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Fish and Game Commission



Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
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COASTAL FISHING COMMUNITIES DISCUSSION

October 11, 2017 Meeting Summary

Central Coast – Atascadero

The following is a summary of the meeting as prepared by staff. Input from participants on questions posed in the agenda is captured in bulleted format below each question.

Meeting Goals

- Discuss challenges and opportunities facing fishing communities
- Discuss how the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) can contribute to more resilient fishing communities
- Identify priorities for your fishing community

1. Welcome, Background, and Goals

Commission Executive Director Valerie Termini convened the meeting at Spring Hill Suites by Marriott in Atascadero at 4:00 p.m. Commission staff provided a welcome, reviewed meeting ground rules, and introduced Commissioner Silva and Commissioner Hostler-Carmesin, Commission and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) staff, and introductions were made around the room, where there were over 22 members of the public in attendance. A brief background on the coastal fishing communities discussion was presented, and the meeting goals and structure were identified.

2. In-depth Discussion and Dialogue

(A) What are the biggest challenges to long-term resiliency that you and/or your fishing community are facing?

- Retailers and commercial fishermen are struggling to achieve annual catch limits and are facing potential allocation cuts
- Marine Spatial Planning: Proposal by Trident Winds for the offshore wind energy development project
 - Potential impact on fishable area, especially when combined with marine protected area (MPA) closures
 - Fishing between windmills is a safety issue
 - Impact of wind energy cables on fishing
 - Input on environmental community is split between green

- energy and protecting habitat
 - Wind farms in Rhode Island have been problematic: installation was challenging, scallop grounds were encroached upon, harbor travel and sonar were negatively impacted, they work inconsistently and are inefficient
- Marine mammals (more specifically, sea otters) that prey on abalone species have slowed recovery and have prevented reopening of commercial fishery

(B) What aspects of state fisheries management impact the sustainability of your community?

- Fishery closures
- Over-regulation and difficulty in deciphering regulations
- Commercial aquaculture impacts on port dynamics
- Marine mammal predation on finfish populations
- Sea otter predation on abalone populations
- Fish farm failures
- Small bait fish commercial fishing fleet utilized as a release opportunity (Buddhist community in Marina del Rey)
- Difficulty in obtaining a trap endorsement for nearshore permit

(C) What actions can the Commission realistically take to address these concerns short and long term?

- DFW should support for fishermen
- Establish a year-round fishery with more areas to fish, and open up hatcheries/new technology for local salmon fisheries
- Request for the State to use its leverage to ensure large corporations/companies assist in mitigating impacts to fishery communities
- Partnerships with key agencies are necessary to evolve infrastructure
- Regulate the current increase in marine mammal populations
- Augment profitability of commercial fisherman
- Rotate fishery closures to open areas to fisherman for access
- Consider opening the recreational red abalone fishery south of San Francisco

3. Next Steps and Wrap-up

Commission staff provided a brief recap of what was learned from the meeting and explained that these meetings will be continued up and down the coast in order to learn more about the regional challenges faced by fishing communities. Staff thanked meeting attendees for participating and explained that a meeting summary will be posted to the Commission website (www.fgc.ca.gov).

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.