



Staff Recommendation  
May 23, 2019

**California Fisheries Portal Development**  
Paige Berube, Program Manager

Item 4

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$220,000 to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop the California Fisheries Portal, an advanced database-driven website which will serve as a central repository and public interface for California state-managed marine fisheries.

**LOCATION:** Statewide

**STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES:** Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems, and Science-Based Decision-Making

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**EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit A: List of 38 State-Managed Marine Species
- Exhibit B: California Fisheries Portal Scoping Phase: Focus Group Agendas
- Exhibit C: California Fisheries Portal Prototype (Screenshots)
- Exhibit D: Letters of Support

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**FINDINGS AND RESOLUTION:**

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibit(s), OPC hereby finds that:

- 1) The proposed project is consistent with the purposes of Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, the Ocean Protection Act;
- 2) The proposed project is consistent with OPC's Proposition 84 grant program funding guidelines (Interim Standards and Protocols, August 2013); and
- 3) The proposed project is not a ‘legal project’ that triggers the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code section, section 15378.”

Staff further recommends that OPC adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“OPC hereby approves the disbursement of up to \$220,000 to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop the California Fisheries Portal, an advanced database-driven website which will serve as a central repository and public interface for California state-managed marine fisheries information.

This authorization is subject to the condition that prior to disbursement of funds, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Director of the OPC detailed work plans, schedules, staff requirements, budgets, and the names of any contractors intended to be used to complete the projects, as well as discrete deliverables that can be produced in intervals to ensure the projects are on target for successful completion. All projects will be developed under a shared understanding of process, management and delivery.”

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The California Ocean Protection Act (COPA) directs OPC to support state agencies’ use and sharing of scientific and geospatial information for coastal- and ocean-relevant decision making, as well as to ensure that this information is publicly accessible and that tools are available for visualizing and analyzing these data (Sections 35620, 35621). OPC will fund the development of the California Fisheries Portal, an advanced, database-driven website which will serve as a dynamic, central repository and public interface for state-managed marine fisheries information. The initial development of the California Fisheries Portal will include information from 35 Enhanced Status Reports, which provide details to inform ongoing fisheries research and management including an overview of state-managed species, with details on life history, fishery characteristics, current management and monitoring efforts, and research needs. In January 2018, OPC approved a \$190,503 project<sup>1</sup> to collect and synthesize information on state-managed marine species that could inform the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s development of Enhanced Status Reports. The 38 species covered by the 35 Enhanced Status Reports<sup>2</sup> represent the majority of commercial fishing landings, as well as commercial and recreational participation in California (Exhibit A). The development of the portal will be constructed to allow for the inclusion of additional marine species and interactive data functions (such as summary tables or mapping of important fisheries information such as landings, catch, etc.) in subsequent phases. The development of the California Fisheries Portal will improve the management of the state’s fisheries by facilitating implementation of COPA and the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) through providing up-to-date, species-specific information on state-managed fisheries. It will also ensure fisheries data is

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<sup>1</sup> January 2018 Staff Recommendation:  
[http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda\\_items/20180131/Item6c\\_Fisheries\\_Prop84\\_January\\_2018\\_Final.pdf](http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20180131/Item6c_Fisheries_Prop84_January_2018_Final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Certain Enhanced Status Reports address multiple species.

publicly accessible and presented in a useful format to inform sustainable use and conservation of California's marine resources.

**Background:**

In order to ensure the California Fisheries Portal is effective and useful for all stakeholders, communication and engagement with stakeholders from the beginning was essential. In January 2018, OPC approved a \$33,944 project<sup>3</sup> supported by Strategic Earth to convene a series of multi-interest roundtable discussions to inform the design and development of an online California Fisheries Portal in alignment with the California Ocean Protection Act and to advance the state's efforts to implement the Marine Life Management Act Master Plan<sup>4</sup>. These roundtable discussions built off the initial stakeholder discussions and engagement from the February 2017 California Department of Fish and Wildlife public webinar regarding a "Draft Approach to Scaled Management and a Fisheries Web-based Data Portal."

This first scoping phase of California Fisheries Portal supported by Strategic Earth focused on the design, visual layout, functionality, usability, and navigability of the portal structure, as informed by input from a focus group of diverse interests. The focus group included representation from anticipated portal users, including Tribes and tribal communities, fishermen (commercial and recreational), divers (consumptive and non-consumptive), environmental non-governmental organizations, Legislative staff, researchers, college students, and state agencies. The group shared user needs and priorities, as well as provided feedback regarding additional functionality, such as data querying and mapping.

The scoping phase consisted of two stakeholder webinars held in May 2018 and March 2019. The webinar agendas are included as Exhibit B, and a Key Themes Summary from each webinar is available on the California Fisheries Portal Scoping project webpage<sup>5</sup>. During the March 2018 webinar, the focus group provided feedback on the desired design, form, and function of a portal, as well as reviewed similar fisheries portals including one developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) for federally-managed marine resources, and one developed by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority. During the March 2019 webinar, the focus group provided feedback on an interactive California Fisheries Portal prototype<sup>6</sup>, that was developed by Waterview Consulting through funding from the Resources Legacy Fund. This prototype was based on feedback solicited during the March 2018 webinar and focused on building out two species pages (Barred Sand Bass and Pink Shrimp), as well as a species landing page and policy page (Exhibit C). One key theme from the March 2019 focus group discussion

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<sup>3</sup> January 2018 Staff Recommendation:

[http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda\\_items/20180131/Item6c\\_Fisheries\\_Prop84\\_January\\_2018\\_Final.pdf](http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20180131/Item6c_Fisheries_Prop84_January_2018_Final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The MLMA Master Plan for Fisheries, adopted by the Fish and Game Commission in June 2018, guides management efforts on highest priority species and describes the specific tools and approaches to be applied in achieving the goals of the MLMA: <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=159222&inline>

<sup>5</sup> California Fisheries Portal Scoping project webpage: <http://www.opc.ca.gov/california-fisheries-portal-focus-groups/>

<sup>6</sup> California Fisheries Portal prototype developed by Waterview Consulting: <https://cdfw.waterviewconsulting.com/>

states that, “participants were supportive of the Portal prototype and experienced it as straight-forward, accessible to a broad audience, and having the ability to grow in future iterations to continue to meet stakeholder needs.”

The second “development phase” of the portal, if approved by the Council, will be informed by the summarized information gathering during the first scoping phase, including the prototype. Separating the California Fisheries Portal development into phases has ensured that the portal will provide maximum utility and access for all stakeholders. This staff recommendation would provide \$220,000 to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife through an interagency agreement to solicit an external contractor to complete the project in close coordination with the State. The funds will support a development team likely to include a programmer, database developer, analyst and project manager.

**Specific objectives of the California Fisheries Portal Development project include but are not limited to:**

- Develop an advanced database-driven website, to be housed on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s website, that will include 35 Enhanced Status Reports covering 38 state-managed species in accordance with the portal prototype developed by Waterview Consulting. The website will be expandable so that additional information and interactive data functions can be included in subsequent phases.
- Provide links to related, applicable resources.
- Provide a user-friendly interface for CDFW non-technical staff to update content for completed Enhanced Status Reports, including text, tables, and graphics.
- Allow users to access information via any Internet-enabled device (i.e. computer, tablet, phone, etc.).
- Conform to State-mandated standards regarding technology and appearance, as well as CDFW development standards and tools.
- The vendor will perform the necessary technical (e.g., database functionality) and non-technical (e.g., user-based navigation) testing. In addition, CDFW subject matter experts and select external stakeholders will conduct user-based testing.
- The vendor will provide the completed website and database, including all coding and data, to CDFW and provide training to allow CDFW staff to administer and maintain the website after the conclusion of this project.
- The back end of the website will be designed in a way that additional phases of development can be easily implemented.

The California Fisheries Portal will promote transparency in fisheries management, advance the dissemination of accurate and best available information regarding state marine resources, increase access to marine resources management information, help to foster public engagement, and focus academic research on areas of management relevance.

**About the Grantee:**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is a state department under the California Natural Resources Agency whose mission is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public. This project will be advanced in coordination with the Ocean Protection Council and multiple teams within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, including but not limited to, the Marine Region and Data and Technology Division.

**Project Timeline:** June 2019 – March 2020

**PROJECT FINANCING**

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) authorize encumbrance of up to \$220,000 to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop the California Fisheries Portal, an advanced database-driven website which will serve as a central repository and public interface for state-managed marine fisheries information.

Ocean Protection Council	\$220,000
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Staff time support
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>

The anticipated source of funds will be from the Ocean Protection appropriation of the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 authorizes the use of funds for purposes consistent with Section 35650 of the Public Resources Code, establishing the California Ocean Protection Trust Fund (Pub. Res. Code § 75060(g)). Under Section 35650(b), Ocean Protection Trust Fund monies may be expended for projects authorized by the OPC that are identified as appropriate Trust Fund purposes, as specified. The project is consistent with the Trust Fund purposes as discussed in the following section.

**Leverage of OPC funds**

This project builds on a previous Ocean Protection Council investment of \$33,944 to Strategic Earth to convene a series of multi-interest roundtable discussions to inform the design and development of an online California Fisheries Portal in alignment with the California Ocean Protection Act and to advance the state's efforts to implement the Marine Life Management Act Master Plan. The aforementioned project concludes at the end of May 2019, and the final Key Themes Summary deliverable is posted on the California Fisheries Portal Scoping project webpage. This project also builds on a previous Ocean Protection Council investment of \$190,503 to collect and synthesize information on state-managed marine species that could inform California Department of Fish and Wildlife's development of Enhanced Status Reports. Additionally, this project leverages a Resources Legacy Fund investment of \$21,100 during the scoping phase which supported

the development of a California Fisheries Portal prototype. The prototype was created by Waterview Consulting and focused on building out two species pages (Barred Sand Bass and Pink Shrimp), as well as a species landing page and policy page.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Ocean Protection Act, Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, because it is consistent with trust-fund allowable projects, defined in Public Resources Code Section 35650(b)(2) as projects which:

- Improve the management of fisheries
- Foster sustainable fisheries
- Improve management, conservation, and protection of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems
- Provide monitoring and scientific data to improve state efforts to protect and conserve ocean resources

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE OPC'S STRATEGIC PLAN:**

These projects implement Focal Area A: Science-Based Decision-Making and Focal Area C: Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems.

**CONSISTENCY WITH PROPOSITION 84 (The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006; Public Resources Code §75060(g))**

This project is consistent with the purposes outlined in Proposition 84, specifically it includes the development of scientific data needed to adaptively manage the state's marine resources, and it fosters sustainable fisheries.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE OPC'S GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the OPC's Grant Program Funding Guidelines for Proposition 84 funds, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. Directly relate to the ocean, coast, associated estuaries, or coastal-draining watersheds: *The California Fisheries Portal will serve as the central repository and public interface for state-managed marine fisheries information. This initial development of the California Fisheries Portal will include information from 35 Enhanced Status Reports, including an overview of the species, and details on life history, fishery characteristics, current management and monitoring efforts, and research needs. These 38 species represent the majority of commercial fishing landings, as well as commercial and recreational participation in California. The initial development will be constructed to allow for inclusion of additional marine species and advanced functionality over time.*
2. Support of the public: *See Exhibit D*
3. Greater-than-local interest: *The 38 species that will be included as part of the initial development of the California Fisheries Portal span the range of California's primary*

state-managed species. The California Fisheries Portal is being developed for a range of potential users statewide, including fishermen, tribes, non-governmental organizations, scientists, agencies, academic institutions, and other interested stakeholders.

#### Additional Criteria

4. Improvements to management approaches or techniques: *This project will improve the management of California's fisheries by facilitating implementation of COPA and the MLMA through providing up-to-date, species-specific information on state-managed fisheries, and ensuring this information is publicly accessible and presented in a useful format to inform all Californian's sustainable use and conservation of state marine resources. This project will promote transparency in fisheries management, promote the dissemination of accurate and best available information regarding state marine resources, increase access to marine resources management information, help to foster public engagement, and focus academic research on areas of management relevance.*
5. Leverage: (See the "Project Financing" section above.) *This project leverages a previous Ocean Protection Council investment of \$33,944 to convene a series of multi-interest roundtable discussions to inform the design and development of an online California Fisheries Portal. This project also builds on a previous Ocean Protection Council investment of \$190,503 to collect and synthesize information on state-managed marine species that could inform California Department of Fish and Wildlife's development of Enhanced Status Reports. Additionally, this project leverages a \$21,100 investment of the Resources Legacy Fund in developing a California Fisheries Portal prototype which informed focus group discussions during the scoping phase. This project supports the implementation phase of the Marine Life Management Act Master Plan and is in alignment with COPA.*
6. Timeliness: *This project is timely as it builds upon the scoping phase of the California Fisheries Portal project which will conclude by the end of May 2019, allowing for a seamless transition into the development phase. This transition will allow for the marine resources information to be publicly accessible online in an interactive and intuitive format as soon as possible, with the goal for the end of December 2019.*
7. Coordination: *These projects involve coordination between state agencies: Ocean Protection Council and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The project will also involve coordination with a private entity as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will solicit bids from external contractors to complete this project. Additionally, there will be an opportunity for select external stakeholders to conduct user-based testing of the California Fisheries Portal, ensuring coordination with the public.*

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):**

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15306 because the project involves only data collection, research and resource evaluation

activities that will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval by the OPC.