local community, including recreational and commercial fishers, cutting the size of the proposal in half.
- Finally, I do not support weakening MPA protections off the California coast in any capacity. For example, to open recreational fishing opportunities to non-Base fishers, Petition 2023-18MPA would create a narrow alongshore State Marine Conservation Area within the existing SMR that would allow all people to fish for finfish by hook and line. This change would weaken the MPA network by officially downgrading the protections within the state's largest fully protected MPA. Instead, I support the state ensuring current Vandenberg SMR restrictions are enforced and applied to Base personnel and dependents, so that it is not only non-military community members who must comply.

California’s MPA network is imperative for maintaining healthy ocean habitats, biodiversity along the California coast, and ecosystem resilience. Management of MPAs can also honor numerous knowledge systems - commercial fishers, recreational fishers, Indigenous peoples, local communities, and Western scientific knowledge systems. The adaptive management process offers a pathway to improve, and build on the successes of our globally-recognized MPA network.

¹ Grorud-Colvert, Kirsten, Jenna Sullivan-Stack, Callum Roberts, et al. 2021. “The MPA Guide: A Framework to Achieve Global Goals for the Ocean.” *Science*, ahead of print, September 10. World. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abf0861>.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify my position. I appreciate your leadership and your commitment to a healthy and vibrant ocean for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn A. Murray', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. Dawn A. Murray
Professor Environmental Studies, Antioch University
Lecturer Environmental Studies Department, UC Santa Barbara

Marine Conservation Institute Comments on CDFW Recommendations for MPA Petitions

From Ali Rubin <ali.rubin@marine-conservation.org>

Date Tue 03/31/2026 03:02 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of Marine Conservation Institute, please find attached our comments on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Evaluations and Recommendations for the ten non-Tribally-led Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions released on March 20, 2026 .

We appreciate your consideration of these comments and your continued work to advance effective marine conservation in California.

Sincerely,
Ali Rubin

Ali Rubin
Marine Conservation Scientist



ali.rubin@marine-conservation.org
marine-conservation.org





March 31, 2026

President Eric Sklar
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
Submitted electronically to: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: Comments from Marine Conservation Institute on petitions to amend the State's MPA network.

Dear California Fish and Game Commission,

On behalf of Marine Conservation Institute, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments following the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Evaluations and Recommendations for the ten non-Tribally-led Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions released on March 20, 2026.

Marine Conservation Institute works to secure strong protection for the ocean's most important places. Through our Marine Protection Atlas (MPAtlas), we assess marine protected areas globally using The MPA Guide, a peer-reviewed framework that evaluates the level of protection and expected conservation outcomes of MPAs. Our work supports governments and partners, including in California, in advancing effective, science-based marine conservation and achieving 30x30 goals.

We recognize the significant effort undertaken by CDFW to evaluate these petitions based on the information available as of March 2025, and we appreciate the Department's acknowledgment that additional information may continue to inform Commission deliberations. As California works toward protecting 30% of state waters by 2030, maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the existing MPA network is essential to achieving meaningful conservation outcomes.

As part of this effort, we conducted an analysis to determine the likely biodiversity outcomes of the petitions submitted to the State using The MPA Guide framework. This approach applies a consistent, science-based method to evaluate how proposed changes would affect protection levels and conservation outcomes across California's MPA network.

We strongly support CDFW's recommendations to deny petitions that would lower protection levels within California's MPA network by allowing additional recreational or commercial take of marine life. Scientific evidence consistently demonstrates that the greatest ecological benefits such as increased biomass, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience are achieved in MPAs that are fully or highly protected from extractive activities.

We also acknowledge that localized ecological pressures, such as sea urchin overpopulation and kelp loss, may require active management. In these cases, we encourage the Commission to explore adaptive, site-specific management strategies that address these threats without reducing protection levels or opening extractive fisheries within MPAs.

In particular, we support the recommendations to deny the following petitions:

- Modify Take in 9 SMCAs to Allow Commercial Take of Sea Urchins (2023-14MPA)¹
- Reclassify Footprint, Gull Island, and Santa Barbara Island SMRs to SMCAs to Allow Take of Highly Migratory Species (2023-15MPA_AM)
- Reclassify Stewarts Point and Bodega Head SMRs to SMCAs to Allow Commercial Salmon Trolling (2023-16MPA)
- Modify Allowed Uses at Several Santa Barbara Channel MPAs and Special Closures: Vandenberg SMR, Kashtayit SMCA, and San Miguel and Anacapa Special Closures (2023-18MPA)

1: With the exception of the Point Vicente no-take SMCA, petition 2023-14MPA does not lower the Highly Protected status of the named MPAs per our MPA Guide analysis, and may provide ecological benefits through the restoration effort of urchin culling. However, while ecosystem restoration and conservation may be complementary, they are non-substitutable actions where priority should be given to preventing the degradation of intact ecosystems.

These petitions propose changes that would reduce the level of protection in areas that currently contribute to the ecological performance of California's MPA network. Downgrading protections risks undermining biodiversity gains, weakening ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change, and compromising California's leadership in marine conservation.

To advance the state's goal of protecting 30% of nature by 2030, we do believe that the following proposals will modestly strengthen the network and urge the commission to support them:

- Designate new MPA as Chitqawi SMCA (2023-19MPA)
- Redesignate Point Buchon SMCA as Chumash SMCA to support tribal co-management and take provisions; extend northern boundary of Point Buchon SMR (2023-20MPA)
- Multiple changes to Pyramid Point SMCA (2023-21MPA)
- Reclassify all or part of Anacapa Island SMR (2023-27MPA)
- Designate new MPA as Point Sal SMR (2023-28MPA)
- Add new MPA as Mishopshno SMCA near Carpinteria (2023-29MPA)
- Reclassify and expand Duxbury Reef SMCA (2023-32MPA)
- Reclassify Point Buchon SMCA and modify regulations in Farnsworth MPAs (2023-34MPA)

California's MPA network is widely recognized as a global model for science-based ocean protection. Maintaining strong protections within this network is critical not only for achieving the State's 30x30 commitments, but also for ensuring long-term conservation benefits for marine ecosystems and coastal communities.

We respectfully urge the Commission to uphold CDFW's recommendations to deny these petitions and to continue advancing policies that strengthen, rather than diminish, the effectiveness of California's MPA network.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Lance E. Morgan, President

Nikki Harasta, Marine Conservation Scientist I

Alexandra Rubin, Marine Conservation Scientist I

April 2026 FGC Meeting Agenda Item 2: MPA Petitions Public Comment Letter

From Katie O'Donnell <katie@wildcoast.org>

Date Thu 04/02/2026 04:14 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; fgcericsklar [redacted]; Samantha Murray [redacted]; commissionerdariusanderson [redacted]; commissioner.zavaleta [redacted]; jhostler [redacted]

Cc Shuman, Craig [redacted]; Waggoner, Claire [redacted]; Worden, Sara [redacted]; Eckerle, Jenn@CNRA <Jenn.Eckerle@resources.ca.gov>; Lewis, Staci@CNRA <Staci.Lewis@resources.ca.gov>; Esqro, Michael@CNRA <Michael.Esqro@resources.ca.gov>; Ashcraft, Susan [redacted]; Miller-Henson, Melissa [redacted]

Good afternoon,

Please see the attached letter for **Agenda Item 2: MPA Petitions** for the upcoming April 15-16 FGC meeting.

Signed by 31 organizations and 2 individuals, the letter respectfully asks the FGC Commission to support CDFW's recommendation to reject petitions 2023-14, 2023-15, 2023-16, and 2023-18 (except for supporting 2023-18MPA_2: Marine Monitor radar at Point Conception).

This letter summarizes how these petitions would weaken the MPA network's integrity, fail to adhere to science-based guidelines and Marine Life Protection Act goals, and conflict with the Decadal Management Review. The letter notes that in total, the four petitions would reduce protections across 18 MPAs within California's MPA Network.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering these comments.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

Thank you,
Katie

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Katie O'Donnell
Senior Ocean Conservation Manager

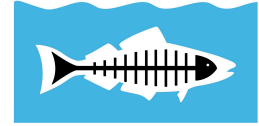
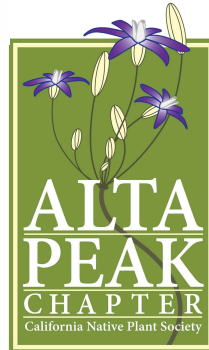
she/her/hers



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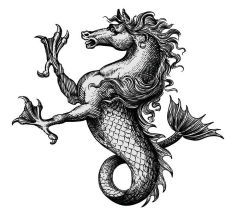
Heal the Bay



CATALINA ISLAND CONSERVANCY



Friends of Rose Creek
"Connecting Our Communities"



April 2, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Submitted electronically to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

RE: **Agenda Item 2** - Opposition to Petitions 2023-14, 2023-15, 2023-16, and 2023-18 which would weaken the California MPA Network

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Anderson, and Honorable Commissioners:

The undersigned organizations -representing public interest, marine science, environmental conservation, and coastal communities - strongly oppose Petitions 2023-14, 2023-15, 2023-16, and 2023-18 and agree with California's Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)'s recommendations to deny them. These proposals would significantly weaken California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network and undermine the ecological integrity that the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) was created to protect. In total, the petitions would reduce protections across eighteen MPAs, including six State Marine Reserves (SMRs), two no-take State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCAs), eight SMCAs, and two Special Closure Areas.

We urge the Fish and Game Commission (FGC) to deny petitions that fail to meet the Decadal Management Review (DMR)'s definition of adaptive management: "Guided by the principles of adaptive management, [the first ten-year management review] is an opportunity to evaluate progress to date, celebrate accomplishments, provide lessons learned, and identify recommendations to strengthen the MPA Network and Management Program going forward."¹

We oppose these petitions because they:

- **Weaken MPA Network Integrity**

California's MPA network was intentionally designed using science-based guidelines developed by CDFW and expert scientists to ensure larval connectivity, habitat representation, trophic structure, and ecosystem resilience. Because the network functions as an interconnected system, weakening individual MPAs compromises the entire network and conflicts with the goals of the MLPA. The [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) recognized the network's effectiveness by adding it to the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas after a seven-year evaluation. Rolling back protections or increasing extractive activities threatens the network's ability to sustain biodiversity and ecological connectivity.

¹California Department of Fish and Wildlife. California's Marine Protected Area Network Decadal Management Review. 2022, nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=209209.

- **Fail to Adhere to Science-Based Guidelines and MLPA Goals**

The MLPA requires that any modifications to MPAs support its six statutory goals and align with established scientific guidelines². The petitions fail to meet these standards. The network's design was grounded in peer-reviewed research on fish movement, larval dispersal, and population persistence, including spatial population models demonstrating that minimum size and spacing criteria are essential for ecological connectivity. Reducing protections in ways that violate these criteria lacks scientific justification and risks degrading network performance.

Scientific literature is also clear that adaptive management is intended to strengthen MPAs based on monitoring data, not weaken them³. As California enters a critical phase of long-term monitoring and adaptive management, peer-reviewed guidance emphasizes that adaptability means refining protections using new evidence, not making ad hoc reductions. A 2023 global synthesis of 307 MPA design recommendations across 56 publications established "permanence and adaptability" as foundational principles, defining the latter specifically as evidence-based enhancement rather than diminished protection⁴.

- **Do Not Align with the Decadal Management Review (DMR)**

The state has invested heavily in monitoring and data synthesis, including more than \$60 million from the Ocean Protection Council since 2017. Findings from the DMR highlight the need to maintain and enhance resilience in the face of climate change, which is a goal fundamentally incompatible with weakening existing protections.

Deny Petition 2023-14MPA: Opening Sea Urchin Harvest to Commercial Fishing Within Existing MPAs

The undersigned organizations urge the FGC to reject Petition 2023-14MPA. The proposed changes fail to address the underlying drivers of kelp decline, contradicts the core mandates of the MLPA, and would weaken the integrity of the broader MPA network. We support CDFW's recommendation to deny the petition, including its conclusion that the proposal conflicts with the original objectives of the affected MPAs and does not align with adaptive management guidance from the DMR.

²California Legislature. California Fish and Game Code, div. 3, ch. 10.5, Marine Life Protection Act, https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=FGC&division=3.&title=&part=&chapter=10.5.&article=

³ Van Diggelen, Amanda D., et al. "California's Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Effective Marine Protected Area Network Management." *Marine Policy*, vol. 137, Mar. 2022, p. 104928, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104928>. 7 January 2022.

⁴ Burns, E. S., et al. "Finding harmony in Marine Protected Area design guidelines." *Conservation Science and Practice*. Vol. 5, Issue 6. <https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.12946>. 24 April 2023.

The Proposed Action Would Not Address Kelp Loss

The petition seeks to open nine SMCAs to commercial urchin harvest to support kelp restoration. However, purple urchins - the species responsible for kelp barrens - represent only 0.26% of commercial landings and have almost no market value. Red urchins make up 99.73% of landings but are not driving kelp decline⁵. Opening MPAs would therefore incentivize removal of red urchins, not the ecologically harmful purple urchins, and would not meaningfully reduce urchin pressure on kelp forests. Current research instead supports targeted, science-based purple urchin removals using trained divers to minimize ecosystem impacts^{6, 7}.

The Petition Conflicts With MLPA Goals

The proposal undermines four MLPA goals (1, 2, 5, and 6) by exposing protected species to increased risk, weakening trophic dynamics, and creating enforcement challenges⁸. Allowing commercial take within MPAs increases confusion and accidental take, contradicting the MLPA's requirement for clear, enforceable protections⁹. Multiple gear types can be used to take urchins¹⁰, and vessels can carry or switch gear, making it difficult for wardens to verify compliance within SMCAs¹¹. Increasing allowable take in MPAs with already complex rules runs counter to MLPA Goal 5 and to the DMR's emphasis on improving, not weakening, management effectiveness.

In Southern California MPAs, intact trophic cascades have been shown to support kelp resilience during marine heatwaves^{12, 13}. In these systems, predators such as lobsters and sheephead naturally regulate urchin populations^{14, 15}. Opening these MPAs to commercial urchin harvest would erode these predator-prey relationships.

⁵ California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Marine Fisheries Data Explorer; Landings by Value and Participation. <https://mfde.wildlife.ca.gov/visualize/LandingsSummary>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2026.

⁶ Bennet and Caton, 2019. Marine heat wave and multiple stressors tip bull kelp forest to sea urchin barrens. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-51114-y>

⁷ Eisaguirre et al. 2020. [Trophic redundancy and predator size class structure drive differences in kelp forest ecosystem dynamics.](#)

⁸ California Legislature. California Fish and Game Code, div. 3, ch. 10.5, Marine Life Protection Act, https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=FGC&division=3.&title=&part=&chapter=10.5.&article=

⁹ Turnbull et. al. "Evaluating the social and ecological effectiveness of partially protected marine areas." *Conservation Biology*, Vol. 35, Issue 3. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13677>. 14 January 2021.

¹⁰ California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Marine Fisheries Data Explorer; Landings by Value and Participation. <https://mfde.wildlife.ca.gov/visualize/LandingsSummary>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2026.

¹¹ California Department of Fish and Wildlife. California's Marine Protected Area Network Decadal Management Review. 2022, <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=209209&inline>.

¹² Kumagai et al. 2024. [Marine Protected Areas that preserve trophic cascades that promote resilience of kelp forests to heat waves.](#)

¹³ Hamilton and Caselle 2015. [Exploitation and recovery of a sea urchin predator has implications for the resilience of southern California kelp forests.](#)

¹⁴ Kumagai et al. 2024. [Marine Protected Areas that preserve trophic cascades that promote resilience of kelp forests to heat waves.](#)

¹⁵ Hamilton and Caselle 2015. [Exploitation and recovery of a sea urchin predator has implications for the resilience of southern California kelp forests.](#)

On the North Coast, where sheephead and otters are absent, commercial harvest would still primarily remove red urchins rather than the purple urchins driving kelp loss^{16,17}. Scientific Collecting Permits offer a more appropriate tool for targeted purple urchin removal while maintaining network protections and supporting long-term commercial viability of red urchins.

The Petition Would Weaken the MPA Network

SeaSketch analysis shows the petition would reduce habitat connectivity and significantly downgrade the level of protection (LOP) in several MPAs. Point Dume, Swami's, and Point Vicente (currently functioning as a no-take SMR) would fall to "moderate-low" protection levels, undermining spacing and habitat representation guidelines essential to network design^{18,19,20}. These changes would diminish long-term ecological benefits without evidence that commercial urchin harvest would improve kelp health.

Deny Petition 2023-15MPA: Opening Channel Island MPAs to Allow Take of Highly Migratory Species

The undersigned organizations urge the FGC to reject Petition 2023-15MPA because it conflicts with the goals of the Marine Reserves Working Group (MRWG) that supported the Channel Islands MPA designation process in 2003²¹, as well as the goals of the MLPA. The petition also undermines ecosystem protections for highly migratory species (HMS), and creates enforcement challenges. We support CDFW's recommendation to deny the petition.

The proposal would open three no-take SMRs in the Channel Islands (Footprint, Gull Island, and Santa Barbara Island) to commercial fishing for pelagic and HMS species. These Channel Islands MPAs are among the largest, oldest, and most effective in the nation and serve as the "crown jewels" of California's MPA network. Reclassifying them as SMCAs contradicts the original planning goals for the region and the statewide MLPA framework.

¹⁶ Marine Mammal Commission. "Southern Sea Otter - Marine Mammal Commission." Marine Mammal Commission, Marine Mammal Commission, 2015,

www.mmc.gov/priority-topics/species-of-concern/southern-sea-otter/. Accessed 25 Mar. 2026.

¹⁷ California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Marine Fisheries Data Explorer; Landings by Value and Participation. <https://mfde.wildlife.ca.gov/visualize/LandingsSummary>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2026.

¹⁸ SeaSketch California. 14_7 Point Dune SMCA (Take) Discussion Forum.

<https://www.seasketch.org/california/app/forums/280/524>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2026.

¹⁹ SeaSketch California. 14_9 Swami's SMCA (Take) Discussion Forum.

<https://www.seasketch.org/california/app/forums/280/526>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2026.

²⁰ SeaSketch California. 14_8 Point Vicente SMCA (no-take) (Take/Designation) Discussion Forum.

<https://www.seasketch.org/california/app/forums/280/525>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2026.

²¹ History of the Community-Based Process on Marine Reserves at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary 1999-2001. March 2002.

<https://nmschannelislands.blob.core.windows.net/channelislands-prod/media/docs/2001-marine-reserves-sac-history.pdf> Accessed 25 Mar. 2026.

Inconsistent With MRWG and MLPA Goals

The Channel Islands MPAs were established to protect representative habitats, ecological processes, and ecosystem-level biodiversity, not individual species. The MRWG explicitly designed these reserves to safeguard whole ecosystems, a principle reinforced by past FGC decisions rejecting petitions focused on single species (e.g., the 2020–21 white shark MPA proposal)²². Opening MPAs to target HMS contradicts this ecosystem-based mandate.

The petition also conflicts with MLPA Goals 1 and 2, which require protecting marine life abundance and ecosystem integrity. Contrary to the petitioner's claims, HMS are not merely transient visitors, they are apex predators that provide critical top-down structural influence on the marine community. Although wide-ranging, they aggregate at predictable hotspots such as seamounts and fronts, and studies show increases in tuna size and reduced fishing pressure following MPA establishment^{23,24}. By foraging on resident MPA species, HMS gain access to high quality prey without the risk of capture from fishing. Allowing HMS take would remove these benefits and introduce new disturbances such as boat traffic, noise, pollution, and derelict gear that harm non-migratory species the MPAs were designed to protect.

Ecological Importance of Protecting HMS and Pelagics

HMS and pelagic species provide essential ecosystem services²⁵. They transport nutrients across ocean regions and act as apex predators that regulate mid-trophic species^{26,27}. Removing them can trigger destabilizing food-web shifts, such as mesopredator booms. In Southern California, declines in sharks and billfish have been linked to increases in Humboldt squid, which then prey heavily on hake, herring, and crustaceans²⁸. Allowing HMS fishing in MPAs risks amplifying these cascading effects. Generally, HMS fisheries also frequently catch non-target species, including threatened turtles and seabirds, although hook-and-line, spear, harpoon, and deep set buoy gear is highly selective and generally avoids surface-dwelling species. Introducing take into no-take MPAs would expose protected habitats and species to new risks, undermining the core purpose of the reserves.

²² California Department of Fish and Wildlife. California's Marine Protected Area Network Decadal Management Review. 2022. [Appendix G Supplemental Tables](#).

²³ McDonald, Gavin, et al. "Global Expansion of Marine Protected Areas and the Redistribution of Fishing Effort." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 121, no. 29, 9 July 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2400592121>.

²⁴ Curnick, David J, et al. "Interactions between a Large Marine Protected Area, Pelagic Tuna and Associated Fisheries." Vol. 7, 14 May 2020, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2020.00318>

²⁵ Heithaus et al. 2008. [Predicting ecological consequences of marine top predator declines](#).

²⁶Bauer, S., and B. J. Hoyer. "Migratory Animals Couple Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning Worldwide." *Science*, vol. 344, no. 6179, 4 Apr. 2014, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1242552>

²⁷ Reynolds, Heather L, and Keith Clay. "Migratory species and ecological processes." *Environmental Law*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2011, pp. 371–391. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43267495, <https://doi.org/10.2307/43267495>.

²⁸Vetter, Russ, et al. Predatory interactions and niche overlap between mako shark, *isurus oxyrinchus*, and jumbo squid, *dosidicus gigas*, in the California Current. *CalCOFI Rep.*, Vol. 49, 2008, oceanrep.geomar.de/id/eprint/53785/1/4444.pdf.

Deny Petition 2023-16: Reclassify Stewart's Point and Bodega Head SMRs as SMCAs to Allow Commercial Salmon Trolling

The undersigned organizations urge the FGC to reject Petition 2023-16MPA because it conflicts with key goals of the MLPA, raises significant scientific concerns, and, according to CDFW, does not align with adaptive management guidance from the DMR. CDFW also notes that the petition contradicts the original purpose of the two SMRs, could create enforcement challenges, and may unintentionally increase pressure on groundfish species.

Conflicts With MLPA Goals

Petition 2023-16 is inconsistent with MLPA Goals 1, 2, and 6. It proposes reducing protections in two SMRs to allow commercial salmon trolling at a time when salmon populations are at historic lows²⁹, ³⁰. The commercial salmon fishery has been closed for three consecutive years (2023–2025) due to extremely low abundance driven by multi-year drought, warming waters, harmful algal blooms, and wildfire-related impacts on watersheds. Introducing new fishing pressure in SMRs would add stress to a species already in crisis, directly contradicting MLPA Goal 1, which requires protecting and maintaining species abundance.

The petition also conflicts with MLPA Goal 2, which prioritizes sustaining and rebuilding depleted, economically valuable species. Salmon clearly meet both criteria: they are economically important and severely depleted. Reclassifying SMRs as SMCAs to increase commercial harvest opportunities during a period of population collapse runs counter to the MLPA's conservation mandate. Finally, weakening protections in Stewart's Point and Bodega Head SMRs would undermine the integrity of the statewide MPA network, violating MLPA Goal 6. SMRs serve as the backbone of the network, and reducing their protection level diminishes the connectivity and ecological function the MLPA requires.

Scientific Concerns

While the petition correctly notes that climate change threatens salmon, its proposed action does nothing to address the root causes of salmon decline. Research shows that warming water temperatures and reduced streamflow have harmed salmon throughout their life cycle, contributing to long-term reductions in abundance³¹. Allowing take in SMRs would not mitigate these climate-driven stressors and would remove safeguards that currently allow salmon to recover and safely hunt for prey within those MPAs.

Recent scientific studies underscore the importance of maintaining strong protections. A 2023 study by Hamilton, Kennedy, and colleagues found that MPAs, despite facing climate stressors,

²⁹ PFMC. 2026. [Review of 2025. Ocean Salmon Fisheries.](#)

³⁰ CDFW. 2026. [Chinook Salmon.](#)

³¹ Siegel, Jared E. and Crozier, Lisa G. "Impacts of Climate Change on Salmon of the Pacific Northwest: A review of the scientific literature published in 2019". 2020, <https://doi.org/10.25923/jke5-c307>

can function as climate refugia that buffer species from the worst impacts of warming³². Similarly, Smith et al. (2025) examined ecological communities in Central Coast MPAs before, during, and after the 2014–2016 marine heatwaves³³. While MPAs did not prevent all climate-driven changes, some communities inside MPAs experienced less disruption than reference sites, and MPAs continued to support higher fish biomass, abundance, and diversity even during extreme heat events.

These findings suggest that maintaining the integrity of the existing MPA network is more likely to support the resilience of salmon and HMS under climate change than weakening SMRs to expand commercial fishing allowances. Strong, fully protected areas provide ecological stability that can help species, including salmon, better withstand climate-related pressures.

Deny Three Actions with Petition 2023-18: Modifications to allowed uses at several Santa Barbara Channel MPAs

The undersigned organizations urge the FGC to reject Petition 2023-18MPA because it is inconsistent with the goals of the MRWG and the MLPA and lacks scientific justification for removing protections for seabirds and pinnipeds. We support CDFW’s recommendation to deny actions 2023-18MPA_5, 2023-18MPA_6, and 2023-18MPA_7, which would reduce protections for seabird and pinniped populations and weaken ecological protections. We also support CDFW’s recommendation to support action 2023-18MPA_2 to continue support for the Marine Monitor (M2) radar at Point Conception SMR, because it aligns with the goals of the MLPA and the DMR recommendations regarding improving MPA enforcement.

Inconsistent With MRWG and MLPA Goals

Actions 2023-18MPA_5, 2023-18MPA_6, and 2023-18MPA_7 propose removing the Special Closures on San Miguel Island and Anacapa Island which were established prior to the creation of the MPA network to protect seabird and pinniped populations from human disturbance.³⁴ San Miguel Island is home to one of the largest pinniped rookeries and haul-out areas in the country and pinnipeds are highly sensitive to disturbance, especially during pupping and breeding, when disturbance can lead to reduced reproductive success or pup abandonment.³⁵ Similarly,

³² Hamilton, Susan L, et al. “Variable Exposure to Multiple Climate Stressors across the California Marine Protected Area Network and Policy Implications.” *Ices Journal of Marine Science*, vol. 80, no. 7, 26 July 2023, pp. 1923–1935, <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsad120>.

³³ Smith, Joshua G, et al. “Conservation Benefits of a Large Marine Protected Area Network That Spans Multiple Ecosystems.” *Conservation Biology*, 9 Jan. 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.14435>

³⁴ National Park Service. “Marine Protected Areas - Channel Islands National Park”. <https://www.nps.gov/chis/learn/nature/marine-protected-areas.htm>. Accessed 23 March 2026.

³⁵ Lowry, Mark S., Elizabeth M. Jaime, and Jeffrey E. Moore. 2021. Abundance and distribution of pinnipeds at the Channel Islands in southern California, central and northern California, and southern Oregon during summer 2016–2019. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SWFSC-656. <https://doi.org/10.25923/6qhf-0z55>

Anacapa Island is home to the largest breeding colony of California brown pelicans in the world^{36, 37}.

Brown pelicans are extremely sensitive to noise and human disturbance, particularly during nesting when disturbance can cause nest abandonment³⁸. Removing protections threatens these sensitive populations and conflicts with MRWG Goal 1 and MLPA Goals 1 and 2 which aim to protect populations of interest and the natural diversity and abundance of marine life.

Conclusion

We urge the FGC to reject Petitions 2023-14, 2023-15, 2023-16, and 2023-18 to ensure that California's marine ecosystems remain resilient, healthy, and protected for future generations.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Organizations³⁹

Tomas Valadez
California Policy Manager
Azul

Kayla Fearheller
CEO and Founder
Bleu World Corporation

Sean Bothwell
Executive Director
California Coastkeeper Alliance

Barbara Brydolf
President Alta Peak Chapter
California Native Plant Society

Sharon Musa
External Affairs Manager
Catalina Island Conservancy

³⁶ National Park Service. Restoring Anacapa Island: Seabird Habitat - Channel Islands National Park. <https://www.nps.gov/chis/learn/nature/restoring-anacapa-island-sea-bird-habitat.htm>. Accessed 24 March 2026.

³⁷ California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Anacapa Island Special Closure. Version 2, September 2022. <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=104293>.

³⁸ Anderson 1998. [Dose-response relationships between human disturbance and brown pelican breeding success](#).

³⁹ Alphabetical by organization name

Suzanne Hume
Educational Director & Founder
CleanEarth4Kids.org

Dan Silver
Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League

Laura Deehan
State Director
Environment California

Pamela Heatherington
Director
Environmental Center of San Diego

Azsha Hudson
Marine Conservation Analyst & Program Manager
Environmental Defense Center

Laura Hunter
Board Member
Escondido Neighbors United

Suzie Fortner
Executive Director
Friends of the Dunes

James Peugh
Chair
Friends of Famosa Slough

Michael Wellborn
Board President
Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks

Daniel Watman
Friends of International Friendship Park

Karin Zirk, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Friends of Rose Creek

Carissa Cabrera
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⁴⁰ Individuals are signing onto this letter for themselves, and are not signing on behalf of their organization. In other words, their affiliation with an organization is not an endorsement by the organization, but only by the individual person.