

AM

LOIS CAPPS
23RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA



DISTRICT OFFICES:

- 1411 MARSH STREET, SUITE 205
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805) 546-8348
- 301 EAST CARRILLO STREET, SUITE A
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101
(805) 730-1710
- 2675 NORTH VENTURA ROAD, SUITE 105
PORT HUENEME, CA 93041
(805) 985-6807

1110 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0522
(202) 225-3601

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

October 25, 2010

11/1
10-070

The Honorable Lester Snow
Secretary for Resources
State of California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Snow:

I commend your leadership in funding projects that support healthy fisheries and economies in coastal communities, and I write to respectfully ask that you support, through full funding, the proposal submitted to the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study (years 2 and 3).

As you know, the Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study is part of the larger Central Coast Groundfish Project, an innovative partnership between many regional stakeholders that aims to foster more environmentally and economically sustainable approaches to fishing that increase community sustainability. The data gathered from this study will improve our understanding of the impacts to bottom trawling on soft-bottom habitats and ensuing patterns of recovery. Funding is urgently needed to prevent a disruption of the research already underway. Research collaborators from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and California State University Monterey Bay, as well as conservation and fishing groups are working together to implement the first controlled study to assess trawling impacts and recovery, and their results will help inform best practices and management decisions regarding bottom trawling in the offshore areas of California.

This is an incredibly important time for the California groundfish fishery. Over the last two decades, landings have declined dramatically, along with revenue and jobs. The beneficiaries of this research effort will be fishing communities and seafood lovers in California and beyond who desire access to the groundfish resources off our shores and a better understanding of how to harvest these resources in a manner that is compatible with the extraordinarily diverse and productive marine ecosystems in this area.

I urge you to give full and fair consideration to this request, consistent with all relevant rules and regulations. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress

Voting Members

Chris Harrold
Research
Chair

Kirk Schmidt
Agriculture

Margaret Webb
Citizen At-Large
Secretary

Cynthia Walter
Business/Industry

Brian Baird
CA Resources Agency

Mat Fuzie
CA State Parks

Simona Bartl
Education

Frank Degnan
Diving

Kathy Fosmark
Commercial Fishing

Richard Hughett
Recreational Fishing

Michael Bekker
Tourism

Gary Pezzi
Recreation

Charles Lester
CA Coastal Commission

Michael Dawson
Citizen At-Large

Richard Ely
Citizen At-Large

Lauren Gilligan
Conservation

Steve Scheiblaue
Harbors

LT Steve Armwine
US Coast Guard

Russ Jeffries
CA EPA

Paul Reilly
CA Dept of Fish and Game

Non-Voting Members

Vacant
Elkhorn Slough NERR

Churchill Grimes
NMFS

Chris Mobley
Channel Islands NMS

Maria Brown
Gulf of Farallones NMS

Dan Howard
Cordell Bank NMS

Paul Michel
Monterey Bay NMS

Sanctuary Advisory Council
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam Street
(831) 647-4201

October 22, 2010

The Honorable Lester Snow
Secretary for Resources
State of California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Snow:

As chair of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC), I am writing on behalf of the SAC to ask you to support, through full funding, the proposal submitted to the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study (Years 2 and 3). It is my understanding that the OPC will consider this request at its November 9-10, 2010 meeting. This proposed research project will contribute to the sustainability of California's fishing heritage and its marine resources by improving our understanding of the impacts of bottom trawling on soft-bottom habitats and the patterns of recovery. This proposal has the unanimous, full support of the SAC.

This is a critical time for the California groundfish fishery; over the last two decades, landings have declined dramatically, along with revenue and jobs. Since 1999, the West Coast Groundfish Trawl Fishery has undergone dramatic change. In its 2001 report, the National Research Council, after documenting significant problems with this fishery, made three recommendations: reduce fleet size, establish no-trawl MPAs, and modify gear to be more environmentally friendly. All three of these recommendations have been implemented. This fishery has applied for certification by the Marine Stewardship Council, has received a positive pre-assessment and is hoping for full certification during the next year. January 1, 2011 will mark the inception of a new management structure for the fishery under a "catch shares" program intended to additionally address some of the issues that have plagued the economic success of the fishery.

Presently, many species of economically important flatfish in California waters, such as Dover sole and rex sole, can only be caught in commercial quantities with trawl gear and the trawl sector is still an important part of California's fishing fleet. California's fishing infrastructure needs both a combination of high volume-lower value, and low volume-higher value seafood products to sustain itself over regulatory



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary



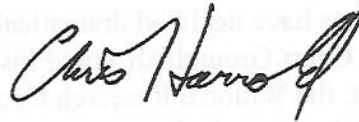
The Advisory Council is composed of 19 federally appointed representatives from government agencies, local institutions, and user groups concerned with the resources of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The Council advises the Sanctuary Superintendent on matters of policy and provides a link between the community and Sanctuary management.

and environmental cycles. This five-year research project on trawl impacts and recovery is at a critical juncture and funding is urgently needed to prevent a disruption of the research initiated over the past year and a half. The research collaborators include agency (National Marine Fisheries Service, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and others), academic (California State University Monterey Bay), and conservation and fishing partners who are working together on the Central Coast to implement the first controlled study to assess trawling impacts and recovery. The results of this five-year study will inform best practices and management decisions regarding bottom trawling in the offshore areas of California.

This research study is part of the larger Central Coast Groundfish Project that has been funded by the OPC, has the support of many regional stakeholders, and aims to foster more environmentally and economically sustainable approaches to fishing to increase both conservation benefits and economic and community sustainability. This research involves local fishermen and leverages the assets that TNC has to conduct this study, including a remotely-operated vehicle, trawl permits, and a trawl vessel. The beneficiaries of this research effort will be fishing communities and seafood lovers in California and beyond who benefit economically from and/or consume some of the commercially-harvested groundfish resources off our shores. There will also be a better understanding of how to sustainably harvest these resources in a manner that is compatible with the extraordinarily diverse and productive marine ecosystems in this area.

Thank you for your support for this important project.

Sincerely,



Christopher Harrold, PhD
Chair
Monterey Bay National Marine
Sanctuary Advisory Council

Marine Interests Group San Luis Obispo County

Working Committee

Harvey Cohon
Sierra Club

Mel de la Motte
Central Coast Fisheries Cons. Coalition

Ray Fields
Aquaculture

Matt Fleming
SLO Surfrider Foundation

Annie Gillespie
Morro Bay National Estuary Program

Bruce Gibson
San Luis Obispo County Supervisor

Monica Hunter
Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo

Ermina Karim
SLO Chamber of Commerce

Carolyn Moffatt
Commissioner, Port San Luis Harbor Dist.

Jeremiah O'Brien
MB. Commercial Fishermen's Organization

Janice Peters
Mayor, City of Morro Bay

Henry Pontarelli
Morro Coast Audubon Society

John Rowley
Virg's Fishing & Whale Watching

Dave Sears
at large, ret'd California State Parks

Debra Stakes
Cuesta College

Bill Ward
Port San Luis Comm. Fishermen's Assn.

Margaret Webb
MBNMS Advisory Council

Dean Wendt, Ph.D.
Assoc. Prof., Cal Poly State University

Patricia Wilmore
PG&E Company

Web site:
www.mbnep.org/mig

Don Maruska
independent facilitator
895 Napa Ave. #A-5, Morro Bay, CA 93442
Phone: 805-772-4667
Fax: 805-772-4697
Email: marine@donmaruska.com

October 27, 2010

RE : Support for Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study [item #11, OPC Agenda, November 9, 2010]

At its October 27, 2010, meeting the Marine Interests Group of San Luis Obispo County (MIG) unanimously supported the full funding request for the Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study (years 2 and 3) before the California Ocean Protection Council. An in-depth presentation to the MIG about this work earlier in the year received an excellent review. We believe that other communities as well as resource managers will find this information to be of high value.

Critical Value of This Study for Fisheries Management

- Economically important flatfish can only be caught in commercial quantities with trawl gear and the trawl sector remains a key element of the State's fishing fleet. Yet, the effects of trawling are not well understood.
- The Central Coast Groundfish Project provides a unique opportunity to analyze the effects of trawling on soft-bottom habitats and the patterns of recovery. These data, including actual images of impacts and responses, offer insights that will deliver valuable guidance in how to manage trawling activity in ways that support productive marine ecosystems.

Groundfish play an important role in supporting the infrastructure for ports along the coast of California. As many changes and challenges occur, the State will benefit from solid science and stakeholder engagement in resolving the critical issues.

We strongly encourage the OPC's full funding of the Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study (Years 2 and 3).

Sincerely yours,

Marine Interests Group of San Luis Obispo County



October 22, 2010

The Honorable Lester Snow
Secretary for Resources
State of California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Snow:

We are writing to ask for your support for the proposal submitted to the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study (Years 2 and 3). It is our understanding that the OPC Council will consider this request at its November 9-10, 2010 meeting in Morro Bay.

TNC and fishermen are working together to pursue more environmentally and economically sustainable approaches to fishing in order to increase both conservation benefits and economic and community sustainability. This five-year research project on trawl impacts and recovery is at a critical juncture and funding is urgently needed to prevent a disruption of the research initiated over the past year and a half. The results of this five-year study will inform best practices and management decisions regarding bottom trawling in the offshore areas of California.

Ocean Conservancy and the Natural Resources Defense Council support efforts to ensure that all fishing in California is conducted in a way that is compatible with the extraordinarily diverse and productive marine ecosystems in our area. We believe that this project will contribute to our understanding of the impacts of trawl gear on the marine environment and may help improve the sustainability of groundfish fisheries throughout the West Coast in the long-term.

Thank you for your support for this important project.

Sincerely,

Kaitilin Gaffney
Pacific Program Director
Ocean Conservancy

Leila Monroe
Attorney, NRDC Ocean Initiative



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam Street
Monterey, California 93940

October 28, 2010

The Honorable Lester Snow
Secretary for Resources
State of California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Snow:

I am writing to ask you to support, through full funding, the proposal submitted to the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) by The Nature Conservancy for the Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study (Years 2 and 3). It is my understanding that the OPC Council will consider this request at its November 9, 2010 meeting. This proposed research project will contribute to the sustainability of California's fishing heritage and its marine resources by improving our understanding of the impacts of bottom trawling on soft-bottom habitats and the patterns of recovery.

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) has supported this project over the past three years with free ship time aboard the NOAA research vessel FULMAR. The 2008 Management Plan for the MBNMS includes an action plan and strategies to conduct research on trawling impacts, and so this project is fulfilling that requirement. This five-year research project on trawl impacts and recovery is at a critical juncture and funding is urgently needed to prevent a disruption of the research initiated over the past year and a half. The research collaborators include TNC, our agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, California State University Monterey Bay, and conservation and fishing partners who are working together on the Central Coast to implement the first controlled study to assess trawling impacts and recovery. The results of this five-year study will inform best practices and management decisions regarding bottom trawling in the offshore areas of California.

Thank you for your support for this important project.

Sincerely,

Paul Michel,
Sanctuary Superintendent

