



February 14, 2008

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

RE: Support for DFG proposal for collaborative ecosystem monitoring using ROVs

Dear Secretary Chrisman,

On behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Ocean Conservancy and our combined more than 250,000 California members and activists, we write in support of the Department of Fish & Game's ROV monitoring proposal.

The Ocean Protection Council has prioritized implementation of the Marine Life Management Act and the Marine Life Protection Act, and has provided funds for the genesis of state-wide monitoring and baseline data collection programs. This proposal continues in that tradition and builds upon it through a partnership with commercial fishermen. Gathering the information we need for sustainable ocean management will require new and creative partnerships, especially for goals such as the regional management framework envisioned in the nearshore fisheries management plan. We believe this proposal will help move the state from theory to practical application by designing data protocols that can be used by public or private partners and expanding available research capacity beyond the often limited resources of a state agency. The data to be gathered are essential, the approach is scientifically sound, and the partnership framework is innovative.

We ask the OPC to find that this project is a high priority and allocate full funding for the project in year 1 (Option 1) at your February meeting. This will allow the researchers to collect baseline data this summer, prior to the implementation of the new North Central MPAs. The proposal authors have demonstrated a strong determination to find funding for this work and we believe that OPC support will catalyze other funding and in-kind donations.

Sincerely,


Karen Garrison
NRDC


Kate Wing
NRDC


Warner Chabot
Ocean Conservancy


Kaitilin Gaffney
Ocean Conservancy

Cc: Drew Bohan, Executive Policy Officer
Sam Schuchat, Council Secretary

February 15 2008

Secretary Mike Chrisman
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

I am writing to express my strong support for the CIAP Supplemental proposal entitled “Ecosystem-based monitoring and research using Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) in support of the Marine Life Protection Act and Marine Life Management Act”, submitted by Kon Karpov and Jason Vasquez of the Department of Fish and Game.

The goals of the proposed work directly support the mandates of the Marine Life Protection Act (MPA monitoring and evaluation) and the Marine Life Management Act (collection of Essential Fishery Information). Moreover, unlike many monitoring proposals, this proposal is based the best available information on MPA sampling needs including a rigorous statistical power analysis to optimize sampling, thus generating greater confidence in the results while minimizing costs.

The proposed work would go beyond most monitoring research in several ways. First, it would fill an important gap in existing monitoring efforts by assessing deepwater habitats. Second, it would collect data on carefully selected parameters that are directly tied to management priorities. Finally, it would represent an important step toward collaborative research with fishermen, which has the potential to greatly expand the scope of monitoring, lower the costs of monitoring, and empower fishermen as long-term stewards of the environment thus increasing the sustainability of monitoring. Sustainable monitoring efforts will be crucial for allowing adaptive management to work by responding to new information.

We urge you to fund this important research, which will not only help achieve monitoring goals, but also point the way to a new and more effective way to sustain monitoring over the long term.

Sincerely,

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