

California Fish and Game Commission

Meeting Goals, Guidelines and Other Important Information

Welcome to a Meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission!

This year marks the 157th year of operation of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Commission's goal is preserving our heritage and conserving our natural resources through informed decision making; Commission meetings are vital in achieving that goal. In that spirit, we provide the following information to be as effective and efficient as possible.

We expect to hear comments from people with varied perspectives and deeply held values about California's wildlife, coastal places, and public trust resources. In these meetings, the Commission is committed to supporting an environment where everyone can safely participate, while also protecting free speech. Meeting goals, expectations, and participation information have been created to support a respectful, constructive environment where all voices are heard; we share them here to enhance transparency.

Meeting Goals

- Provide a safe and inclusive environment for sharing knowledge, experiences, ideas, and perspectives.
- Uphold the Commission's [Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(JEDI\) Policy](#) and goals, including centering principles of environmental justice and access for underserved communities; recognizing and honoring the perspectives and traditional knowledge and practices of California tribes and tribal communities; and working from a shared understanding of key JEDI-related [definitions and terms](#).
- Ensure all commissioners can hear and participate in agenda topic dialogue in real time.
- Daylight areas of agreement or disagreement, as well as potential modifications and compromises.
- Gather input to inform Commission decision-making.

MPA Petitions Goals and Guidelines

- Deliberate and vote on 15 MPA petitions and all the actions within each. Decisions could be to move to a regulatory process, deny, or take any other action the Commission determines is warranted by the petition, such as considering regulatory amendments that petitioners have suggested during the petition process or granting or further reviewing some portions of a petition.
- Consider MPA petitions on **Wednesday** in the afternoon (petition numbers 2023-14MPA, 2023-23MPA_AM1, 2023-33MPA_AM1), on **Thursday** (petition numbers 2023-21MPA_AM1, 2023-19MPA_AM1, 2023-20MPA_AM1, 2023-34MPA, 2023-28MPA_AM2, 2023-29MPA_AM2, 2022-04, and 2023-18MPA [Vandenberg and Kashtayit]), and on **Friday** (petition numbers 2023-27MPA_AM1, 2023-18MPA [San Miguel and Anacapa special closures], 2023-15MPA_AM2, 2023-16MPA, 2023-32MPA, and 2023-24MPA_AM1). See details about MPA petitions in the October 13-16, 2026 Commission meeting agenda.

- **The amount of time allocated for public comment on each MPA petition agenda item will be limited to no more than 30 minutes to limit the entire agenda item to approximately one hour in length.**
 - Includes an introduction to the item, public comment, and Commission discussion.
 - Not everyone will have an opportunity to speak.
 - ***No ceding time will be allowed*** for the MPA petition agenda items (beginning with Agenda Item 26), so submitting comments in writing by 5:00 p.m. on September 30 or noon on October 8 is highly recommended. The presiding commissioner will alternate between speakers in the meeting room and speakers online, both in support of the petitioned actions and opposed to the petitioned actions, alternating until the maximum time is reached.
 - The presiding commissioner may ask for visual cues to express support or opposition at the end of public comment.
 - If agenda items are concluded in less time than allocated, the Commission may choose to allow for additional time for subsequent agenda items.
- There are no restrictions on submitting written comments, other than they be submitted consistent with the Commission's meeting procedure regulation as explained in this document. It is highly advised to *submit written comments by September 30* rather than counting on being able to give oral comments at the meeting.

Meeting Expectations: Commitment to a Respectful Environment and Free Speech

We acknowledge that meeting participants care deeply about California's wildlife, coastal places, and public trust resources. The Commission is committed to creating and maintaining an environment where all participants feel safe, respected, and able to contribute meaningfully. Therefore, the Commission strongly discourages personal attacks, intimidation, harassment, hateful expressions (including racial or other identity-based comments), or other conduct or comments that target individuals rather than issues. These comments can diminish the quality of public dialogue, discourage community participation, and potentially reduce the likelihood that commissioners will give weight to comments delivered in this manner.

The Commission upholds the right to free speech; all individuals possess this right and are entitled to use their full speaking time to express their views, including critiques, alternative perspectives, and disagreement. However, disruptions to the meeting will not be tolerated. Personal threats or attacks on members, staff or other commenters, references to protected characteristics, offensive or profane speech, yelling, interruptions, audible reactions, or disputing another speaker during their speaking time may constitute a disruption to the meeting, depending on the circumstances.

The Commission may restrict an individual's right to speak when necessary to avoid disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting. In these cases, the presiding commissioner may gavel or mute a speaker's microphone. If the disruptive behavior continues, after a call for decorum and a warning, the person or people disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting may be removed from the meeting, the meeting may be suspended, and the room may be cleared.

Meeting Participation: How to Attend and Engage

Participate in Person, on Zoom, or by Phone

All Commission meetings are open to the public and subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. You may participate and comment in person, via Zoom webinar, or by phone; meetings are also live streamed for listening or viewing only. The presiding commissioner will explain how to indicate your interest in speaking and time limits. Staff are available to help with logistical questions. After each meeting, audio and video archives are posted to the Commission website.

How to Provide Verbal Comment During the Meeting (Agenda Items 1-25)

- ***In Person:*** Complete a “speaker card” and provide it to the designated staff member before the agenda item is announced. Please complete one speaker card per agenda item. Cards will be available outside the meeting room near the entrance. ***You must submit your speaker card before the agenda item begins.*** In-person speakers will be called in small groups. Please line up behind the podium when your name is called and note that the order of speakers does not matter.
- ***Via Zoom or Phone:*** A “call for public comment” will be made at the beginning of each agenda item, specifying an approximately three-minute time window to “raise” your hand. Please raise your hand either through the Zoom function or, if on the phone, by pressing *9 once on your phone when prompted at the beginning of the agenda item. ***You must be available online at the beginning of the agenda item to raise your hand during the allotted time window.***

How to Provide Verbal Comment for MPA Petition Items (Beginning with Item 26)

- ***In Person:*** Complete a “speaker card” and provide it to the designated staff member before the agenda item is announced. Please complete one speaker card per agenda item. Cards will be available outside the meeting room near the entrance. ***You must submit your speaker card before the agenda item begins.*** In-person speakers will be called in small groups. Please line up behind the podium when your name is called and note that the order of speakers does not matter.
- ***Via Zoom or Phone:*** A “call for public comment” will be made at the beginning of each agenda item with a request to “raise” your hand *first if you support the petition* and then a *few moments later if you oppose the petition*. Please raise your hand either through the Zoom function or, if on the phone, by pressing *9 once on your phone when prompted at the beginning of the agenda item. ***You must be available online at the beginning of the agenda item to raise your hand during the few moments available for either supporting or opposing the petitioned actions.***

Please note that once you raise your hand, staff will record your name and lower your hand. Using a randomized selection of the support and oppose lists it has recorded, staff will call on the number of names identified by the presiding commissioner. Speakers on Zoom or phone will be identified by your display name or the last three digits of your phone number; listen closely for when your name or number is called.

- **General Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items):** Comments made during the general public comment agenda items must be about matters not on this agenda. This time is an opportunity to bring other issues to the Commission's attention; concerns may also be submitted by email or mail. Note that the Commission may not discuss or take action on any matter raised during this item, except to decide whether to place the matter on the agenda of a future meeting (per sections 11125 and 11125.7(a), California Government Code).

How to Provide Written Comments and Submission Deadlines

The public is encouraged to submit written comments on any agenda item. Written comments can be more detailed than what time allows during verbal comment at the meeting, *creating an opportunity to share more information in support of your thoughts and ideas*. You may submit written comments by one of three methods (only one is necessary):

Email to fgc@fgc.ca.gov; **mail** to California Fish and Game Commission, P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090; or **hand deliver** to California Fish and Game Commission, 715 P Street, 16th floor, Sacramento, CA 95814 (call at least one business day in advance to arrange delivery).

Comment Deadlines

<i>Comment Deadline*</i>	<i>Supplemental Comment Deadline**</i>
September 30, 5:00 PM	October 8, 12:00 PM

- * Written comments received at the Commission office by the ***Comment Deadline*** will be made available to the Commissioners prior to the meeting, and may be posted online with meeting materials.
- ** Written comments received at the Commission office by the ***Supplemental Comment Deadline*** will be made available to Commissioners at the meeting but not posted with meeting materials.

After the **Supplemental Comment Deadline**, written comments may be delivered in person to the meeting. Please bring twelve (12) copies of written comments and hand them to the designated staff member just prior to speaking.

Materials provided to the Commission will be available to the general public.

Visual Presentations: Slides, Videos, and Graphics (Non-MPA Petition Items Only)

No visual presentations will be approved for the MPA petition agenda items (beginning with item 26).

All electronic presentations must be requested and submitted by the **Supplemental Comment Deadline** and approved by the Commission executive director before the meeting.

- Electronic presentations must be provided by email to fgc@fgc.ca.gov. If the file is too large to send via email, contact staff to identify an alternative method for submitting the file.
- Specify to which meeting date and agenda topic it pertains.
- All electronic formats must be Windows PC compatible.

- If presenting in person, it is recommended that you bring a print copy of your presentation in case of technical difficulties.
- Approval is at the discretion of the presiding commissioner and is not guaranteed.

Accessibility or Accommodation Needs

Individuals with disabilities and/or needing reasonable accommodation to participate in Commission meetings may contact the Civil Rights Office (CRO) of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife at civilrights@wildlife.ca.gov. Requests for facility or meeting accessibility and requests for American Sign Language interpreters should be submitted at least two weeks before the meeting to help ensure that the requested accommodation can be met. Requests for real-time captioners should be submitted at least four weeks prior to the event. These timeframes are to help ensure that the requested accommodation can be met. If an accommodation is no longer needed, please notify CRO immediately.

Individuals relying on an interpreter are entitled to at least twice the allotted speaking time pursuant to California Government Code, Section 11125.7, subdivision (c), and are asked to provide at least 72 hours' notice. Additional time for other accommodation needs may be granted at the presiding commissioner's discretion to ensure equitable opportunity to address the Commission.

Meeting Expectations: Agenda and Format

Meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda outlines the planned sequence of items, during which presentations, discussion, and public comment will occur. Each meeting includes an opportunity for public comment on each agenda item, as well as a "general public comment" agenda item for topics not on the agenda.

Meeting Format

During meetings, each agenda item generally follows the same format:

- Commission staff introduction of the item
- Department or other agency presentation (if applicable)
- Public presentation (if applicable)
- Commissioner questions
- Ceded speaker time
- Public comment
- Commission discussion and potential action (if applicable)

Meeting Expectations: Guidelines on Speaker Time

The Commission understands that many participants travel long distances or rearrange commitments to attend, whether in person or remotely. To help participants prepare for Commission meetings, we share here speaker guidelines; please keep these in mind as you prepare your comments.

Under Commission meeting procedures, the presiding commissioner allocates a maximum speaking time per person (one to three minutes, with exceptions) for each agenda item. The Commission sometimes discusses items with high public engagement, potentially with large numbers of speakers, and is committed to hearing all scheduled items, while also maximizing the amount of information and number of viewpoints that can be shared by attendees. To balance these goals, the presiding commissioner will seek to ensure discussions are focused, respectful, and efficient, and that as many voices as possible can be heard.

Individual Speaking Time

At the beginning of public comment on an agenda item, the presiding commissioner will ask staff how many speakers have indicated a desire to speak, in addition to those with time ceded to them by other attendees (see instructions for ceded time; note that *ceded time will not be allowed for the MPA petition items during this meeting and public comment will be limited to 30 minutes per MPA petition agenda item*). The presiding commissioner will assign one to three minutes for *speakers* without ceded time for that non-MPA petition agenda item.

With limited time to speak during the meeting, it is helpful to submit detailed comments in writing by the **Comment Deadline** (September 30) to help ensure that your ideas and perspective are included in the meeting materials developed and distributed in advance. During the meeting, you can then focus on the key points you want the commissioners to keep in mind as they make any decisions or provide direction to staff.

Additional Time for Speakers with Ceded Time (Non-MPA Petition Items Only)

For the October 2026 meeting, ceding time will not be allowed for MPA petition agenda items scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, Thursday or Friday.

Per Commission meeting procedures, a speaker for non-MPA petition agenda items may be approved to speak for *up to five minutes if three or more* participants cede their time to them. This allows a group to designate a spokesperson to provide comment on an agenda item. Participants ceding their time to a spokesperson:

- Must be present (in person, on Zoom, or by phone) when the agenda item is called; and
- forego their own opportunity to speak on that agenda item.

If you plan to cede time:

- *In person*, please complete a speaker card and approach the staff table with the spokesperson before the agenda item begins so staff can confirm the presence of those ceding time. An in-person speaker may identify a remote participant who wishes to cede their time. However, all individuals ceding time to an in-person speaker must be present on Zoom or phone during the agenda item.
- *Remote (via Zoom or phone)*, Remote participants who wish to cede their time must notify the Commission at fgc@fgc.ca.gov by the **Supplemental Comment Deadline** and include the name of the individual to whom they are ceding time. All individuals ceding time *must also be present on Zoom or phone during the agenda item*.
- For this meeting, ceding time will not be allowed for MPA petition agenda items (beginning with item 26).

Considerations for Giving Effective Public Comment

When addressing the Commission, begin by giving your name, any organizational affiliation, and the number of people you represent. To help commissioners in their decision-making and facilitate a positive meeting experience for all, please remember to:

- Respect the meeting environment, other speakers, staff, and commissioners.
- Treat all participants with courtesy and recognize diverse experiences and perspectives.
- Listen respectfully while one person speaks at a time.
- Come prepared and keep comments centered on the topic as time is limited.
- Focus on clear, concise contributions that support productive dialogue.
- If there are several speakers with the same concerns, you are encouraged to appoint a spokesperson to avoid repetitive comments or state your agreement with earlier speakers or remarks.
- Treat disagreements as shared problems to solve.
- When offering critique, propose alternative ideas when appropriate.
- Avoid personal accusations, stereotyping, or deliberate misinformation.

To help you organize your comments, it may be helpful to focus on:

- Do you support or oppose what has been proposed and why?
- Why is the subject important to you, your community, or your work?
- What action(s) would you like the Commission to consider if not what has been proposed?

Please call (916-653-4899) or email (fgc@fgc.ca.gov) us if you have any questions!