

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 30, 2026

To: Melissa Miller-Henson Executive Director
California Fish and Game Commission

From: Jaimie Huynh
Deputy Director for Strategic Engagement, Equity, and Partnerships
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Subject: **Initial Assessment of Question 14 (Equitable Access) and Question 16 (CFGF JEDI Policy) of the 2025 MPA Petition Evaluation Framework**

At its February 14-15, 2024 meeting, the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGF) referred 20 Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for review, evaluation, and recommendation. CDFW completed the Evaluations and Recommendations for the ten non-Tribally-led petitions and the Companion Document in March of 2026, which were received by CFGF at their April 15-16, 2026 meeting. The Evaluations and Recommendations and the Companion Document did not include answers to Questions 14 and 16 of the 2025 MPA Petition Evaluation Framework.

- Question 14: Does the proposed change provide more equitable access opportunities (e.g., fishing, educational, and/or other recreational opportunities) for traditionally underserved or marginalized communities?
- Question 16: Is the proposed change consistent with the CFGF Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Policy?

At the May 2026 Regional Petition Meeting, CFGF requested that Question 14 and Question 16 be answered to inform CFGF decisions on the Bin 2 petitions.

CDFW, the Ocean Protection Council, and the California Natural Resources Agency jointly completed and is transmitting the initial assessment of Question 14 and Question 16 (see attached) to CFGF. The assessment acknowledges the history of exclusion from the coast and MPA Initiative planning process experienced by California Native American tribes and disadvantaged communities; includes an inventory to provide CFGF with an improved understanding of how petitions may impact equitable access to the coast and MPAs; presents an evaluation of petitions for the CFGF JEDI Policy actions; and provides future opportunities to improve tribal and community engagement, invest in social, cultural, and access-related research, and adopt policies to guide environmental justice and equity work.



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Addressing imbalances in representation and incorporation of equity considerations into management and decision-making ensures the benefits of conservation are shared fairly for all Californians. Diverse perspectives strengthens public support, improves stewardship, and contributes to more resilient ecosystems. There are meaningful opportunities to repair past harms, ensure appropriate avenues for formal tribal engagement, and build a process that is inclusive of and welcoming for communities of color.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at Jaimie.huynh@wildlife.ca.gov.

cc: Meghan Hertel, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Chad Dibble, Deputy Director
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Kevin Thomas, Deputy Director
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Geneva E.B. Thompson, Deputy Secretary for
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