



Gavin Newsom, Governor  
Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection  
Kristina Thayer, Ph.D., Director

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Charlton H. Bonham, Director  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
715 P Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

**FROM:** Kristina Thayer, Ph.D. *Kristina Thayer*  
Director [Kristina Thayer \(Jun 13, 2025 11:51 PDT\)](#)

**DATE:** June 13, 2025

**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTION ON THE  
COMMERCIAL LANDINGS OF PACIFIC SARDINES FROM WATERS  
OFF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIGHT (MULTIPLE COUNTIES)

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined that consumption of Pacific sardines taken from waters off the Southern California Bight no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. The impacted area includes waters between Point Conception (34° 27' N. Lat.) and the California/Mexico border (Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties). OEHHA and CDPH recommend lifting the restriction that limited commercial Pacific sardine landings to only live bait use. This recommendation is based on levels of domoic acid below the federal action level in the viscera and whole bodies of Pacific sardines collected from this area and analyzed by CDPH laboratories. A table presenting the results of domoic acid analysis in samples from the impacted areas is shown below.

Domoic acid poisoning in humans may occur within minutes to hours after consumption of contaminated seafood, and can result in signs and symptoms ranging from vomiting and diarrhea to permanent loss of short-term memory (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning), coma, or death. Current federal action levels for domoic acid are  $\geq 20$  parts per million (ppm) for all fish and shellfish, except for  $> 30$  ppm in the viscera of Dungeness crab. State and federal laws prohibit the commercial distribution of seafood products that contain domoic acid levels above the action level.

If you have questions, please contact me at [Kris.Thayer@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:Kris.Thayer@oehha.ca.gov) or Dr. Wesley Smith at [Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov).

### Pacific Sardine Sampling Results

PORT	COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATES	TISSUE TYPE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) <sup>a</sup>
SAN PEDRO	Block 829	5/22/25	viscera*	< 2.5
			viscera*	< 2.5
			whole body*	< 2.5
			whole body*	< 2.5
	Block 826	5/28/25	viscera**	< 2.5
			whole body**	< 2.5
	Block 807	5/30/25	viscera**	< 2.5
			whole body**	< 2.5

\*Composite sample of 5 individual fish.

\*\*Composite sample of 8 – 10 individual fish.

<sup>a</sup> The action level is  $\geq 20$  ppm.

cc: June Weintraub, Sc.D.  
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