



DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov>

Marine Region

20 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Suite 100
Monterey, CA 93940



May 9, 2008

Secretary Mike Chrisman
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530



Re: Continued Baseline Data Collection in the Central California Coast

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

The Department of Fish and Game (Department) would like to express its continued support of baseline data collection efforts in the central California coast. Generous contributions from the Ocean Protection Council allowed monitoring to begin in the region and, as noted in the Department's March 2008 memorandum, the Department believes baseline monitoring efforts should continue over multiple years. The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) specifically recognizes the role of monitoring projects to help design new marine protected area (MPA) networks as well as assist with the adaptive management of existing MPAs. Your continued support of these efforts will help ensure California's MPAs are well monitored and better understood.

The programs funded for the first year of biological baseline data collection are all appropriate for continued funding this year. Efforts to collect baseline data on rocky intertidal habitats, kelp forests, deep rocky reefs and collaborative tagging studies in the Central Coast Study Region are all necessary for a complete understanding of the MPAs. It is important in any biological data collection effort for continuity in methods and process in order to allow statistical comparison of data across years. Funding these same projects for a second year will allow such comparisons and support completion of a three-year baseline supported by scientists and the Department.

I look forward to seeing these project's results as part of a complete baseline and applying them to Department management of marine resources.

Sincerely,

John Ugoretz
Habitat Conservation Program Manager

Secretary Mike Chrisman
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

May 5, 2008

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

On behalf of the Marine Protected Areas Monitoring Enterprise (Monitoring Enterprise) and the Ocean Science Trust, I wish to emphasize the importance of collecting a second year of data to characterize the baseline conditions of the marine protected areas (MPAs) established in the Central Coast study region under the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA).

As you know, the Monitoring Enterprise is leading a collaboration among the California Department of Fish and Game, the MLPA Initiative, researchers, and others to refine MPA monitoring to maximize its efficiency and effectiveness in meeting MLPA goals. The collaboration will guide both future baseline characterizations and on-going monitoring of the MPAs established under MLPA, and will begin to produce specific recommendations in approximately six months. The work may, in time, lead to suggested changes to monitoring of Central Coast MPAs. Regardless of possible future modifications, however, it is essential to describe the baseline condition of the recently established Central Coast MPAs and appropriate control areas with sufficient robustness to allow future comparisons and evaluations to be made with confidence. A second year of data collection in the Central Coast study region will greatly increase the robustness of the baseline characterization, making the data already collected considerably more useful for research and management.

Designing effective monitoring of the MLPA MPA network will require new thinking and new approaches. Emerging science focused on assessment and tracking of ecosystem function and other critical parameters must be married with cutting-edge policy and management in order to evaluate and adaptively manage the statewide MPA network, once established. This will be pioneering work not only for California, but globally, as an increasing number of other states and nations similarly face the challenge of evaluating large spatial scale MPA networks. The Monitoring Enterprise looks forward to leading this effort to design an efficient and effective approach to monitoring and evaluating the MLPA MPA statewide network.

Please contact me at (510)251-8322 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Cheri A. Recchia, Ph.D.
Director, Marine Protected Areas Monitoring Enterprise

cc Donald Koch, Director, California Department of Fish and Game
Sonke Mastrup, Deputy Director, California Department of Fish and Game
Ken Wiseman, Executive Director, Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer, State Coastal Conservancy, and Secretary, Ocean Protection Council
Drew Bohan, Executive Policy Officer, Ocean Protection Council
Brian Baird, Assistant Secretary for Ocean and Coastal Policy, California Resources Agency
Amber Mace, Executive Director, California Ocean Science Trust





ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

finding the ways that work

April 29, 2008

Mike Chrisman
California Secretary for Resources
The Resources Agency

RE: Support for Renewed Funding of Collaborative Fisheries Research and MPA Baseline Monitoring

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

We are writing to express our strong support for renewed funding for the Central Coast MPA Baseline Data Collection project (Dean Wendt and Rick Starr, Principal Investigators).

The collection of baseline information for MPAs will obviously be essential for assessing their performance. Furthermore, this window of time is the only opportunity that will ever be available for the collection of baseline information, because as time goes on, conditions will change both inside and outside the MPA.

In addition to collecting this essential information, this project is unique in that it draws on the expert knowledge of sport and commercial fishermen to increase the efficiency of sampling, while preserving the statistical power of the data and analysis. The results, in terms of data variability, are very impressive. This is a model that works and that should be expanded to develop baseline information for more MPAs.

The project has also collected valuable fisheries information. Such information is critical for moving fisheries from data-poor to data-moderate and data-rich conditions, and hence from precautionary to science-based management. However, according to leading stock assessment scientists, more work will be necessary to slot this information into conventional stock assessment methodology, such as the development of an absolute abundance estimate and a calibration factor for catch per unit effort. Both of these estimates are feasible given the project's methodology.

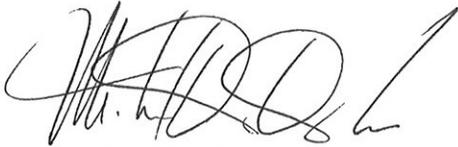
Fisheries data collected by this project will also be useful for the testing and (hopefully) application of new data-poor stock assessment methods that are under development now. The integration of fisheries data collection with MPA data collection increases efficiency, and the use of a collaborative research methodology increases sampling efficiency and is apparently reducing costs (compared to standard ship time costs).

This project is a fine example of what is possible with collaborative research: true engagement by fishermen, meaningful contributions by fishermen and scientists to every step of the process, interpretation of the data by both fishermen and scientists leading to more robust conclusions, and efficient, low cost data collection that makes MPAs useful in a direct way to fisheries management. We urge you to support the funding of this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rod Fujita".

Rod Fujita, Ph.D
Senior Scientist and Director, Ocean Innovations
Environmental Defense Fund

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael DeLapa".

Michael DeLapa
Pacific Regional Director, Oceans Programs
Environmental Defense Fund

55 C Municipal Wharf
Santa Cruz, CA 95060



831.425.1363 Telephone
831.425.5604 Facsimile
www.oceanconservancy.org

Delivered via electronic mail to:
COPCpublic@resources.ca.gov

May 13, 2008

Mike Chrisman, Chair
Members of the California Ocean Protection Council
California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Central Coast MPA Baseline Monitoring Project
File No. 08-063-01

Dear Secretary Chrisman and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

Please accept the following letter of support from Ocean Conservancy for the Central Coast MPA Baseline Monitoring –Year 2 project.

Ocean Conservancy has been engaged in the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) process since its inception and our organization is deeply committed to the successful implementation of the MLPA statewide. Collection of adequate baseline monitoring is a critical step in the long-term effective management of California's newly adopted network of MPAs. Because baseline monitoring data must be collected immediately after the MPAs are put in place to serve its purpose of allowing temporal comparisons, it is imperative that this project be funded and executed without delay.

We are especially pleased to support monitoring efforts that engage the knowledge and effort of sport and commercial fishermen in MPA management and research. We believe that such collaborative research projects can have many benefits.

We strongly urge your support of this critical project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaitilin Gaffney". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kaitilin Gaffney
Pacific Ecosystem Protection Program Director