



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources, Council Chair
Gavin Newsom, Lieutenant Governor, State Lands Commission Chair
Linda Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection
Susan Golding, Public Member
Geraldine Knatz, Public Member
Fran Pavley, State Senator
Toni Atkins, State Assemblymember

TO: California Ocean and Coastal Community

FROM: John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources

DATE: May 25, 2011

SUBJECT: May 2011 OPC Meeting Highlights

On May 12, the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) held its second meeting of 2011 in Sacramento. The meeting focused on California fisheries, a key priority and opportunity for the OPC. California's fisheries resources and the communities and livelihoods they support require thoughtful, coordinated management as well as sound science guidance to ensure all persist for decades to come. Our objective with this meeting was to hear the perspectives from agency partners, fishermen, scientists, environmentalists, and tribes on achieving our shared goal of effective and sustainable management of fishery resources. It was also an opportunity for the OPC to consider the strategic application of funds to advance the sound management of the spiny lobster fishery on behalf of fishermen, environmentalists, and resource managers. Below are highlights of the meeting, and as always, I invite you to visit the OPC website to review documents and an archived webcast of this May 12 meeting.

Spotlight on Science: To continue to bring sound science to the forefront of policy and management, we heard from Dr. Steve Gaines, Professor and Dean of the Donald Bren School of Environmental Sciences at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and OPC Science Advisory Team member, on *Integrating Marine Protected Areas into Fisheries Management in California*. His presentation focused on future opportunities and considerations for incorporating information from monitoring the state's emerging network of marine protected areas into fisheries stock assessment models, and how this will benefit the fishing community. I was encouraged to hear directly from an expert, Dr. Gaines, how ongoing research will support the state's efforts to sustainably manage fisheries and therefore aid fishing communities, and we learned from OPC science staff that generating new spatial fish stock assessment models will be supported by ongoing MPA monitoring efforts.

Panel on Sustainable Fisheries: There are a variety of diverse perspectives regarding California fisheries, and it's incumbent upon the OPC to hear directly from stakeholders across the spectrum. We therefore convened a panel of discussants with widely ranging perspectives to provide the Council their respective priorities for managing California's fisheries. Each of the following panelists provided valuable insight, and we learned that we all stand in agreement that our fisheries require ongoing and coordinated stewardship and vigilance with a strong foundation in sound science to ensure their future vibrancy as we face increasingly complex threats. The panel discussion ranged from a manager's perspective, when the CDFG Deputy Director emphasized the department's ongoing commitment to effective management, to hearing from the

environmental community, recreational and commercial fisherman, and a representative from the tribal community. This panel discussion galvanized the need for ongoing communication; all are in agreement that our fisheries face complex challenges, and that the state needs to provide thoughtful leadership to effectively maintain resources for all stakeholders.

The panelists included:

Sonke Mastrup, Deputy Director, California Department of Fish and Game

Rod McInnis, Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

Roberta Reyes Cordero, JD, Member, Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation

Zeke Grader, Executive Director, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

Mike Sutton, Vice President, Monterey Bay Aquarium

Pietro Parravano, Commercial Fisherman, President of the Institute for Fisheries Resources

Dan Wolford, Coastside Fishing Club

Linda Sheehan, Executive Director, California Coastkeeper Alliance

Following the fisheries panel, the OPC heard public comment commending the OPC for pulling these panelists together, and expressing support for a comprehensive approach to managing California's fisheries resources.

Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan

The Council unanimously supported funding of up to \$990,000 to California Wildlife Foundation to assist the California Department of Fish and Game in developing a Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Spiny lobster in California are a valuable and sought after species by both commercial and recreational fishermen alike. As with all fisheries in California, we need a thorough understanding of the fish stocks to ensure our management is effective and provides for a sustainable resource. Approval for this FMP addresses many of the OPC converging goals, including implementing recommendations from the Marine Life Management Act Lessons Learned study and the California Sustainable Seafood Initiative. Development of this FMP will engage stakeholders and scientists in the common goal of improving information for a data poor, high priority fishery. This funding allocation was supported by public comment from the Department of Fish and Game as well as fishermen and environmentalists.

In recognition of the value of thorough management plans, the OPC heard public comment expressing support for funding the plan, including from a member of the California Lobster and trap Fishermen's Association and members of the environmental community.

California Sustainable Seafood Protocol (CSSI)

The Council heard a brief presentation that provided an update on the current draft CSSI protocol in support of AB 1217 that requires the OPC to develop and implement a voluntary sustainable seafood promotion program. The intent of the legislation is to encourage and promote sustainable fishing practices that will also benefit commercial fishermen. We heard from OPC staff that the basis of the program would use the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) to certify individual fisheries and how the OPC will involve its Science Advisory Team in oversight of aspects of the program to ensure objectivity. The Council also heard about initial information on development of a logo to identify fresh, sustainable, California seafood. This program is critical



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to the Council's goal of supporting both fisheries and the resources they depend on. As the program develops, it will benefit from additional scientific data and fishery management plans as well. With all OPC efforts, engaging the stakeholders, scientists and consumers is paramount, and the Council appreciated the update.

Toxicity Issues in California Fisheries

Of ongoing concern to Californians is the level of toxins in consumable fishes and the potential risk to the health of consumers. Recognizing the importance of this issue to all Californians who regularly eat locally caught fishes, the OPC requested an update on the latest information on state efforts to monitor toxicity in California fishes from Dr. Robert Brodberg, Chief of the Fish and Water Quality Evaluation Section from the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). We learned that fishes that top the food chain such as shark or swordfish, do accumulate various toxins, including mercury and PCBs, and consumption of these species may put certain consumer populations at some risk to their health, including children and young women. Key to managing intake of these species is adequate data and reporting, and the Council supports the efforts to provide this information publically.

The Council also heard from Buffy Martin Tarbox, from GotMercury, an advocacy organization calling for stronger labeling and notification on mercury levels in commercial and recreationally caught fishes. The Council questioned whether toxic contamination should be folded into our sustainable seafood program, and we learned from OPC staff that the two programs necessarily need to be kept separate, as sustainability refers to fishing effort. However, toxicity information can be made available to increase public awareness.

I remain pleased with the hard work of the OPC staff, the OPC-Science Advisory Team, and the engagement and commitment from the public. This meeting demonstrated how we're addressing difficult issues in a concerted manner, using science resources and input from stakeholders. I am hopeful and excited that California will continue to provide leadership as together we more effectively and efficiently find solutions to these challenges.

For more meeting details, please visit our website: <http://www.opc.ca.gov/category/meetings/>

Please join us at our next meeting on August 11, 2011 where we will focus on marine renewable energy. We will also present a draft of the five-year strategic plan for public comment.