



May 20, 2019

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 9th Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Crowfoot and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

I am writing on behalf of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch network to express our strong support for the approval of the MPA related projects under consideration by the Ocean Protection Council at your meeting on May 23, 2019. We are pleased that the State of California is investing in long-term MPA monitoring and outreach, education, and compliance projects as together these projects will significantly advance the management of California's MPA network.

MPA Watch is a network of programs that support healthy oceans through community science by collecting human use data in and around our protected areas. Network partners have trained more than 2,000 volunteers to observe and collect data on anthropogenic use of coastal and marine resources in 187,917 acres of MPAs as well as surrounding areas. Volunteers use standardized protocols to collect relevant, scientifically rigorous, and broadly accessible data which are meant to inform the management, enforcement, and science of California's MPAs, and allow our network of programs and organizations to track how the public uses coastal areas. By involving local communities in data collection, MPA Watch programs inspire and empower stewardship, and educate the public about California's ocean ecosystems.

To date MPA Watch has collected more than 23,000 surveys from 58 MPAs in California used to compile reports for enforcement agencies, such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, academia, and a host of other entities. MPA Watch is also excited to contribute data to key long-term monitoring projects such as the sandy beach and surf zone habitat monitoring project from University of California Santa Barbara under consideration (agenda item 3.a.4.) as well as MPA outreach, education, and compliance projects through Resources Legacy Fund's (RLF) community-based efforts to improve statewide compliance of MPA regulations (agenda item 3.c.2.). MPA Watch, with funding from RLF's project, anticipates working with partners to provide comprehensive data for the 2022 management review and strengthen the adaptive management of California's MPAs moving forward.

Approval of this important suite of MPA projects will demonstrate the Ocean Protection Council's commitment to ensuring healthy oceans through effective management of California's MPA network. We appreciate the leadership put forth by this council and look forward to working together to protect California's coastal and marine ecosystems.

Angela Kemsley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "AKemsley", written over a white background.

Statewide Network Coordinator, MPA Watch
Conservation Development Manager, WILD Coast
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CREATIVE SOLUTIONS. LASTING RESULTS.

May 6, 2019

VIA Electronic Transmission

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 9th Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Proposed Marine Protected Area Program Investments

Dear Chair Crowfoot and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) strongly supports approval of the marine protected area (MPA) related projects under consideration for approval by the Ocean Protection Council at your May 23rd meeting. The suite of proposed MPA projects will advance critical restoration, monitoring, and outreach and education efforts that, taken together, will significantly advance comprehensive management of California's MPA network and improve ocean health.

RLF has been pleased to work closely with the State of California, philanthropic foundations, and other partners for more than fifteen years to support the establishment and implementation of California's world class network of 124 MPAs. Through this effort, California has set the standard for public engagement and science-based decision making in ocean conservation and has created a model for other countries around the globe.

The MPA projects before the Ocean Protection Council on May 23rd represent a strategic set of programs and activities designed to support state priorities and goals as laid out in several recent MPA guidance documents adopted by your Council including the MPA Statewide Leadership Team Work Plan for 2018-2021 and the MPA Monitoring Action Plan.

By approving this important set of MPA implementation projects, the Ocean Protection Council will demonstrate the state's commitment to effective management of the state MPA network and to improving California's ocean health. We appreciate your leadership and look forward to continuing to work closely with your Council in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Kaitilin Gaffney
Director of Ocean, Coast, and Fisheries