



California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY



California Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

October 16, 2025

Subject: Notice of Evaluation of Petitions Proposing Changes to California's Marine Protected Area Network

Dear Honorable Tribal Leader and Representative:

The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) would like to inform you as a tribal representative that the Department is evaluating 15 petitions for changes to California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network (2023 MPA Petitions). Your input can be provided to the Department and the Commission through direct communication, comments, and/or consultation. The Commission and the Department welcome direct communication and consultation prior to the public review process, and learning about any anticipated impacts on tribal interests or cultural resources related to the petitioned actions in the 2023 MPA Petitions.

The goal of the Commission and the Department is to understand tribal interests and concerns early in the process and to work collaboratively to resolve any concerns. The Commission also seeks to effectively work together to realize sustainably-managed natural resources of mutual interest; the Commission's Tribal Consultation Policy can be viewed at <https://fgc.ca.gov/About/Policies/Miscellaneous#TribalConsultation>. The Department is committed to open communication with your tribe under its Tribal Communication and Consultation Policy, which is available through the Department's Tribal Affairs webpage at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/General-Counsel/Tribal-Affairs>.

Background and Requested Actions

In late 2023, the Commission received 20 petitions from California Native American tribes and the public requesting changes to California's MPA Network. The Commission referred the 2023 MPA Petitions to the Department to evaluate in early 2024; later that year, the Department completed its evaluations for five of the 2023 MPA Petitions and submitted recommendations to the Commission. The Commission took action on the Department's recommendations in December 2024.

The Department is currently evaluating the remaining (15) 2023 MPA Petitions that are more complex and include over 70 requested actions, from southern California to the Oregon border, including requests to establish new MPAs. Additional information on the MPA petition process, petitions, overviews and maps, evaluation framework, evaluation process, and next steps can be viewed on the Department's MPA Petition StoryMap webpage at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/27e78c677dca484ebfb37120abc59d10>.

For the evaluations, the Department is using a framework approved by the Commission in August 2025 (<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=234650&inline>). The Department anticipates releasing draft evaluations for the remaining 2023 MPA Petitions in February 2026. The Commission has confirmed that the process for discussing and receiving

public comments on the Department's draft petition evaluations and recommendations will occur during both regular and special Commission meetings to be held in 2026.

After the Commission has considered and acted upon the 2023 MPA Petitions, the Department will work with the Commission to begin the public rulemaking process for petitioned actions granted by the Commission. Additional tribal outreach will be conducted during the rulemaking process and tribes will have opportunities to provide comments or request consultation.

Request for Input and/or Consultation

The Department respectfully requests that your input, written comments, or questions regarding the 2023 MPA Petitions be submitted by **January 15, 2026** to the MPA Team at mpamanagementreview@wildlife.ca.gov or at California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 1010 Riverside Parkway, West Sacramento, CA 95605.

To request consultation with the Department, please contact Marine Region Tribal Coordinator Samara Maxey by email at Samara.Maxey@wildlife.ca.gov or by mail at Department of Fish and Wildlife, Attn: Samara Maxey, Marine Region, 1010 Riverside Parkway, West Sacramento, CA 95605.

To request formal consultation with the Commission, please contact Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director and Acting Tribal Advisor and Liaison at fgc@fgc.ca.gov or California Fish and Game Commission, PO Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding our request for input and consultation. When responding to either agency, we respectfully ask that you include the appropriate point of contact with whom staff should coordinate pertaining to this project.

We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,



Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
California Fish and Game Commission



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