32. Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 (New SMCA Near Point Sal, Tribally Co-Led)

Today's Item **Information ☐** **Action ☒**

Request to designate a new SMCA near Point Sal – using boundaries proposed in November 2025 – that allows recreational take of finfish by hook and line from shore and take during mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base, and to consult with tribes to identify a tribal name for the SMCA.

Consider evaluations, recommendations, and public comments in determining whether to grant or deny marine protected area (MPA) Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 (Exhibit 1).

Petitions or individual actions within petitions that are granted today will be added to the Commission's rulemaking calendar for development and future consideration in a rulemaking.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

• Received petition; referred to the Marine Resources Committee and the Department for review	December 2023; February 2024
• Tribal Committee (TC) received overview of 5 MPA petitions from tribal leads or co-leads; received Department presentation, and developed TC recommendation	April 14, 2026; TC
• Commission adopted TC recommendation to amend the tribally led and co-led petitions	April 15-16, 2026
• Received petitioner's presentation and discussed region-specific petitioned actions via regional meeting	May 5-6, 2026
• Received petition evaluations and recommendations from the Department and California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)	August 11, 2026 TC; August 12-13, 2026
• **Today, consider granting or denying all or parts of Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2**	**October 13-16, 2026**

Background

Pursuant to Section 662, any person requesting that the Commission adopt, amend, or repeal a regulation must complete and submit a petition for regulation change (Form FGC-1). For background on the regular process for considering regulation change petition forms submitted by the public, see Agenda Item 22 (this meeting). Due to the complexity and unique nature of the MPA petition evaluation process, this and other MPA petitions are scheduled separately from the standing agenda item for regulation change petitions.

For detailed background information and key documents related to the MPA petition process, see the staff summary titled *Introduction to Bin 2 MPA Regulation Change Petitions and Evaluations* (this meeting). The summary introduction includes links to the index of MPA petitions and compiled public comments across time; the Department's evaluations, recommendations, and companion document; OPC's policy evaluation and recommendations complementing the Department's evaluations; the equitable access and the Commission

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy initial assessments; and the Department's and OPC's presentations.

Overview of Proposed Regulatory Actions

This amended petition, submitted by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and co-led by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC), proposes to establish a new SMCA located in this region:

Action 1. Designate a new SMCA (9.18 square miles) at Point Sal in Santa Barbara County that prohibits take except for recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore and take incidental to mission-critical military operations of the adjacent Vandenberg Space Force Base; and name the MPA with a Chumash place name to be identified through consultation with the Chumash people.

Overview of Non-Regulatory Requests

The petitioner also requests to establish a co-management agreement between NCTC, other Chumash tribes, and the Department.

Petitioner's Stated Intent

In summary, the petitioners state that the proposed MPA would recognize that, "Point Sal is located in Chumash ancestral territory, and holds historic and cultural significance to Chumash people." They note that the area lies within the newly designated Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary — a recently designated federal marine protected area that the petitioner highlights was, "proposed and championed by NCTC." The petitioners emphasize that establishing the MPA would provide, "strong protections for the sacred and culturally important waters of Point Sal." The petitioners also emphasized that the proposal would, "… advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative approach with NCTC." From a conservation perspective, the petitioners believe that the proposed MPA would be, "…sufficiently protective of critical conservation features…such as Lion's Rock, persistent kelp forest habitat, biologically important areas for cetaceans and porpoises, and the larval retention zone on the leeward side of Point Sal" while "...as amended still meet[ing] minimum size and shoreline extent guidelines." (See Exhibit 1 for more details.)

Public Input Over Time

The Commission has received public comments on MPA petitions continuously since petitions were submitted in late 2023. Staff has compiled packets of comments about this petition that were included in committee or Commission meeting binders or supplemental handouts from the December 2023 through the August 2026 Commission meeting (links to packets of comments are available online in the final column of the *Status of MPA Petitions for Regulation Change Index* table). Comments received after the August 2026 Commission meeting, but by this meeting's comment deadline, are included with this staff summary and/or staff summaries for the MPA petition agenda items.

The Tribally led or co-led petitions were discussed at the regional meetings held in April and May 2026 (prior to the Department and OPC evaluations being delivered). The overarching goal of the meetings was to provide an inclusive, well-informed forum where petitioners could

present their proposals, community members could openly share perspectives on the proposals, and commissioners could ask questions, to build a foundation of understanding to help guide Commission decisions at today's meeting.

Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 proposes regulatory action in Santa Barbara County. For regional meeting materials, see the Staff Summary for May 5-6, 2026 and the petitioner presentation to the Commission on May 5-6, 2026.

Agency Evaluations and Recommendations

Department

The Department's evaluation, presented at the Commission's April 15-16, 2026 meeting, recommends the Commission consider multiple options:

1. Support with Alternative Pathway. Request the Department engage with NCTC, other interested tribes, and California State Parks to explore designating the area as a state marine cultural preservation area to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area, rather than establishing a new MPA.
2. Grant with Alternative Pathway, Point Sal SMR or an SMCA with at least Moderate-high LOP. Establish a new MPA at Point Sal and request that CDFW identify similar northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with CDFW Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2.
3. Grant with Alternative Pathway, Special Closure Lion Rock. Establish a new special closure around Lion Rock for birds and pinnipeds. This alternative could be considered on its own or as an add-on to Options (1), (2), and (4).
4. Grant in Concept Point Sal SMCA. Establish a new SMCA at Point Sal as proposed in 2023-28MPA_AM2 that allows recreational take of finfish by hook-and line from shore (Moderate-low LOP) and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with CDFW Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2.
5. Deny. Do not establish a new SMCA (or SMR or special closure) at Point Sal.

The full technical analysis and summary of key findings are provided in Exhibit 2. In summary:

- When measured against the SAT Science Guidelines, the proposed Point Sal SMCA is unlikely to enhance MPA Network design beyond existing conditions because the MPA Network is currently meeting connectivity objectives, and the proposed SMCA's take results in a Moderate-low LOP.
- The Moderate-low LOP applies, regardless of current levels of use or access. This application is consistent across the entire MPA Network.
- However, there are alternative designations that can be used to recognize the cultural significance of the location or that would offer greater ecological protection than the proposed SMCA, consistent with the SAT Science Guidelines.
- The various designations meet different objectives and there are tradeoffs among the alternatives that the Commission will need to consider.

- CDFW provided a list of potential options for Commission consideration that would better meet the petitioner's stated objectives, and the potential benefits and trade-offs for each (see Table 1 of CDFW's evaluation).
- It is important to note that an MPA was considered at Point Sal during the MLPA Initiative planning process but was not selected, in part due to socioeconomic considerations, many of which are still relevant today.

Regarding tribal co-management, the Department recommends support, with alternative pathway, for the reasons detailed in Exhibit 2. In summary:

- CDFW can enter tribal co-management agreements at any time, independent of Commission action or the petition process.
- This non-regulatory pathway aligns with state commitments to strong government-to-government relationships and supports key DMR recommendations to improve tribal engagement, create clear pathways for tribal MPA management, and incorporate marine cultural heritage. It also helps build tribal capacity for MPA stewardship.
- CDFW is committed to working with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians on co-management within MPAs and in areas outside MPA boundaries, including the proposed areas, without establishing a new MPA. These agreements can be developed more quickly than regulatory MPA designations and provide a flexible approach to advancing tribal co-stewardship.

Ocean Protection Council (OPC)

OPC staff, in its science and policy recommendations presented at the August 12-13, 2026 Commission meeting, recommends granting the petitioned action, with reasons detailed in Exhibit 3. In summary:

- The area around Point Sal supports exceptionally high biodiversity (foraging grounds for seabirds and marine mammals, krill hotspot, potential larval retention zone).
- Given its remoteness, the proposed new SMCA would likely still provide significant biodiversity benefit even with shore fishing allowed.
- The proposed Point Sal SMCA would also protect an area of substantial cultural importance to the Chumash people.

Regarding tribal co-management, OPC is highly supportive of MPA adaptive management actions that advance co-governance, co-management, and collaborative stewardship with tribes, for the reasons detailed in Exhibit 3. In summary:

- Adaptive management actions which include protecting places with high biocultural significance, are essential not only for righting historical wrongs, but also for reconnecting tribes to traditional stewardship practices that can directly benefit biodiversity.
- Increased support for tribal stewardship is a top priority in both OPC's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan and the California Natural Resources Agency's recently released Tribal

Stewardship Policy, which aims to expand tribal stewardship of at least 7.5 million acres of California's lands and coastal waters.

Key Considerations

- *Ecological*

  Point Sal was considered during the MLPA planning process for its biodiversity, complex habitats, and remoteness, but was not selected due to socioeconomic trade-offs.

  The Department assessed the proposed SMCA, allowing shore-based finfish and military-related take, as providing Moderate-low ecological protection. However, limited shoreline access and remoteness may constrain shore-fishing effort and support conservation benefits.

- *Tribal and Equitable Access*

  Point Sal holds significant cultural and ancestral importance to Chumash people. Tribal engagement and integration of traditional ecological knowledge were more limited during the original MLPA process than under contemporary State policies. The proposed shore-based fishing allowance is intended to maintain traditional harvest access for members of non-federally recognized tribes who are ineligible for the existing tribal take exemption, presenting an important equitable access consideration.

- *Socioeconomic*

  Point Sal provides productive fishing grounds and valuable shelter for commercial passenger fishing vessels operating from Morro Bay and Port San Luis. New restrictions could affect fishing opportunities and redistribute effort. Vessel monitoring systems data do not capture many smaller vessels, limiting assessment of existing use and potential displacement.

- *Management and Policy*

  The proposal presents trade-offs among ecological protection, Tribal stewardship, equitable access, and established fishing uses. The Commission may consider whether a new MPA, modified boundaries or regulations, or alternative cultural recognition and collaborative stewardship approaches would best advance these objectives, while recognizing evolving Tribal policies and prior stakeholder agreements.

Today

Today, the Commission will consider the petition, petition evaluations and recommendations, and public comments in determining whether to grant or deny the petition; the Commission may choose to grant the petition in whole or in part (that is, select specific petition actions) and may also grant with modifications informed by public input and discussions.

If the petition, any individual actions, or any modified actions are granted today, they will be added to the Commission's rulemaking calendar for consideration in a future rulemaking.

Significant Public Comments

To view comments received for this meeting that are not specific to an individual petition, such as comments about the process, broad support for specific goals, or the MPA network, see the comment summary and exhibits in Introduction to Bin 2 MPA Regulation Change Petitions and Evaluations.

1. The Northern Chumash Tribal Council and NRDC respond to the evaluations and recommendations from the Department and the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC), received by the Commission at its August 12-13, 2026 meeting. They support OPC's recommendation and Department Option 4, noting that option best aligns with OPC's recommendation and offers meaningful, enforceable conservation benefits while supporting tribal co-stewardship. (Exhibit 4)
2. A commenter requests rejection of Petition 2023-28MPA, stating that the proposal would limit public fishing access, rely on insufficient scientific justification, and introduce concerns about equity, governance, and the role of self-interested parties in managing public coastal resources. (Exhibit 5)
3. A commercial fisherman opposes the proposed Point Sal MPA, stating it would remove essential fishing grounds, harm commercial and recreational fishermen's ability to earn a living, and negatively affect the local community and economy. (Exhibit 6)
4. The president and executive director of Native Coast Action Network supports approval of the Mishopshno and Point Sal MPA petitions (2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA), emphasizing tribal stewardship and protecting living cultural landscapes. They urge the Commission to prioritize tribal-led conservation while continuing meaningful co-management with tribes. (Exhibit 7)
5. Two elected officials jointly ask for a full and fair consideration of proposals that would strengthen California's MPA network, including those guided by the OPC recommendations (notably petitions 2023-27MPA, 2023-28MPA, 2023-29MPA, and 2023-33MPA), noting their relevance to biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and the state's broader 30x30 goals. They emphasize the importance of considering Tribal stewardship opportunities and also considering the economic and cultural significance of fisheries to coastal communities while maintaining a science-based, collaborative, and trusted decision-making process. (Exhibit 8)
6. NRDC, a co-petitioner for 2023-28MPA, expresses strong support for establishing the Point Sal SMCA, emphasizing its cultural importance to the Chumash people, its ecological value as a biodiversity hotspot, and its alignment with statewide conservation priorities such as 30x30. NRDC includes letters from local businesses, the co-petitioner Northern Chumash Tribal Council, and supporting organizations that reinforce the proposal would strengthen marine resilience, benefit community well-being and coastal economies, and — based on spatial fishing effort analyses derived from federal vessel monitoring systems — result in minimal displacement of commercial fishing activity. (Exhibit 9)
7. NRDC, on behalf of 11,211 signatories, expresses strong support for both the Mishopshno (Petition 2023-29MPA) and Point Sal (Petition 2023-28MPA) SMCA

proposals, emphasizing their cultural significance to the Chumash people and their ecological value in strengthening California's MPA network. The signers highlight benefits, including habitat protection, climate resilience, tourism support, and long-term ecosystem health, urging the Commission to approve both petitions. (Exhibit 10)

8. Ocean protectors program expresses support for Petitions 2023 28MPA and 2023 29MPA, emphasizing that the proposed Point Sal and Mishopshno SMCAs would restore long overdue Tribal co management and protect culturally, ecologically, and spiritually significant Chumash coastal waters. They note these designations align with Indigenous stewardship principles, safeguard sensitive marine ecosystems, and strengthen Tribal relationships with ancestral homelands. (Exhibit 11)
9. Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association opposes establishing the Point Sal SMCA, stating that the Department's evaluation shows the proposal lacks strong ecological justification, offers only a low level of protection, and fails to demonstrate a clear need for restricting this productive fishing area. They emphasize that no adequate socioeconomic or displacement analysis has been completed, warning that removing access at Point Sal could redirect fishing pressure across the central coast and Channel Islands, with significant ecological, economic, and operational consequences that must be fully assessed before any action is taken. (Exhibit 12)
10. A commenter opposes the proposed Chitqawi, Pt. Buchon, and Pt. Sal MPAs, stating that additional closures are unnecessary, unsupported by scientific or socioeconomic analysis, and would severely harm commercial fishing operations, local ports, and waterfront infrastructure. They also raise concerns about dredging impacts, increased fuel use and emissions, inadequate stakeholder outreach, tribal homeland considerations, and the lack of enforcement capacity for additional MPAs. (Exhibit 13)
11. Opposes Petition 2023 28MPA, stating that additional closures such as Point Sal would eliminate nearly 80% of the central coast's most productive fishing areas, compounding the displacement already caused by existing MPAs and contributing to over - concentration of effort on remaining grounds. They emphasize that commercial fishing is already heavily regulated, fleet participation is declining, and further restrictions — unsupported by clear ecological necessity — threaten the viability of local fishermen while increasing California's dependence on imported seafood. (Exhibit 14)
12. Expresses concern that Petition 2023 28MPA would unnecessarily restrict recreational boat and kayak fishing access near Point Sal, where safe and practical entry points are already limited. They support science-based conservation but urge the Commission to balance habitat protection with maintaining opportunities for responsible recreational fishing, noting potential impacts on local anglers and nearby coastal communities. (Exhibit 15)
13. A commenter expresses strong support for establishing the Mishopshno (Petition 2023-29MPA) and Point Sal (Petition 2023-28MPA) SMCAs, noting that California's existing MPA network has already improved fish abundance, wildlife health, and habitat conditions. They emphasize that these new designations would honor culturally significant Chumash areas, strengthen climate resilience, boost local

tourism economies, and protect key habitats for seabirds, marine mammals, fish, and invertebrates. (Exhibit 16)

14. A commenter opposes Petitions 2023 28MPA and 2023 19MPA, stating that closing Point Sal and Chitqawi would severely harm central coast fisheries by eliminating essential fishing grounds, creating major spatial displacement, and increasing fuel costs and safety risks. They state that existing MPAs already provide sufficient protection and that the petitions lack adequate socioeconomic analysis, making the proposed closures unnecessary and unjustified. (Exhibit 17)
15. California Interfaith Power and Light supports OPC's recommendations to advance new and expanded MPAs, emphasizing that precautionary action is a moral responsibility amid climate change and biodiversity loss. They highlight the Mishopshno and Point Sal SMCA proposals as exemplary efforts that strengthen ecological protection, elevate Tribal stewardship, and uphold shared values of caring for California's ocean for future generations. (Exhibit 18)

Recommendation

Commission staff

Consider evaluations, Department and OPC recommendations, key considerations, and public comments in determining whether to grant in whole or in part, grant with modifications, or deny Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 (Exhibit 1).

Department

Regulatory Proposed Action

The Commission could consider several options:

1. Support with Alternative Pathway. Request CDFW engage with the NCTC, other interested tribes, and California State Parks to explore designating the area as a State Marine Cultural Preservation Area to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area, rather than establishing a new MPA.
2. Grant with Alternative Pathway, Point Sal SMR or a SMCA with at least Moderate-high LOP. Establish a new MPA at Point Sal and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2.
3. Grant with Alternative Pathway, Special Closure Lion Rock: Establish a new Special Closure around Lion Rock for birds and pinnipeds. This alternative could be considered on its own or as an add-on to Options (1), (2), and (4).
4. Grant in Concept Point Sal SMCA. Establish a new SMCA at Point Sal as proposed in 2023-28MPA_AM2 that allows recreational take of finfish by hook-and line from shore (Moderate-low LOP) and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2.
5. Deny. do not establish a new SMCA (or SMR or Special Closure) at Point Sal.

The full technical analysis and summary of key findings are provided in Exhibit 2.

Non-Regulatory Request

Support, with alternative pathway, for reasons detailed in Exhibit 2.

Ocean Protection Council

Regulatory Proposed Action: Grant Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 as amended at the April 15-16, 2026 Commission meeting, for the reasons detailed in Exhibit 3 and summarized under "Agency Evaluations and Recommendations."

Non-Regulatory Request: Supports MPA adaptive management actions that advance co-governance, co-management, and collaborative stewardship with tribes, for the reasons detailed in Exhibit 3.

Exhibits

1. Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2, received November 30, 2023 and amended on April 15-16, 2026 (see the attached memo for details on the amendment)
2. Department evaluation companion document and petition evaluation, companion document updated on July 30, 2026 and petition evaluation received March 20, 2026
3. Letter from Jenn Eckerle, Deputy Secretary for Oceans and Coastal Policy, California Natural Resources Agency and Executive Director, OPC, with OPC staff recommendations and recommendation narratives for petitions to adaptively manage California's MPA network, received July 31, 2026
4. Letter from Violet Sage Walker, Chairwoman, Northern Chumash Tribal Council, and Sandy Aylesworth, Director, Pacific Initiative, Natural Resources Defense Council, received August 10, 2026
5. Email from James Bittner, received August 11, 2026
6. Email from Stella Dyerly, received August 18, 2026
7. Email from Teresa Romero, President and Executive Director, Native Coast Action Network, received September 21, 2026
8. Letter from Greg Hart, Assemblymember, 37th District, and Monique Limon, Senate President Pro Tempore, 19th Senate District, received September 30, 2026
9. Email from Sandy Aylesworth, Pacific Director, Ocean Division, Natural Resources Defense Council, received September 30, 2026
10. Email from Margaret Brown, Senior Director of Equity and Community Partnerships, Nature Team, Natural Resources Defense Council, received September 30, 2026
11. Email from Tina Calderon, Director, Ocean Protectors Program and Indigenous Waters Associate, received September 30, 2026
12. Email from Dave Colker, Executive Director, Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association, received September 30, 2026
13. Email from Lori French, received September 25, 2026
14. Email from Tom Hafer, received September 28, 2026

15. Email from Terri Lajda, received September 30, 2026
16. Email from Carla Pera, received September 25, 2026
17. Email from Nathan Rosser, received September 28, 2026
18. Email from Susan Stephenson, Executive Director, California Interfaith Power and Light, received September 23, 2026

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission **grants** Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2.

OR

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission **grants** Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 to designate a new 9.18 square mile SMCA at Point Sal in Santa Barbara County that prohibits take:

____ **except** recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore.

____ **except** take incidental to mission-critical military operations of the adjacent Vandenberg Space Force Base.

____ **and names** the MPA with a Chumash place name to be identified through consultation with the Chumash people.

OR

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission **denies** Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2.

California Fish and Game Commission
Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2

This petition has been formally amended, effective April 15, 2026

This petition is one of five tribally led or co-led marine protected area (MPA) petitions that have been amended. The amendments are based on tribal petitioner presentations and discussion at the April 14, 2026 Commission Tribal Committee meeting; the proposed changes were formally accepted as amendments to the petitions by the Commission at its April 15-16, 2026 meeting.

Attached is a Commission memo to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife that summarizes the changes to the five tribally led or co-led MPA petitions, including this one.

Attachments

- Memo from the Commission to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, dated July 6, 2026
- Communications from petitioner: Amended petition form FGC1, and updated narrative for Petition 2023-28MPA AM2
- Original and amended petition form FGC1 and attachments for Petition 2023-28MPA and 2023-28MPA AM1

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION
MEMORANDUM

DATE: ~~May 29, 2026~~ Updated July 6, 2026 (updates displayed in blue font)

TO: Craig Shuman, Regional Manager, Marine Region
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

CC: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Meghan Hertel, Director
Chad Dibble, Deputy Director, Wildlife and Fisheries Division
Sarah Fonseca, Tribal Liaison
Samara Maxey, Regional Tribal Coordinator, Marine Region

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

SUBJECT: Actions Proposed for Tribally Led and Co-Led Marine Protected Area Petitions

This memo is intended to transmit to the Department, for evaluation purposes, current descriptions of specific proposed actions in the five tribally led or co-led marine protected area (MPA) petitions under consideration by the Commission.

During its April 14, 2026 meeting, the Commission Tribal Committee received presentations from tribes that are leading or co-leading MPA petitions, during which the tribes described updates or clarifications to their original petitions. The committee recommended that the Commission request the Department move forward with tribally led or co-led petition evaluations based on how the petitions, and individual actions contained within, were presented and described during the April 14 meeting.

At its April 15-16, 2026 meeting, the Commission supported the Tribal Committee recommendation and directed staff to submit to the Department the amended proposed actions for tribally led or co-led MPA petitions. Since the April meeting, the Commission held three regional meetings focused on MPA petitions, during which the five tribally led or co-led petitions were presented and petitioners reaffirmed the specific proposed actions as described on April 14.

Table 1 details the five tribally led or co-led MPA petitions and the specific actions requested in each, including those presented in April and reaffirmed during the regional MPA petition meetings. For clarity, the tribal changes are identified in the third column and petitions are renamed with an amendment number in the fourth column. The Department is asked to evaluate the five petitions consistent with the amendments summarized in the "…Description of Amended Petition Proposed Actions, Effective April 15, 2026" column. The Commission has requested that the Department complete and submit the evaluations to the Commission prior to, and present its recommendations during, the Commission's August 12-13, 2026 meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Table 1: Tribally Led or Co-Led Marine Protected Area Petitions, Updated July 1, 2026 (updates displayed in blue font)

Petition Number Tribal Lead or Co-Lead and Co-Sponsor(s)	Description of Petition Proposed Actions (Original 2023 or as Amended 2025)	Tribal Petitioner Changes	Amended Petition Number and Description of Amended Petition Proposed Actions (Effective April 15, 2026)
2023-21MPA Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation	• Amend northern boundary of Pyramid Point State Marine Conservation Area (SCMA) • Remove recreational take of surf smelt • Maintain tribal take exemption for the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation	No changes proposed • *The Department explained that surf smelt is part of a three-species "true smelt" group (surf, night, and whitebait); because the MPA allows recreational take of the group, it is necessary to remove the recreational allowance for true smelt, not just surf smelt. The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation does not oppose this change.*	2023-21MPA_AM1 • Amend northern boundary of Pyramid Point SMCA • Remove recreational take of ~~surf~~ true smelt • Maintain tribal take exemption for the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation
2023-28MPA_AM1~~AM2~~ Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) Northern Chumash Tribal Council	• Designate a new SMCA around Point Sal (size: 14.22 square miles with an alongshore span of 3.20 miles) • Identify a tribal name through consultation with Chumash people • Allow recreational take of finfish by hook and line from shore	• *Add Northern Chumash Tribal Council as co-petitioner* • *Move the southern boundary northward by approximately one-half mile to end of Vandenberg Space Force Base Road.* *SW corner: 34.895212665° N Lat, 120.731972573° W Long* *SE corner: 34.895212665° N Lat, 120.642637239° W Long* • *Allow incidental take during mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base*	2023-28MPA_AM2 • Northern Chumash Tribal Council added as co-petitioner • Designate a new SMCA around Point Sal (size as amended: 9.18 square miles with an alongshore span of 4.03 miles) • Identify a tribal name through consultation with Chumash people • Allow recreational take of finfish by hook and line from shore • Allow incidental take during mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base

Petition Number **Tribal Lead or Co-Lead and Co-Sponsor(s)**	**Description of Petition Proposed Actions (Original 2023 or as Amended 2025)**	**Tribal Petitioner Changes**	**Amended Petition Number and Description of Amended Petition Proposed Actions (Effective April 15, 2026)**
2023-29MPA_AM1 NRDC Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Environmental Defense Center	• Designate a new marine protected area near Carpinteria as "Mishopshno SMCA" (size: 8.97 square miles) • Allow recreational take of finfish by hook and line from shore • Include a tribal take exemption for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians	• *Move western boundary to align with Caspia Lane in Summerland, at:* *34.366106° N Lat, 119.53689° W Long* • *Move the eastern boundary to align with Franklin Creek, at:* *34.366106° N Lat, 119.58868° W Long*	2023-29MPA_AM2 • Designate a new marine protected area near Carpinteria as "Mishopshno SMCA" (size as amended: 9.05 square miles with an alongshore span of 3.63 miles) • Allow recreational take of finfish by hook and line from shore • Include a tribal take exemption for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
2023-19MPA Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians	• Designate a new marine protected area near Morro Bay as "Chitqawi SMCA" • Include a tribal take exemption for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians • Allow recreational take of finfish and invertebrates except mussels and scallops by hand • Allow incidental take from permitted operations	• *Remove proposed allowance for recreational take of finfish and invertebrates except mussels and scallops by hand* • *Remove incidental take allowance*	2023-19MPA_AM1 • Designate a new marine protected area near Morro Bay as "Chitqawi SMCA" • Include only a tribal take exemption for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

Petition Number Tribal Lead or Co-Lead and Co-Sponsor(s)	Description of Petition Proposed Actions (Original 2023 or as Amended 2025)	Tribal Petitioner Changes	Amended Petition Number and Description of Amended Petition Proposed Actions (Effective April 15, 2026)
2023-20MPA Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians	• Expand northern boundary of Point Buchon State Marine Reserve (SMR) north to align with Point Buchon • Re-name Point Buchon SMCA as the "Chumash Co-Managed SMCA" • Remove current take allowance (recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore) • Add allowance for recreational take of finfish and invertebrates except mussels and scallops by hand • Allow take incidental to operations in MPA • Add a tribal take exemption for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians	• *Keep current take allowance (recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore)* • *Remove proposed allowance for recreational take of finfish and invertebrates except mussels and scallops by hand* • *Remove proposed allowance for take incidental to operations in MPA*	2023-20MPA_AM1 • Expand northern boundary of Point Buchon SMR north to align with Point Buchon • Re-name Point Buchon SMCA as the "Chumash Co-Managed SMCA" • Add a tribal take exemption for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

November 24, 2025

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95817

Submitted electronically to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

RE: Amendments to Petition 2023-28MPA: Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

We are writing on behalf of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) and Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) with a request to amend Petition 2023-28MPA, which seeks to designate a new marine protected area (MPA) off the coast of Point Sal and within state waters of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

As per the email dated Monday, October 13, NCTC will join NRDC as a formal co-sponsor of this petition. Point Sal is located in Chumash ancestral territory, and holds historic and cultural significance to Chumash people. It also lies within the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, a recently designated federal marine protected area proposed and championed by NCTC. As part of NCTC's ongoing leadership in Chumash stewardship of California's marine resources, we are committed to garnering strong protections for the sacred and culturally important waters of Point Sal. If designated, this petition would advance progress toward Recommendations 2a, b, and c of the California MPA Decadal Management Review, and advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with NCTC. We respectfully request that Petition 2023-28MPA be reclassified as a Tribal petition because of this change in co-sponsorship. Further, we support the option to rename the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area with a Chumash place name after further consultation with other Chumash Tribes in the region, as stated in the original petition.

Following months of productive conversations, we are adjusting the southern boundary of the proposed MPA roughly one mile to the north to avoid conflicts with existing mission-critical operations of Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB). Initially, the proposed boundaries were drawn to align with visible landmarks and natural geographies as much as possible, with the northern boundary beginning at Mussel Point and the southern boundary drawn at the end of Brown's Beach – two visual landmarks that are likely visible from sea, per MLPA Master Plan guidance.

Since the petition's submission in fall 2023, conversations with officials at VSFB have improved our understanding of the base's operations and facilities, and we learned that the southernmost offshore boundary of the SMCA (as originally proposed) overlaps with critical VSFB assets. The new southern boundary as amended herein is the result of productive conversations and negotiations with VSFB. We believe it is sufficiently protective of critical conservation features in the proposed MPA such as Lion's Rock, persistent kelp forest habitat, biologically important areas for cetaceans and porpoises, and the larval retention zone on the leeward side of Point Sal. Critically, the proposed MPA as amended still meets minimum size and shoreline extent guidelines, and the new southern boundary generally aligns with the southern end of Point Sal State Beach, making it easily recognizable and understandable for the public.

We recognize that these are two significant changes during the review process. We appreciate your understanding that building authentic partnerships and conducting thorough outreach with critical stakeholders takes time. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to schedule a meeting to discuss this addition in sponsorship or changes in boundaries.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Violet Sage Walker
Chairwoman
Northern Chumash Tribal Council

Sandy Aylesworth
Director, Pacific Initiative, Nature
Natural Resources Defense Council

State of California – Fish and Game Commission
PETITION TO THE CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION FOR REGULATION CHANGE

Tracking Number: (_2023-28MPA_AM2_)

To request a change to regulations under the authority of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), you are required to submit this completed form to: California Fish and Game Commission, (physical address) 1416 Ninth treet, Suite 1320, Sacramento, CA 95814, (mailing address) P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090 or via email to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Note: This form is not intended for listing petitions for threatened or endangered species (see Section 670.1 of Title 14).

Incomplete forms will not be accepted. A petition is incomplete if it is not submitted on this form or fails to contain necessary information in each of the required categories listed on this form (Section I). A petition will be rejected if it does not pertain to issues under the Commission's authority. A petition may be denied if any petition requesting a functionally equivalent regulation change was considered within the previous 12 months and no information or data is being submitted beyond what was previously submitted. If you need help with this form, please contact Commission staff at (916) 653-4899 or FGC@fgc.ca.gov.

SECTION I: Required Information.

Please be succinct. Responses for Section I should not exceed five pages

1. **Person or organization requesting the change (Required)**
   Name of primary contact person: [redacted] National Resources Defense Council
   Address: 111 Sutter St 21st floor, San Francisco, CA 94104
   Telephone number: (415) 875-6100
   Email address: [redacted]

2. **Rulemaking Authority (Required) -** Authority cited: Sections 200, 205(c), 265, 399, 1590, 1591, 2860, 2861 and 6750, Fish and Game Code; and Sections 36725(a) and 36725(e), Public Resources Code.

3. **Overview (Required) -** We propose the designation of a new State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) in the waters around Point Sal, Central California to 1) advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, 2) protect the rich and productive ecosystem and biodiversity found within, 3~~2~~) protect an important larval retention zone and enhance the connectivity dynamics within the region, and 4~~3~~) enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network.

   The proposed area aligns with state MPA design and feasibility guidelines provided by CDFW, and is bounded by the mean high tide line, the 3 nm state waters boundary, and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:
   - 34.89521266~~534.880667518~~ N lat. 120.731972573 ~~120.726433061~~ W long. (SW corner)
   - 34.929894739 N lat. 120.727488272 W long. (NW corner)
   - 34.930008197 N lat. 120.666597401 W long. (NE corner)
   - 34.895212665 ~~34.880979714~~ N lat. 120.642637239 ~~120.639473286~~ W long. (SE corner)

The proposed SMCA would prohibit the injury, damage, take, or possession of all living, geological, or cultural marine resources with the exception of incidental take related to mission-critical military operations of the adjacent Vandenberg Space Force Base and recreational take of finfish from shore using hook and line. This permitted activity would allow for fishing access to the shoreline and marine resources for recreational, traditional, ceremonial, cultural, and subsistence purposes for the public including the Chumash people and other members of federally and non-federally recognized tribes.

We recommend that the state consult with local Indigenous communities and Tribes to explore co-management options for the Point Sal SMCA before designation.

4. Rationale (Required) - Located in Santa Barbara County in Chumash ancestral territory, Point Sal is an ecologically rich and relatively remote promontory along the coastline that supports a diverse marine ecosystem and provides critical habitat for seabirds and marine mammals alike. The nutrient-rich waters found at this site allow for a diversity of ocean life to thrive, with kelp beds, rich tidepools, and productive waters that support humpback whales, gray whales, a variety of sea lions and seals, sea otters, and a biologically important feeding area for endangered blue whales nearby. Offshore, Lion Rock is a significant roosting site for seabirds like the Brown pelican and Brandt's cormorant and acts as a relatively undisturbed haulout for sea lions, seals, and other pinnipeds, underlining the area's conservation value for these animals as the California coastline becomes increasingly developed. In addition, the leeward waters of Point Sal act as a larval retention zone. Larval retention zones are known to be highly beneficial areas for the recruitment of fish and invertebrate larvae in wind-driven upwelling zones while promoting the biodiversity of the surrounding ecosystem. Point Sal also holds cultural significance for the Chumash people, with evidence of their occupation as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago; Chumash artifacts are visible throughout Point Sal, and analyses of burial sites from the area demonstrate the rich cultural ties to the traditional stewards of this land. Furthermore, Point Sal is still of importance to the Chumash people who visit and use the area today. Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity, sense of place, and cultural and subsistence practices for many of the Indigenous people of Central California today. Cosponsored by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the Point Sal SMCA seeks to advance Tribal co-stewardship and management of a California MPA, in alignment with the recommendations identified after the MPA network Decadal Management Review (Recommendations 1, 2, and 3). We request that upon designation of this SMCA, CDFW work to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement with NCTC and other interested Tribes.

Protecting the waters of Point Sal aligns strongly with the goals set by the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), especially with regards to the protection of natural biodiversity found in relatively undisturbed marine ecosystems and advancement of Tribal marine stewardship. Given the remote nature of Point Sal, its relative lack of human disturbance, and potential for increased threats to the California MPAs found nearby, there is value in maximizing the ecological and biological benefits that Point Sal provides to the marine species that inhabit the area and to the broader Central California region. As development of the state's coastline and seascape progresses, protecting relatively undisturbed areas will add to

the resilience of the MPA network by providing refugia for marine life from encroaching threats. Furthermore, designating a Tribal~~n~~ MPA in the proposed area will improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities at Point Sal and support equitable access to coastal resources moving forward into the future.

See Petition Narrative for full rationale.

SECTION II: Optional Information

5. Date of Petition: 11/30/2023

6. Category of Proposed Change
☐ Sport Fishing
☐ Commercial Fishing
☐ Hunting
☒ Other, please specify: MPAs, Section 632.

7. The proposal is to: (*To determine section number(s), see current year regulation booklet or https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs*)
☒ Amend Title 14 Section(s):Westlaw regulations.
☐ Add New Title 14 Section(s): Click here to enter text.
☐ Repeal Title 14 Section(s): Click here to enter text.

8. If the proposal is related to a previously submitted petition that was rejected, specify the tracking number of the previously submitted petition
Or ☒ Not applicable.

9. Effective date: If applicable, identify the desired effective date of the regulation.
If the proposed change requires immediate implementation, explain the nature of the emergency:

10. Supporting documentation: Identify and attach to the petition any information supporting the proposal including data, reports and other documents:
a. Proposed Point Sal SMR petition narrative
b. Figure 1 - Proposed Point Sal SMR habitat map
c. Appendix A - Climate-smart MPA design guidelines met by proposed Point Sal SMR
d. Appendix B - Proposed Point Sal SMR letter of support

11. Economic or Fiscal Impacts: Identify any known impacts of the proposed regulation change on revenues to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, individuals, businesses, jobs, other state agencies, local agencies, schools, or housing:

Current fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from the nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. The proposed Point Sal MPA overlaps with 14% of California fishing block 631, and 11% of California fishing block 632. According to the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, annual landings reported from these blocks over a 10-year period from 2012 to 2022 were an average of 231,460 lbs by weight and $678,632 by value

per year. This represents just 0.11% of the landings by weight, and 1.1% of landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10-year period. For this reason, and due to the relatively small proposed size of the MPA, we believe the establishment of an SMR in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

Our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.

12. Forms: If applicable, list any forms to be created, amended or repealed:

SECTION 3: FGC Staff Only

Date received: 11/302023 Amended 3/14/2025; **Re-amended 11/24/2025**

FGC staff action:

- ☒ X Accept - complete
- ☐ Reject - incomplete
- ☐ Reject - outside scope of FGC authority

Date petitioner was notified of receipt of petition and pending action: **11/26/2025**

Meeting date for FGC consideration: **Receive and Re-refer on 12/11/2025**

FGC action:

- ☐ Denied by FGC
- ☐ Denied - same as petition _____
  Tracking Number
- ☐ Granted for consideration of regulation change

Petition to Designate a New State Marine Reserve at Point Sal, Central California
PETITION NARRATIVE

Point Sal is located in Santa Barbara County, California, roughly 50 miles (80 kilometers) to the northwest of Point Conception. The nearest city to Point Sal is Guadalupe, located about six miles to the northeast, and Vandenberg Space Force Base is located to the south. Known for its scenic beauty, rugged cliffs, and stunning ocean views, Point Sal is a relatively remote and undeveloped area along California's coastline located in Chumash ancestral territory. Its waters are home to rich biodiversity, productive oceanographic features, and intact food webs that are worth protecting. This petition calls for the designation of a new State Marine Conservation Area with a Chumash collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) and other interested Tribes.~~allowing for cultural and subsistence use by Tribes and Indigenous communities in this area,~~ This MPA would~~to~~ advance the goals of California's network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the face of climate change and threats from increased human activities and threats in the future, and advance California's priorities of recognizing and remedying the displacement of Indigenous nations from California's coasts and lands. The Point Sal SMCA would allow for cultural and subsistence use by Tribes and Indigenous communities in this area and the continuation of recreational hook and line fishing from shore.

Goals

The overall goals of this new MPA are to 1) advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management (DMR Recommendation 2a, b, and c) through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, 2~~1~~) protect this rich and productive ecosystem and the biodiversity found within, 3~~2~~) to protect this larval retention zone and the connectivity dynamics within the region, and 4~~3~~) to enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network.

Proposed boundaries

In keeping with state MPA design and feasibility guidelines provided by CDFW, the proposed area is bounded by the mean high tide line and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

a. 34.895212665 ~~34.880667518~~ N lat. 120.731972573 ~~120.726433061~~ W long. (SW corner)
b. 34.929894739 N lat. 120.727488272 W long (NW corner)
c. 34.930008197 N lat. 120.666597401 W long. (NE corner)
d. 34.895212665 ~~34.880979714~~ N lat. 120.642637239 ~~120.639473286~~ W long. (SE corner)

The proposed boundaries were drawn to align with visible landmarks and natural geographies as much as possible, with the northern boundary beginning at Mussel Point, and the southern boundary aligned with the end of a Vandenberg Space Force Base road~~drawn at the end of~~

~~Brown's Beach~~. The eastern boundary aligns with the mean high tide line, and the western boundary extends out to the edge of state waters as recommended by state feasibility guidelines.

The proposed area is 9.18 ~~14.22~~ square miles with an alongshore span of 4.03 ~~3.2~~ miles, which meets the state's minimum size guidelines and design recommendations. The proposed area is located 19 miles alongshore from Point Buchon SMR/SMCA, the nearest MPA to the north, which meets the state's minimum spacing recommendations, and 6.5 miles from Vandenberg SMR, the nearest MPA to the south.

Proposed regulations

- Any injury, damage, take, or possession of all living, geological, or cultural marine resources is prohibited, with the exception of recreational take of finfish from shore using hook and line.
- Take incidental to base operations and commercial space launch operations identified by the Vandenberg Space Force Base Commander as mission critical is allowed.
- Public entry may be restricted at the discretion of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to protect wildlife, aquatic life, or habitat, or by the Commander of Vandenberg Space Force Base to protect and provide safety for base operations.
- The Department shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commander of Vandenberg Space Force Base for the mutually beneficial management and administration of the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area. The MOU shall include, but not be limited to, the identification of Vandenberg Space Force Base's national defense mission activities that are unrestricted by the subject regulations and details on management and administrative roles and responsibilities.

Ecological significance of the area

The coastal waters around Point Sal in California support a diverse and dynamic marine ecosystem. The rocky coast is home to abundant and rich tidepools. The kelp beds found in waters leeward of the point provide habitat for endangered Southern sea otters and many other kelp-associated species. The rocks and coastal habitats around the point provide critical roosting and foraging habitats for multiple species of seabirds. State waters surrounding the point are home to a variety of feeding and migrating marine mammals, including bottlenose and common dolphins, harbor porpoises, humpback and gray whales, California sea lions, harbor seals, elephant seals, and Steller sea lions.[1]

An analysis of species, habitats, threats, and existing protections within the California Current found that the waters around Point Sal are among the top 5% in conservation value in the

[1] Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan" (Santa Barbara County Parks Department, July 2002), https://ryono.net/pointsal/ptsalreserve.pdf.

California Current.[2] Notably, the area remained within the top 5% regardless of whether conservation value was being measured utilizing the species richness index or the rarity index, with a significant portion of these areas falling into the top 2%. This region of California is also well-known as a marine biogeographic 'transitional zone' for ocean and coastal biota. Many species reach the southern or northern limits of their ranges here, making it an important biogeographic boundary along California's coast.[3]

The nutrient-rich waters in this region support a productive food web. Upwelling, where nutrient-rich deep waters rise to the surface, enhances primary productivity, providing ample food resources for a variety of marine organisms, from plankton to larger predators. A krill hotspot[4] and Biologically Important Area (BIA) for blue whale foraging are located just outside the proposed area,[5] indicating that these waters are productive enough to support feeding blue whales, which ingest up to 16 tons of krill per day.[6] The state waters within the proposed area are home to several other BIAs for marine mammal species, including a BIA for humpback whale foraging, a BIA for migrating gray whales, and BIA for resident harbor porpoises.[7]

Lion Rock haul out and roosting site

Lion Rock, located off the southern coast of Point Sal, is an important haul out site for sea lions and other marine mammals. As many as 883 sea lions have been observed on the rock on a single day, and the site is also occasionally used by Steller sea lions and elephant seals.[8] Haulouts are critical to the behavioral cycles of foraging, resting, and breeding for pinnipeds. However, these species are highly sensitive to visual and auditory disturbance and will leave haulouts when they become stressed – even abandoning them permanently, if disturbances occur frequently. Undisturbed haulouts are thus necessary for the protection of these species. Given Point Sal's remote location, Lion Rock currently experiences little to no human-caused disturbance[9] and may be one of the few remaining undisturbed haulouts along the busy California coastline – making it especially important for the conservation of these marine mammals.

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[2] Nathan Elliott et al., "Assessment of Marine Protected Areas in the California Current" (Petaluma, CA: Point Blue, June 5, 2020), https://www.pointblue.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MPA-Assessment_Final.pdf.
[3] Ronald S. Burton, "Intraspecific Phylogeography Across the Point Conception Biogeographic Boundary," *Evolution* 52, no. 3 (June 1998): 734–45, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1558-5646.1998.tb03698.x.
[4] Jarrod A. Santora et al., "Mesoscale structure and oceanographic determinants of krill hotspots in the California Current: Implications for trophic transfer and conservation," *Progress in Oceanography* 91, no. 4 (December 2011): 397-409, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pocean.2011.04.002
[5] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Biologically Important Area Map," Web map, Cetacean & Sound Mapping, accessed November 20, 2023, https://cetsound.noaa.gov/biologically-important-area-map.
[6] Matthew S. Savoca et al., "Baleen Whale Prey Consumption Based on High-Resolution Foraging Measurements," *Nature* 599, no. 7883 (November 2021): 85–90, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03991-5.
[7] NOAA, "Biologically Important Area Map."
[8] NMFS, NOAA, and Department of Commerce. Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Weapons Testing at Vandenberg Air Force Base; California. 87 FR 762 (Jan. 6, 2022). Available at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/01/06/2022-00032/takes-of-marine-mammals-incidental-to-specified-activities-taking-marine-mammals-incidental-to.
[9] Dan Robinette, Sara Acosta, and Julie Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network" (Petaluma, CA: PRBO Conservation Science, November 15, 2012).

Lion Rock is also an important roosting site and breeding site for many seabird species. Roosting is a vital behavior for seabirds, providing essential rest, social interaction, protection, and nesting opportunities, thereby enhancing their energy conservation, reproductive success, and overall well-being in the dynamic marine environment. Seabirds like cormorants do not have oil-producing glands to help their feathers repel water, making roosting especially critical for these species to dry after foraging. Thousands of cormorants have been observed roosting on Lion Rock,[10] and it is also a roost site of significant importance for Brown Pelicans, which until recently were listed as endangered species.[11] Finally, Lion Rock is a breeding site of growing importance for Brandt's cormorants, with as many as 14 breeding pairs observed on the rock in recent years.[12]

Connectivity and larval retention zone

Although wind-driven upwelling is a vital source of nutrients for California ecosystems, this large-scale offshore transport of coastal ocean water poses a significant challenge to larval stages of marine organisms that must recruit to coastal environments. Headlands, such as found at Point Sal, can help to mitigate this effect by slowing down or recirculating ocean currents, and research has shown waters on the leeward sides of coastal promontories or headlands provide refuge for fish and invertebrate larvae against offshore transport during upwelling events.[13] These "larval retention zones" are critical for enhanced recruitment, and help to ensure that adult populations are supplied with larvae in recruitment-limited upwelling regions.[14] Larval retention zones also serve as biological hotspots, where upwelling delivers nutrients that then fuel phytoplankton growth and support marine food webs. This effect has been shown even for small headlands like Point Sal (e.g., Bodega Headland).[15]

Point Sal's leeward waters are known to serve as a larval retention zone in this stretch of the Central Coast. One study used seabird foraging rates as a proxy for juvenile fish recruitment to explore whether seabird foraging and geographic indicators can be used to identify larval retention zones, in order to help inform MPA network spatial design.[16] The findings show that both long and short headlands—including Point Sal—lead to higher juvenile fish abundance, and that coastal orientation was an important determinant of juvenile fish abundance. Pelagic cormorant foraging rates were also found to be higher at south-facing coasts like Point Sal's compared to other coastal orientations. This is due to weaker offshore advection caused by

[10] Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan."
[11] Dan Robinette and Julie Lanser, "Brown Pelican Roost Utilization Along the Coastal Margin of Vandenberg Air Force Base, 2004" (Stinson Beach, CA: PRBO Conservation Science, May 3, 2006).
[12] Robinette, Acosta, and Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network."
[13] Amber J. Mace and Steven G. Morgan, "Larval Accumulation in the Lee of a Small Headland: Implications for the Design of Marine Reserves," *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 318 (August 3, 2006): 19–29, https://doi.org/10.3354/meps318019.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Dan Robinette, Nadav Nur, and Jaime Jahncke, "Spatial Patterns in Nearshore Juvenile Fish Abundance Throughout the California Network of Marine Protected Areas as Revealed by Seabird Foraging Rates," *California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations* 60 (2019).

coastal upwelling along south-facing coasts, and eddies forming in the lee of the south-facing coasts of embayments.[17]

This biological evidence for local retention zones is supported by physical oceanography data. Multiple studies of oceanographic currents in the area show that within the Santa Barbara Channel, ocean currents primarily run from east to west.[18] Just north of Point Conception there is strong seasonal equatorward flow heading south. Around the area of Point Sal, the interaction of these westward and southward surface currents cause convergence.[19] Additionally, the region experiences episodic periods of wind relaxation in the spring, leading to less vigorous upwelling with important biological consequences for larval retention and surface productivity.[20]

Chumash Heritage and collaborative co-stewardship~~Historical and cultural use~~

The ocean is an integral part of Chumash culture and heritage and Point Sal holds significant cultural and historical ties to the Chumash people, who have inhabited the region for thousands of years.[21] For instance, the Chumash village Axwin was located very close to the area.[22] There is abundant evidence of Chumash occupation of Point Sal as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago. Rock rings where homes once stood, grinding stones, and other Chumash artifacts are easily visible. Human remains found at Chumash burial sites indicate that the diet of Indigenous peoples living at Point Sal was high in marine protein. Chumash oral histories and their current marine practices~~,~~ demonstrat~~e~~ing the strong link between coastal peoples and marine resources.[23] There are many Chumash people who still live in the general area and come to Point Sal for a variety of reasons. Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity and sense of place, and cultural and subsistence practices for many of the Indigenous people of Central California today.

Cosponsored by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the Point Sal SMCA seeks to advance Tribal co-stewardship and management of a California MPA, in alignment with the recommendations identified after the MPA network Decadal Management Review (Recommendations 1, 2, and 3). We request that upon designation of this SMCA, CDFW work

[17] Ibid.
[18] Clinton D. Winant, Edward P. Dever, and Myrl C. Hendershott, "Characteristic Patterns of Shelf Circulation at the Boundary between Central and Southern California," *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans* 108, no. C2 (2003), https://doi.org/10.1029/2001JC001302.
[19] Sutara H. Suanda et al., "Wind Relaxation and a Coastal Buoyant Plume North of Pt. Conception, CA: Observations, Simulations, and Scalings," *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans* 121, no. 10 (2016): 7455–75, https://doi.org/10.1002/2016JC011919.
[20] Louis W. Botsford et al., "Effects of Variable Winds on Biological Productivity on Continental Shelves in Coastal Upwelling Systems," *Deep Sea Research Part II: Topical Studies in Oceanography*, The Role of Wind-Driven Flow in Shelf Productivity, 53, no. 25 (December 1, 2006): 3116–40, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr2.2006.07.011.
[21] Bureau of Land Management, "Point Sal," Visit Point Sal, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.blm.gov/visit/point-sal.

[22] King, Chester. *The Names and Locations of Historic Chumash Villages* . The Journal of California Anthropology, 12 Jan. 1975, escholarship.org/uc/item/8833s5k5
[23] Bureau of Land Management, "Point Sal," Visit Point Sal, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.blm.gov/visit/point-sal.

to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement with NCTC and other interested tribes that would aim to achieve the following: 1) incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, goals, perspectives, and monitoring into CDFW's management of the MPA (DMR Recommendation 2c), 2) provide for appropriate, substantive involvement of all interested local Indigenous community groups (federally and non-federally recognized local Tribes and Indigenous groups) in the ongoing stewardship of the MPA, 3) provide tribes with meaningful resources to support participation in management of the MPA (DMR Recommendation 3), 4) facilitate and support Tribal and Indigenous community cultural access, connection to, and activities within the MPA (DMR Recommendation 2b).

Habitat

Since the creation of the California MPA network, a new dataset that allows for detailed delineation of the habitat categories used in the design of the MPA network for all California state waters has been completed and made available through the California State Mapping Program (CSMP). Using this dataset, we characterized the habitat types present in the area proposed for protection around Point Sal (Figure 1).[24]

The proposed area is characterized by a large amount of sandy bottom, with some rocky substrate south of the point and in the northeast portion of the area (8.3% shallow (0-30m) rocky bottom, 41.9% shallow sandy bottom, 1.2% deeper (30-100m) rocky bottom, and 48.6% deeper sandy bottom). Kelp beds are present on the shallow rocky bottom substrate (personal communications, Dan Robinette), supporting numerous marine species like rockfish and sea otters.[25]

Adding this area to the California state MPA network would increase the number of replicate sites for these four important habitat types, as recommended by the science-based guidelines for the MLPA planning process and recent peer-reviewed guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks.[26]

Land-sea connection

Coastal marine ecosystems are influenced by both ocean- and land-based activities. Conservation efforts focused on addressing ocean-based threats alone are often compromised by land-based impacts that affect coastal ecosystems, such as nutrient runoff, organic and inorganic pollutants, and the direct impacts associated with high levels of human traffic and visitation.[27] Planning for and designating MPAs that are linked with terrestrial reserves or

[24] California State University, Monterey Bay, Seafloor Mapping Lab. 2014. California Seafloor Mapping Project - Undersea Imagery Archive 2007-2014. https://csumb.edu/undersea/seafloor-maps Accessed 2023.
[25] Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan."
[26] Nur Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management: Guidelines for Designing Climate-Smart Marine Protected Areas," *One Earth* 6, no. 11 (November 17, 2023): 1523–41, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.10.002.
[27] David M. Stoms et al., "Integrated Coastal Reserve Planning: Making the Land–Sea Connection," *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 3, no. 8 (2005): 429–36, https://doi.org/10.1890/1540-9295(2005)003[0429:ICRPMT]2.0.CO;2.

adjacent to areas with little to no human impact can therefore considerably improve MPA conservation outcomes.[28] The proposed SMCA is adjacent to Point Sal State Beach, which currently protects approximately 80 acres and includes just over 1 1/2 miles of ocean frontage. Due to its remote location, and possibly these terrestrial protections, Point Sal's terrestrial habitats remain relatively undisturbed and free of negative human impacts,[29] making the waters around Point Sal a particularly valuable area to protect.

Access and recreation

The coastline of the proposed SMCA is currently accessible through Point Sal State Beach and Point Sal Trail. Recreational activities at Point Sal State Beach include fishing, beach combing, hiking, nature study, photography, picnicking, and sunbathing.

In 1998, heavy rains destroyed Point Sal Road in several places, which was the main access road for Point Sal State Beach. The road was closed until May 2008, when Air Force and County officials announced they had reached an interim agreement to provide access. They have since been "coordinating to place informational signs, fix fences and repair washed-out sections of the County road", though progress has been extremely slow. The road remains closed, although according to California's State Parks Department, efforts to develop a long-term access plan to Point Sal State Beach are ongoing.[30]

Point Sal State Beach is currently best accessed via Point Sal Trail, which is located at the end of Brown Road. This moderately challenging trail is approximately 10 miles round trip to the beach and back,[31] or 5 miles round trip to a popular coastal bluff overlook and back, and is open year-round. It provides unparalleled access to pristine coastal wilderness, traversing astonishingly beautiful coastal habitats such as dunes, chaparral, windswept bluffs, and rocky cliffs. The trail is described as "a very popular area for hiking",[32] and locally-based environmental groups like the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center regularly organize group hikes to Point Sal as part of their educational programming for local underserved communities.[33]

By making the ocean more productive and resilient to climate change, stronger marine protections like the proposed Point Sal SMCA can enhance shore-based recreation. When combined with efforts to increase access and connect more people to nature, additional state MPAs can give those from marginalized communities more equitable access to the ocean's resources and benefits. California's MPAs have been shown to increase the biomass of fishery-targeted species and promote "spillover" into nearby coastal areas, benefitting nearby fishing

[28] Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management."
[29] Robinette, Acosta, and Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network."
[30] California State Parks, "Point Sal SB," CA State Parks, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.parks.ca.gov/.
[31] County of Santa Barbara California, "Point Sal," County of Santa Barbara Parks, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.countyofsb.org/900/Point-Sal.
[32] All Trails, "Point Sal Overlook," Travel Website, AllTrails.com, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/california/point-sal-overlook.
[33] For example, see https://dunescenter.org/event/%f0%9f%a5%bepoint-sal-docent-led-community-hike/

grounds.[34] The California Environmental Protection Agency identifies the adjacent city of Guadalupe as "disadvantaged" under CA Senate Bill 535, and their synthesis of environmental and socioeconomic indicators further reveals that Guadalupe – alongside Santa Maria and Lompoc – are underprivileged communities that experience significant cumulative impacts from pollution.[35] Given these communities' close proximity to Point Sal, implementing an SMCA at the proposed site could enhance access for disadvantaged populations to valuable coastal resources and fishing opportunities, as a popular shore fishing site is located just north of the proposed Point Sal SMCA boundary, near the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Reserve area. In addition to the designation of a new Point Sal SMCA, we urge the state to redouble its efforts to provide access to Point Sal State Beach by reopening Point Sal Road.

Socioeconomic impacts

Current fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. The proposed Point Sal MPA overlaps with 14% of California fishing block 631, and 11% of California fishing block 632. According to the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, annual landings reported from these blocks over a ten year period from 2012 to 2022 were an average of 231,460 lbs by weight and $678,632 by value per year.[36] This represents just 0.11% of the landings by weight, and 1.1% of landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10 year period.[37,38] For this reason, and due to the relatively small proposed size of the MPA, we believe the establishment of an SMCA in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

Our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.

Historical context

During the MLPA planning process, a large SMR around Point Sal was proposed in External Proposed MPA Package AC. The proposed SMR was 21.92 mi^2, with an alongshore span of 6.1 miles and depth range of 0-192 feet. Based upon a review of the historical documents provided by the Fish & Game Commission in October 2023, it is not clear why the state chose not to designate this proposed SMR at that time.

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[34] Hunter S. Lenihan et al., "Increasing Spillover Enhances Southern California Spiny Lobster Catch along Marine Reserve Borders," *Ecosphere* 13, no. 6 (2022): e4110, https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.4110.
[35] OEHHA, "CalEnviroScreen 4.0," Text, CA.Gov, September 20, 2021, https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40; OEHHA, "Final Designation of Disadvantaged Communities Pursuant to Senate Bill 535" (CalEPA, May 2022).
[36] Assuming equal distribution of effExcellent ort and value across all years. Because smaller timescales resulted in confidential data outputs from the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, we aggregated 10 years of landings data from both blocks to calculate average annual landings data. However, the state should look into the confidential data to find more detailed estimates of fisheries landings from this area.
[37] We defined the Central Coast region as all fishing blocks from Point Ano Nuevo to Point Conception: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=144496&inline
[38] California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Marine Fisheries Data Explorer," database, MFDE, accessed November 21, 2023, https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Data-Management-Research/MFDE.

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) did not direct how state agencies were to engage or consult with Tribes as sovereign nations during the process of establishing California's MPA Network, and the text of the law did not acknowledge coastal Indigenous peoples' long standing relationships to, dependence on, and stewardship of marine resources. In the years following the MPA network's initial implementation, Tribes, state agencies, and policymakers have made progress to encourage and facilitate Tribal marine co-management and access in MPAs.[39]

Now, as California is conducting its first-ever adaptive management process, the state has the opportunity to more thoroughly include the groups that were underrepresented during the initial implementation of the network. This petition is one of the first Tribally proposed state marine protected areas in California. Designating this MPA would strengthen the role and authority of California Tribes in the state's ocean and marine life protection efforts. With a collaborative co-stewardship approach, the Point Sal MPA would also contribute to the integration of Tribes in California's marine monitoring and management initiatives. Furthermore, this proposal aligns with the state's goal of supporting Tribally-led conservation.[40]

Future stressors may compromise California's coastal waters and nearby MPAs

There is increasing pressure to develop resources in and otherwise utilize California's coastal waters. For example, as efforts intensify to mitigate and adapt to climate change, the state is investing in offshore wind and desalination plants. Interest in ocean-based carbon dioxide removal (CDR) is growing, and aquaculture activities are proliferating. Scientists warn that a rising wave of ocean industrialization, such as underway in California's waters, will pose additional strain on marine biodiversity.[41]

MPAs along the central coast of California will likely experience these types of stressors in the coming decade. Vandenberg SMR, located 17 km to the south of this proposed area, and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, located 50 km to the north, are both sited near potential future offshore wind development projects. The proposed California Demonstration Project (CADEMO) seeks to place four floating offshore wind turbines in state waters just outside the boundaries of Vandenberg SMR, and would deliver power via a subsea cable traveling under the seafloor to an onshore cable landing site at Vandenberg Space Force Base. The Morro Bay Wind Energy Area is located in federal waters just outside Point Buchon SMCA, and two leases have recently been issued to commercial wind developers to begin planning for offshore wind development. Offshore wind construction and operations are expected to impact the marine environment through increased ocean noise, collisions with turbines, entanglements, the introduction of electromagnetic fields, alterations to existing habitats and hydrodynamics, and

[39] McGinnis, Michael. 2022. *Co-Management of California-Chumash Marine Conservation Areas: A White Paper Produced for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.*
[40] California Ocean Protection Council, 2025. "Roadmap to Achieving 30x30 in California's Coastal Waters." https://opc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Roadmap-to-Achieving-30x30-in-Californias-Coastal-Waters-508.pdf
[41] Douglas J. McCauley et al., "Marine Defaunation: Animal Loss in the Global Ocean," *Science* 347, no. 6219 (January 16, 2015): 1255641, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1255641.

the possible release of contaminants.[42] While the state of California is working closely with developers and the federal government to minimize the environmental impacts of these projects as much as possible, it stands to reason that the region, including Vandenberg SMR and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, will experience some level of adverse impact related to the development of heavily industrialized renewable energy projects.

In addition, Point Buchon SMR/SMCA is located just north of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, which uses seawater for its once-through cooling process. The plant's intake pipes draw in more than 2.5 billion gallons of water per day. This large and continuous seawater withdrawal is estimated to kill roughly 1.5 billion fish in early life stages each year, as creatures are sucked into the cooling systems or become impinged against the screens on the open-water pipes.[43] The cooling water is also discharged back into the ocean water at a warmer temperature, which can cause additional harm to kelp, fish, and other marine life in the area.[44] While Diablo Canyon's intake is not directly within the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA cluster, the area of source water being drawn into the plant likely overlaps with the MPA boundaries and has the potential to withdraw marine life out of the protected area.

As the increase of local stressors are likely to strain resources in the Vandenberg and Point Buchon MPAs, a new MPA at Point Sal could help to protect similar habitat not subject to these local stressors, adding a helpful replicate MPA to serve as an insurance policy for the region's MPA network.

Climate resilient MPA networks

Changing ocean conditions, such as warming temperatures, acidification, and reduced oxygen, combined with increasing crowding, and pressure on our ecosystems, will compound local stressors mentioned above – putting California's spectacular marine biodiversity at elevated risk. MPAs are increasingly recognized as an important ocean-climate solution. Fully protected MPAs can allow for disturbed and degraded areas to recover, and also promote and retain complex, intact food webs and ecosystems that are better at resisting future stressors.[45] A recent meta-analysis of more than 22,000 peer-reviewed studies spanning more than 200 MPAs around the world demonstrated that marine reserves can significantly enhance carbon

[42] NOAA Fisheries, "Offshore Wind Energy: Protecting Marine Life," Protecting Marine Life, National, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/offshore-wind-energy/protecting-marine-life.
[43] Mackenzie Shuman, "How California's Last Remaining Nuclear Power Plant Transformed Marine Life off the Coast," *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, March 25, 2022, https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/environment/article258804173.html.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Lewis A.K. Barnett, Marissa L. Baskett, and Louis W. Botsford, "Quantifying the Potential for Marine Reserves or Harvest Reductions to Buffer Temporal Mismatches Caused by Climate Change," *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 72, no. 3 (March 2015): 376–89, https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2014-0243; Lewis A. K. Barnett and Marissa L. Baskett, "Marine Reserves Can Enhance Ecological Resilience," ed. Peter Mumby, *Ecology Letters* 18, no. 12 (December 2015): 1301–10, https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.12524; Callum M. Roberts et al., "Marine Reserves Can Mitigate and Promote Adaptation to Climate Change," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 24 (June 13, 2017): 6167–75, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1701262114.

sequestration, coastal protection, biodiversity, and the reproductive capacity of marine organisms as well as fishers' catch and income.[46]

Further, when designed with climate resilience in mind, MPA networks can provide greater resilience than single MPAs on their own.[47] A new analysis focused on the California Bight has identified 21 actionable guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks across large geographies and international boundaries.[48] The designation of a new MPA at Point Sal would meet or help to advance at least 11 of these climate-smart MPA design guidelines (Appendix A). Specifically, a new MPA at Point Sal would help to increase habitat representation and replication; protect critical and unique areas relevant to the life histories of important California species; incorporate and enhance connectivity across the broader MPA network; provide permanent protections better suited for the maintenance of ecosystem function and resilience at relevant timescales for climate resilience, and; enhance the MPA network's protections for healthy and relatively undisturbed habitats (Appendix A). In the face of increasing impacts related to climate change, it is critical that the state adaptively manage its MPA network with climate resilience in mind.

Relevance to MLPA Goals and DMR Recommendations

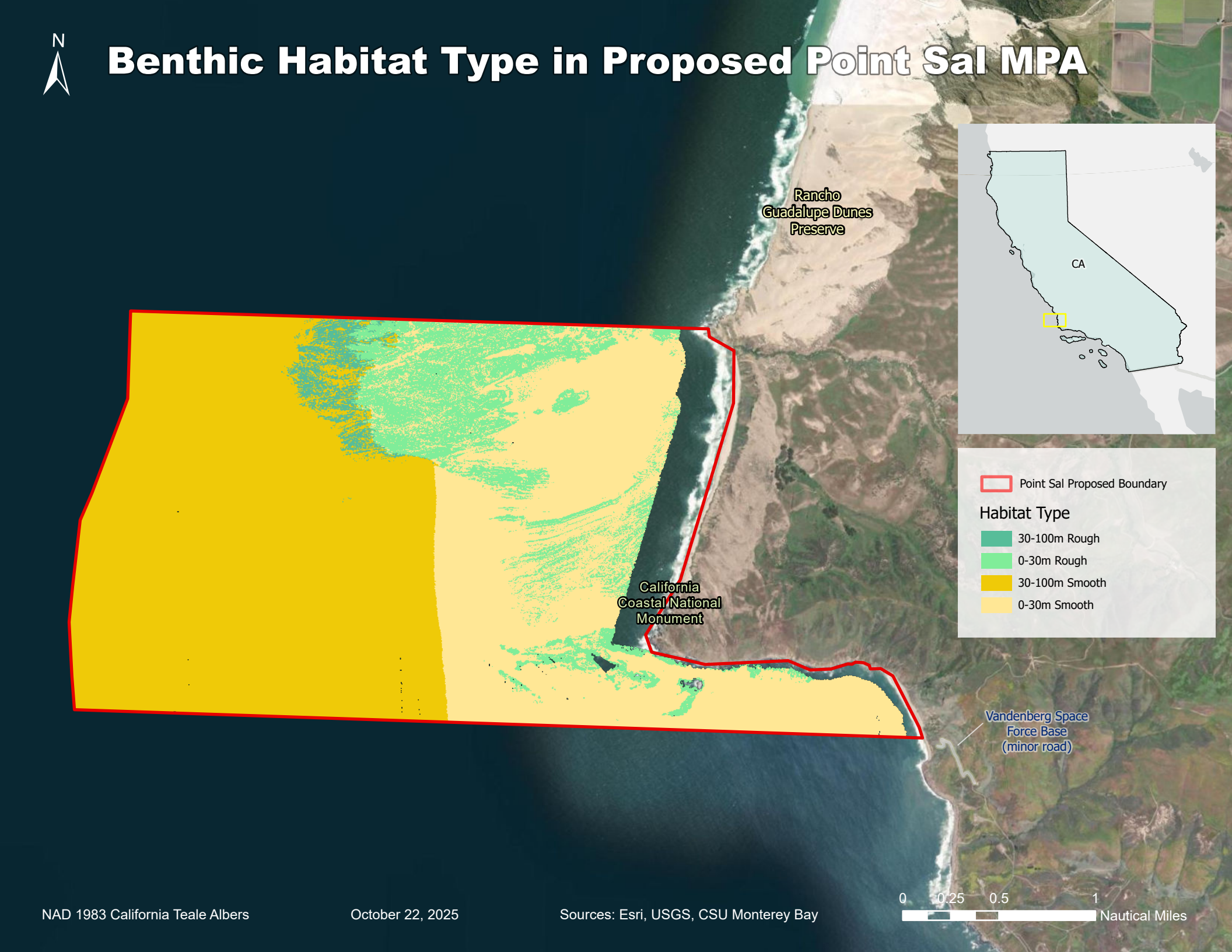
This proposed Point Sal SMCA contributes directly to MLPA Goals 1, 2, 3, and 6 (California Marine Life Protection Act). Protecting the rich biodiversity, relatively undisturbed habitats, and important larval retention zone found in the relatively undisturbed waters around Point Sal would help to protect the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems subject to minimal human disturbance.

In addition, this petition helps to advance a number of DMR Recommendations. As a Tribal petition, the Point Sal SMCA advances DMR Recommendations 1.) "Improve state agencies' tribal engagement and relationship building efforts," 2.) "Create a clear pathway to tribal MPA management," and 3.) "Build tribal capacity to participate in MPA management activities." It also advances Recommendation 4.b.) "Identify and utilize best science-based approaches to inform potential changes to the MPA Network in order to enhance Network performance." New and groundbreaking peer-reviewed guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks have recently been developed, and the proposed MPA at Point Sal aligns strongly with these guidelines.[49] We recommend the state consider these guidelines for the review and implementation of additional proposals to enhance and expand California's MPA network.

We must pass on a healthier ocean for future generations to experience, benefit from, and enjoy. California has the opportunity now to protect the conservation legacy of our iconic coastal state, including its rich and diverse marine wildlife. We urge the state to designate a new MPA

[46] Juliette Jacquemont et al., "Ocean Conservation Boosts Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation," *One Earth* 5, no. 10 (October 2022): 1126–38, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2022.09.002.
[47] Roberts et al., "Marine Reserves Can Mitigate and Promote Adaptation to Climate Change."
[48] Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management."
[49] Ibid.

at Point Sal to advance Tribal marine stewardship and enhance the protection and climate resilience of our coastal and ocean resources, for the benefit of current and future generations of Californians.


N
Benthic Habitat Type in Proposed Point Sal MPA
Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve
CA
California Coastal National Monument
Point Sal Proposed Boundary
Habitat Type
30-100m Rough
0-30m Rough
30-100m Smooth
0-30m Smooth
Vandenberg Space Force Base (minor road)
0 0.25 0.5 1
Nautical Miles
NAD 1983 California Teale Albers
October 22, 2025
Sources: Esri, USGS, CSU Monterey Bay

March 14, 2025

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95817

Submitted electronically to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

RE: Amendments to Petition 2023-28MPA: Point Sal State Marine Reserve

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

In November 2023, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) submitted petition 2023-28MPA to the Fish and Game Commission (FGC) proposing a new marine protected area (MPA) off the coast of Point Sal, to be named Point Sal State Marine Reserve (SMR).

With the ecological significance of the area in mind, we proposed regulations for the Point Sal SMR that are aligned with current State Marine Reserves: *"It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource."* Given the historic and contemporary importance of the region to the Chumash people, we also recommended that the state consult with local Indigenous communities and Tribes before designation to determine whether a State Marine Conservation Area with exemptions for cultural and subsistence use of relevant Indigenous communities and Tribes in the area is warranted.

Since January 2024, we have conducted extensive outreach with community members and interested parties to discuss the proposal and gather additional insights and information. These conversations have improved our understanding of the Point Sal region and provided a greater appreciation of the historical and contemporary significance of the area for Chumash peoples. Our discussions with local communities, Tribal members, and Tribal organizations in particular, informed our decision to amend the original petition submitted to the FGC.

Our decision to amend Petition 2023-28MPA to allow recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore is in recognition of: 1) the importance of this area for federally and non-federally recognized Chumash peoples, and 2) the importance of the area for shore-based subsistence and sport fishers. We support having the option to rename the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area with a Chumash place name after further consultation with Chumash Tribes in the region. While we explored options for renaming the proposed SMCA, we were unable to affirmatively determine an appropriate Chumash name in time for the amendment deadline.

We hope this amendment, informed by the additional insight and information gathered through our outreach efforts with local communities and interested parties, encourages the Commission to support the proposed Point Sal SMCA.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sandy Aylesworth
Director, Pacific Initiative, Nature
Natural Resources Defense Council

Bella Sullivan
Next Wave Fellow
Natural Resources Defense Council

Petition to Designate a New State Marine Reserve at Point Sal, Central California
PETITION NARRATIVE

Point Sal is located in Santa Barbara County, California, roughly 50 miles (80 kilometers) to the northwest of Point Conception. The nearest city to Point Sal is Guadalupe, located about six miles to the northeast, and Vandenberg Space Force Base is located to the south. Known for its scenic beauty, rugged cliffs, and stunning ocean views, Point Sal is a relatively remote and undeveloped area along California's coastline. Its waters are home to rich biodiversity, productive oceanographic features, and intact food webs that are worth protecting. This petition calls for the designation of a new ~~State Marine Reserve or~~ State Marine Conservation Area allowing for cultural and subsistence use by Tribes and Indigenous communities in this area, to advance the goals of California's network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the face of climate change and threats from increased human activities and threats in the future.

Goals

The overall goals of this new MPA are to 1) protect this rich and productive ecosystem and the biodiversity found within, 2) to protect this larval retention zone and the connectivity dynamics within the region, and 3) to enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network.

Proposed boundaries

In keeping with state MPA design and feasibility guidelines provided by CDFW, the proposed area is bounded by the mean high tide line and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

a. 34.880667518 N lat. 120.726433061 W long. (SW corner)
b. 34.929894739 N lat. 120.727488272 W long (NW corner)
c. 34.930008197 N lat. 120.666597401 W long. (NE corner)
d. 34.880979714 N lat. 120.639473286 W long. (SE corner)

The proposed boundaries were drawn to align with visible landmarks and natural geographies as much as possible, with the northern boundary beginning at Mussel Point, and the southern boundary drawn at the end of Brown's Beach. The eastern boundary aligns with the mean high tide line, and the western boundary extends out to the edge of state waters as recommended by state feasibility guidelines.

The proposed area is 14.22 square miles with an alongshore span of 3.2 miles, which meets the state's minimum size guidelines and design recommendations. The proposed area is located 19 miles alongshore from Point Buchon SMR/SMCA, the nearest MPA to the north, which meets the state's minimum spacing recommendations, and 6.5 miles from Vandenberg SMR, the nearest MPA to the south.

Ecological significance of the area

The coastal waters around Point Sal in California support a diverse and dynamic marine ecosystem. The rocky coast is home to abundant and rich tidepools. The kelp beds found in waters leeward of the point provide habitat for endangered Southern sea otters and many other kelp-associated species. The rocks and coastal habitats around the point provide critical roosting and foraging habitats for multiple species of seabirds. State waters surrounding the point are home to a variety of feeding and migrating marine mammals, including bottlenose and common dolphins, harbor porpoises, humpback and gray whales, California sea lions, harbor seals, elephant seals, and Steller sea lions.[1]

An analysis of species, habitats, threats, and existing protections within the California Current found that the waters around Point Sal are among the top 5% in conservation value in the California Current.[2] Notably, the area remained within the top 5% regardless of whether conservation value was being measured utilizing the species richness index or the rarity index, with a significant portion of these areas falling into the top 2%. This region of California is also well-known as a marine biogeographic 'transitional zone' for ocean and coastal biota. Many species reach the southern or northern limits of their ranges here, making it an important biogeographic boundary along California's coast.[3]

The nutrient-rich waters in this region support a productive food web. Upwelling, where nutrient-rich deep waters rise to the surface, enhances primary productivity, providing ample food resources for a variety of marine organisms, from plankton to larger predators. A krill hotspot[4] and Biologically Important Area (BIA) for blue whale foraging are located just outside the proposed area,[5] indicating that these waters are productive enough to support feeding blue whales, which ingest up to 16 tons of krill per day.[6] The state waters within the proposed area are home to several other BIAs for marine mammal species, including a BIA for humpback whale foraging, a BIA for migrating gray whales, and BIA for resident harbor porpoises.[7]

Lion Rock haul out and roosting site

Lion Rock, located off the southern coast of Point Sal, is an important haul out site for sea lions and other marine mammals. As many as 883 sea lions have been observed on the rock on a

[1] Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan" (Santa Barbara County Parks Department, July 2002), https://ryono.net/pointsal/ptsalreserve.pdf.
[2] Nathan Elliott et al., "Assessment of Marine Protected Areas in the California Current" (Petaluma, CA: Point Blue, June 5, 2020), https://www.pointblue.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MPA-Assessment_Final.pdf.
[3] Ronald S. Burton, "Intraspecific Phylogeography Across the Point Conception Biogeographic Boundary," *Evolution* 52, no. 3 (June 1998): 734–45, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1558-5646.1998.tb03698.x.
[4] Jarrod A. Santora et al., "Mesoscale structure and oceanographic determinants of krill hotspots in the California Current: Implications for trophic transfer and conservation," *Progress in Oceanography* 91, no. 4 (December 2011): 397-409, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pocean.2011.04.002
[5] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Biologically Important Area Map," Web map, Cetacean & Sound Mapping, accessed November 20, 2023, https://cetsound.noaa.gov/biologically-important-area-map.
[6] Matthew S. Savoca et al., "Baleen Whale Prey Consumption Based on High-Resolution Foraging Measurements," *Nature* 599, no. 7883 (November 2021): 85–90, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03991-5.
[7] NOAA, "Biologically Important Area Map."

single day, and the site is also occasionally used by Steller sea lions and elephant seals.[8] Haulouts are critical to the behavioral cycles of foraging, resting, and breeding for pinnipeds. However, these species are highly sensitive to visual and auditory disturbance and will leave haulouts when they become stressed – even abandoning them permanently, if disturbances occur frequently. Undisturbed haulouts are thus necessary for the protection of these species. Given Point Sal's remote location, Lion Rock currently experiences little to no human-caused disturbance[9] and may be one of the few remaining undisturbed haulouts along the busy California coastline – making it especially important for the conservation of these marine mammals.

Commented [SI1]: discrepancy in spelling from "haul out". are these supposed to be different?

Lion Rock is also an important roosting site and breeding site for many seabird species. Roosting is a vital behavior for seabirds, providing essential rest, social interaction, protection, and nesting opportunities, thereby enhancing their energy conservation, reproductive success, and overall well-being in the dynamic marine environment. Seabirds like cormorants do not have oil-producing glands to help their feathers repel water, making roosting especially critical for these species to dry after foraging. Thousands of cormorants have been observed roosting on Lion Rock,[10] and it is also a roost site of significant importance for Brown Pelicans, which until recently were listed as endangered species.[11] Finally, Lion Rock is a breeding site of growing importance for Brandt's cormorants, with as many as 14 breeding pairs observed on the rock in recent years.[12]

Connectivity and larval retention zone

Although wind-driven upwelling is a vital source of nutrients for California ecosystems, this large-scale offshore transport of coastal ocean water poses a significant challenge to larval stages of marine organisms that must recruit to coastal environments. Headlands, such as found at Point Sal, can help to mitigate this effect by slowing down or recirculating ocean currents, and research has shown waters on the leeward sides of coastal promontories or headlands provide refuge for fish and invertebrate larvae against offshore transport during upwelling events.[13] These "larval retention zones" are critical for enhanced recruitment, and help to ensure that adult populations are supplied with larvae in recruitment-limited upwelling regions.[14] Larval retention zones also serve as biological hotspots, where upwelling delivers

[8] NMFS, NOAA, and Department of Commerce. Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Weapons Testing at Vandenberg Air Force Base; California. 87 FR 762 (Jan. 6, 2022). Available at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/01/06/2022-00032/takes-of-marine-mammals-incidental-to-specified-activities-taking-marine-mammals-incidental-to.
[9] Dan Robinette, Sara Acosta, and Julie Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network" (Petaluma, CA: PRBO Conservation Science, November 15, 2012).
[10] Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan."
[11] Dan Robinette and Julie Lanser, "Brown Pelican Roost Utilization Along the Coastal Margin of Vandenberg Air Force Base, 2004" (Stinson Beach, CA: PRBO Conservation Science, May 3, 2006).
[12] Robinette, Acosta, and Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network."
[13] Amber J. Mace and Steven G. Morgan, "Larval Accumulation in the Lee of a Small Headland: Implications for the Design of Marine Reserves," *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 318 (August 3, 2006): 19–29, https://doi.org/10.3354/meps318019.
[14] Ibid.

nutrients that then fuel phytoplankton growth and support marine food webs. This effect has been shown even for small headlands like Point Sal (e.g., Bodega Headland).[15]

Point Sal's leeward waters are known to serve as a larval retention zone in this stretch of the Central Coast. One study used seabird foraging rates as a proxy for juvenile fish recruitment to explore whether seabird foraging and geographic indicators can be used to identify larval retention zones, in order to help inform MPA network spatial design.[16] The findings show that both long and short headlands—including Point Sal—lead to higher juvenile fish abundance, and that coastal orientation was an important determinant of juvenile fish abundance. Pelagic cormorant foraging rates were also found to be higher at south-facing coasts like Point Sal's compared to other coastal orientations. This is due to weaker offshore advection caused by coastal upwelling along south-facing coasts, and eddies forming in the lee of the south-facing coasts of embayments.[17]

This biological evidence for local retention zones is supported by physical oceanography data. Multiple studies of oceanographic currents in the area show that within the Santa Barbara Channel, ocean currents primarily run from east to west.[18] Just north of Point Conception there is strong seasonal equatorward flow heading south. Around the area of Point Sal, the interaction of these westward and southward surface currents cause convergence.[19] Additionally, the region experiences episodic periods of wind relaxation in the spring, leading to less vigorous upwelling with important biological consequences for larval retention and surface productivity.[20]

Historical and cultural use

Point Sal holds significant cultural and historical ties to the Chumash people, who have inhabited the region for thousands of years.[21] For instance, the Chumash village Axwin was located very close to the area.[22] There is abundant evidence of Chumash occupation of Point Sal as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago. Rock rings where homes once stood, grinding stones, and other Chumash artifacts are easily visible. Human remains found at Chumash burial sites indicate that the diet of ~~ancient peoples~~Indigenous peoples living

[15] Ibid.
[16] Dan Robinette, Nadav Nur, and Jaime Jahncke, "Spatial Patterns in Nearshore Juvenile Fish Abundance Throughout the California Network of Marine Protected Areas as Revealed by Seabird Foraging Rates," *California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations* 60 (2019).
[17] Ibid.
[18] Clinton D. Winant, Edward P. Dever, and Myrl C. Hendershott, "Characteristic Patterns of Shelf Circulation at the Boundary between Central and Southern California," *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans* 108, no. C2 (2003), https://doi.org/10.1029/2001JC001302.
[19] Sutara H. Suanda et al., "Wind Relaxation and a Coastal Buoyant Plume North of Pt. Conception, CA: Observations, Simulations, and Scalings," *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans* 121, no. 10 (2016): 7455–75, https://doi.org/10.1002/2016JC011919.
[20] Louis W. Botsford et al., "Effects of Variable Winds on Biological Productivity on Continental Shelves in Coastal Upwelling Systems," *Deep Sea Research Part II: Topical Studies in Oceanography*, The Role of Wind-Driven Flow in Shelf Productivity, 53, no. 25 (December 1, 2006): 3116–40, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr2.2006.07.011.
[21] Bureau of Land Management, "Point Sal," Visit Point Sal, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.blm.gov/visit/point-sal.

[22] King, Chester. *The Names and Locations of Historic Chumash Villages* . The Journal of California Anthropology, 12 Jan. 1975, escholarship.org/uc/item/8833s5k5

at Point Sal was high in marine protein, demonstrating the strong link between coastal peoples and marine resources.[23] ~~P~~There are many Chumash people who still live in the general area and come to Point Sal for a variety of reasons. Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity and sense of place for many of the ~~triba~~ Iindigenous people of Central California today.

Habitat

Since the creation of the California MPA network, a new dataset that allows for detailed delineation of the habitat categories used in the design of the MPA network for all California state waters has been completed and made available through the California State Mapping Program (CSMP). Using this dataset, we characterized the habitat types present in the area proposed for protection around Point Sal (Figure 1).[24]

The proposed area is characterized by a large amount of sandy bottom, with some rocky substrate south of the point and in the northeast portion of the area (8.3% shallow (0-30m) rocky bottom, 41.9% shallow sandy bottom, 1.2% deeper (30-100m) rocky bottom, and 48.6% deeper sandy bottom). Kelp beds are present on the shallow rocky bottom substrate (personal communications, Dan Robinette), supporting numerous marine species like rockfish and sea otters.[25]

Adding this area to the California state MPA network would increase the number of replicate sites for these four important habitat types, as recommended by the science-based guidelines for the MLPA planning process and recent peer-reviewed guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks.[26]

Land-sea connection

Coastal marine ecosystems are influenced by both ocean- and land-based activities. Conservation efforts focused on addressing ocean-based threats alone are often compromised by land-based impacts that affect coastal ecosystems, such as nutrient runoff, organic and inorganic pollutants, and the direct impacts associated with high levels of human traffic and visitation.[27] Planning for and designating MPAs that are linked with terrestrial reserves or adjacent to areas with little to no human impact can therefore considerably improve MPA

[23] Bureau of Land Management, "Point Sal," Visit Point Sal, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.blm.gov/visit/point-sal.
[24] California State University, Monterey Bay, Seafloor Mapping Lab. 2014. California Seafloor Mapping Project - Undersea Imagery Archive 2007-2014. https://csumb.edu/undersea/seafloor-maps Accessed 2023.
[25] Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan."
[26] Nur Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management: Guidelines for Designing Climate-Smart Marine Protected Areas," *One Earth* 6, no. 11 (November 17, 2023): 1523–41, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.10.002.
[27] David M. Stoms et al., "Integrated Coastal Reserve Planning: Making the Land–Sea Connection," *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 3, no. 8 (2005): 429–36, https://doi.org/10.1890/1540-9295(2005)003[0429:ICRPMT]2.0.CO;2.

conservation outcomes.[28] The proposed SM~~R~~CA is adjacent to Point Sal State Beach, which currently protects approximately 80 acres and includes just over 1 1/2 miles of ocean frontage. Due to its remote location, and possibly these terrestrial protections, Point Sal's terrestrial habitats remain relatively undisturbed and free of negative human impacts,[29] making the waters around Point Sal a particularly valuable area to protect.

Access and recreation

The coastline of the proposed ~~SMR~~ SMCA is currently accessible through Point Sal State Beach and Point Sal Trail. Recreational activities at Point Sal State Beach include fishing, beach combing, hiking, nature study, photography, picnicking, and sunbathing.

In 1998, heavy rains destroyed Point Sal Road in several places, which was the main access road for Point Sal State Beach. The road was closed until May 2008, when Air Force and County officials announced they had reached an interim agreement to provide access. They have since been "coordinating to place informational signs, fix fences and repair washed-out sections of the County road", though progress has been extremely slow. The road remains closed, although according to California's State Parks Department, efforts to develop a long-term access plan to Point Sal State Beach are ongoing.[30]

Point Sal State Beach is currently best accessed via Point Sal Trail, which is located at the end of Brown Road. This moderately challenging trail is approximately 10~~2~~ miles round trip to the beach and back,[31] and is open year-round. It provides unparalleled access to ~~untouched~~pristine coastal wilderness, traversing astonishingly beautiful coastal habitats such as dunes, chaparral, windswept bluffs, and rocky cliffs. The trail is described as "a very popular area for hiking".[32]

By making the ocean more productive and resilient to climate change, stronger marine protections like the proposed Point Sal ~~SMR~~SMCA can enhance shore-based recreation. When combined with efforts to increase access and connect more people to nature, additional state MPAs can give those from marginalized communities more equitable access to the ocean's resources and benefits. California's MPAs have been shown to increase the biomass of fishery-targeted species and promote "spillover" into nearby coastal areas, benefitting nearby fishing grounds.[33] The California Environmental Protection Agency identifies the adjacent city of Guadalupe as "disadvantaged" under CA Senate Bill 535, and their synthesis of environmental and socioeconomic indicators further reveals that Guadalupe – alongside Santa Maria and Lompoc – are underprivileged communities that experience significant cumulative impacts from

[28] Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management."
[29] Robinette, Acosta, and Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network."
[30] California State Parks, "Point Sal SB," CA State Parks, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.parks.ca.gov/.
[31] County of Santa Barbara California, "Point Sal," County of Santa Barbara Parks, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.countyofsb.org/900/Point-Sal.
[32] All Trails, "Point Sal Overlook," Travel Website, AllTrails.com, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/california/point-sal-overlook.
[33] Hunter S. Lenihan et al., "Increasing Spillover Enhances Southern California Spiny Lobster Catch along Marine Reserve Borders," *Ecosphere* 13, no. 6 (2022): e4110, https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.4110.

pollution.[34] Given these communities' close proximity to Point Sal, implementing an ~~SMR~~SMCA at the proposed site could enhance access for disadvantaged populations to valuable coastal resources and fishing opportunities, as a popular shore fishing site is located just north of the proposed Point Sal SMCA boundary, near the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Reserve area.~~.~~ In addition to the designation of a new Point Sal ~~SMR~~SMCA, we urge the state to redouble its efforts to provide access to Point Sal State Beach by reopening Point Sal Road.

Socioeconomic impacts

Current fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. The proposed Point Sal MPA overlaps with 14% of California fishing block 631, and 11% of California fishing block 632. According to the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, annual landings reported from these blocks over a ten year period from 2012 to 2022 were an average of 231,460 lbs by weight and $678,632 by value per year.[35] This represents just 0.11% of the landings by weight, and 1.1% of landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10 year period.[36,37] For this reason, and due to the relatively small proposed size of the MPA, we believe the establishment of an ~~SMR~~SMCA in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

Our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.

Historical context

During the MLPA planning process, a large SMR around Point Sal was proposed in External Proposed MPA Package AC. The proposed SMR was 21.92 mi^2, with an alongshore span of 6.1 miles and depth range of 0-192 feet. Based upon a review of the historical documents provided by the Fish & Game Commission in October 2023, it is not clear why the state chose not to designate this proposed SMR at that time.

Future stressors may compromise California's coastal waters and nearby MPAs

There is increasing pressure to develop resources in and otherwise utilize California's coastal waters. For example, as efforts intensify to mitigate and adapt to climate change, the state is

[34] OEHHA, "CalEnviroScreen 4.0," Text, CA.Gov, September 20, 2021, https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40; OEHHA, "Final Designation of Disadvantaged Communities Pursuant to Senate Bill 535" (CalEPA, May 2022).

[35] Assuming equal distribution of effExcellent ort and value across all years. Because smaller timescales resulted in confidential data outputs from the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, we aggregated 10 years of landings data from both blocks to calculate average annual landings data. However, the state should look into the confidential data to find more detailed estimates of fisheries landings from this area.

[36] We defined the Central Coast region as all fishing blocks from Point Ano Nuevo to Point Conception: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=144496&inline

[37] California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Marine Fisheries Data Explorer," database, MFDE, accessed November 21, 2023, https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Data-Management-Research/MFDE.

investing in offshore wind and desalination plants. Interest in ocean-based carbon dioxide removal (CDR) is growing, and aquaculture activities are proliferating. Scientists warn that a rising wave of ocean industrialization, such as underway in California's waters, will pose additional strain on marine biodiversity.[38]

MPAs along the central coast of California will likely experience these types of stressors in the coming decade. Vandenberg SMR, located 17 km to the south of this proposed area, and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, located 50 km to the north, are both sited near potential future offshore wind development projects. The proposed California Demonstration Project (CADEMO) seeks to place four floating offshore wind turbines in state waters just outside the boundaries of Vandenberg SMR, and would deliver power via a subsea cable traveling under the seafloor to an onshore cable landing site at Vandenberg Space Force Base. The Morro Bay Wind Energy Area is located in federal waters just outside Point Buchon SMCA, and two leases have recently been issued to commercial wind developers to begin planning for offshore wind development. Offshore wind construction and operations are expected to impact the marine environment through increased ocean noise, collisions with turbines, entanglements, the introduction of electromagnetic fields, alterations to existing habitats and hydrodynamics, and the possible release of contaminants.[39] While the state of California is working closely with developers and the federal government to minimize the environmental impacts of these projects as much as possible, it stands to reason that the region, including Vandenberg SMR and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, will experience some level of adverse impact related to the development of heavily industrialized renewable energy projects.

In addition, Point Buchon SMR/SMCA is located just north of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, which uses seawater for its once-through cooling process. The plant's intake pipes draw in more than 2.5 billion gallons of water per day. This large and continuous seawater withdrawal is estimated to kill roughly 1.5 billion fish in early life stages each year, as creatures are sucked into the cooling systems or become impinged against the screens on the open-water pipes.[40] The cooling water is also discharged back into the ocean water at a warmer temperature, which can cause additional harm to kelp, fish, and other marine life in the area.[41] While Diablo Canyon's intake is not directly within the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA cluster, the area of source water being drawn into the plant likely overlaps with the MPA boundaries and has the potential to withdraw marine life out of the protected area.

As the increase of local stressors are likely to strain resources in the Vandenberg and Point Buchon MPAs, a new MPA at Point Sal could help to protect similar habitat not subject to these

[38] Douglas J. McCauley et al., "Marine Defaunation: Animal Loss in the Global Ocean," *Science* 347, no. 6219 (January 16, 2015): 1255641, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1255641.
[39] NOAA Fisheries, "Offshore Wind Energy: Protecting Marine Life," Protecting Marine Life, National, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/offshore-wind-energy/protecting-marine-life.
[40] Mackenzie Shuman, "How California's Last Remaining Nuclear Power Plant Transformed Marine Life off the Coast," *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, March 25, 2022, https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/environment/article258804173.html.
[41] Ibid.

local stressors, adding a helpful replicate MPA to serve as an insurance policy for the region's MPA network.

Climate resilient MPA networks

Changing ocean conditions, such as warming temperatures, acidification, and reduced oxygen, combined with increasing crowding, and pressure on our ecosystems, will compound local stressors mentioned above – putting California's spectacular marine biodiversity at elevated risk. MPAs are increasingly recognized as an important ocean-climate solution. Fully protected MPAs can allow for disturbed and degraded areas to recover, and also promote and retain complex, intact food webs and ecosystems that are better at resisting future stressors.[42] A recent meta-analysis of more than 22,000 peer-reviewed studies spanning more than 200 MPAs around the world demonstrated that marine reserves can significantly enhance carbon sequestration, coastal protection, biodiversity, and the reproductive capacity of marine organisms as well as fishers' catch and income.[43]

Further, when designed with climate resilience in mind, MPA networks can provide greater resilience than single MPAs on their own.[44] A new analysis focused on the California Bight has identified 21 actionable guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks across large geographies and international boundaries.[45] The designation of a new MPA at Point Sal would meet or help to advance at least 11 of these climate-smart MPA design guidelines (Appendix A). Specifically, a new MPA at Point Sal would help to increase habitat representation and replication; protect critical and unique areas relevant to the life histories of important California species; incorporate and enhance connectivity across the broader MPA network; provide permanent protections better suited for the maintenance of ecosystem function and resilience at relevant timescales for climate resilience, and; enhance the MPA network's protections for healthy and relatively undisturbed habitats (Appendix A). In the face of increasing impacts related to climate change, it is critical that the state adaptively manage its MPA network with climate resilience in mind.

Relevance to MLPA Goals and DMR Recommendations

This proposed Point Sal SMCA~~MR~~ contributes directly to MLPA Goals 1, 2, 3, and 6 (California Marine Life Protection Act). Protecting the rich biodiversity, relatively undisturbed habitats, and important larval retention zone found in the relatively undisturbed waters around Point Sal would

[42] Lewis A.K. Barnett, Marissa L. Baskett, and Louis W. Botsford, "Quantifying the Potential for Marine Reserves or Harvest Reductions to Buffer Temporal Mismatches Caused by Climate Change," *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 72, no. 3 (March 2015): 376–89, https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2014-0243; Lewis A. K. Barnett and Marissa L. Baskett, "Marine Reserves Can Enhance Ecological Resilience," ed. Peter Mumby, *Ecology Letters* 18, no. 12 (December 2015): 1301–10, https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.12524; Callum M. Roberts et al., "Marine Reserves Can Mitigate and Promote Adaptation to Climate Change," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 24 (June 13, 2017): 6167–75, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1701262114.
[43] Juliette Jacquemont et al., "Ocean Conservation Boosts Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation," *One Earth* 5, no. 10 (October 2022): 1126–38, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2022.09.002.
[44] Roberts et al., "Marine Reserves Can Mitigate and Promote Adaptation to Climate Change."
[45] Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management."

help to protect the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems subject to minimal human disturbance.

In addition, this petition helps to advance DMR Recommendation 4.b.) “Identify and utilize best science-based approaches to inform potential changes to the MPA Network in order to enhance Network performance.” New and groundbreaking peer-reviewed guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks have recently been developed, and the proposed MPA at Point Sal aligns strongly with these guidelines.[46] We recommend the state consider these guidelines for the review and implementation of additional proposals to enhance and expand California’s MPA network.

We must pass on a healthier ocean for future generations to experience, benefit from, and enjoy. California has the opportunity now to protect the conservation legacy of our iconic coastal state, including its rich and diverse marine wildlife. We urge the state to designate a new MPA at Point Sal to enhance the protection and climate resilience of our coastal and ocean resources, for the benefit of current and future generations of Californians.

[46] Ibid.

Tracking Number: (_____)

To request a change to regulations under the authority of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), you are required to submit this completed form to: California Fish and Game Commission, (physical address) 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320, Sacramento, CA 95814, (mailing address) P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090 or via email to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Note: This form is not intended for listing petitions for threatened or endangered species (see Section 670.1 of Title 14).

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SECTION I: Required Information.

Please be succinct. Responses for Section I should not exceed five pages

1. Person or organization requesting the change (Required)
Name of primary contact person: Lisa Suatoni, National Resources Defense Council
Address:
Telephone number:
Email address:

2. Rulemaking Authority (Required) - Authority cited: Sections 200, 205(c), 265, 399, 1590, 1591, 2860, 2861 and 6750, Fish and Game Code; and Sections 36725(a) and 36725(e), Public Resources Code.

3. Overview (Required) - We propose the designation of a new State Marine ~~Reserve~~ Conservation Area (SMCA) in the waters around Point Sal, Central California to 1) protect ~~this~~ the rich and productive ecosystem and biodiversity found within, 2) protect an important larval retention zone and enhance the connectivity dynamics within the region, and 3) enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network.

The proposed area aligns with state MPA design and feasibility guidelines provided by CDFW, and is bounded by the mean high tide line, the 3 nm state waters boundary, and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

- 34.880667518 N lat. 120.726433061 W long. (SW corner)
- 34.929894739 N lat. 120.727488272 W long. (NW corner)
- 34.930008197 N lat. 120.666597401 W long. (NE corner)
- 34.880979714 N lat. 120.639473286 W long. (SE corner)

The proposed SMCA would prohibit the injury, damage, take, or possession of all living, geological, or cultural marine resources with the exception of recreational take of finfish from shore using hook and line. This permitted activity would allow for fishing access to the

shoreline and marine resources for recreational, traditional, ceremonial, cultural, and subsistence purposes for the public including~~,~~ the Chumash people and other members of federally ~~-~~and non-federally recognized tribes.

~~However,~~ We recommend that the state consult with local Indigenous communities and Tribes to explore co-management options for the Point~~.~~ Sal SMCA before designation~~, to determine whether a State Marine Conservation Area withexemptions for cultural and subsistence use of relevant Indigenous communities and Tribes in the area is warranted~~.

4. Rationale (Required) - Located in Santa Barbara County, Point Sal is an ecologically rich and relatively remote promontory along the coastline that supports a diverse marine ecosystem and provides critical habitat for seabirds and marine mammals alike. The nutrient-rich waters found at this site allow for a diversity of ocean life to thrive ~~here~~, with kelp beds, rich tidepools, and productive waters that support humpback whales, gray whales, a variety of sea lions and seals, sea otters, and a biologically important feeding area for endangered blue whales nearby. Offshore, Lion Rock is a significant roosting site for seabirds like the Brown pelican and Brandt's cormorant~~,~~ and ~~also~~ acts as a relatively undisturbed haul~~-~~out for sea lions, seals, and other pinnipeds, underlining the area's conservation value for these animals as the California coastline becomes increasingly developed. In addition, the leeward waters of Point Sal act as a larval retention zone. Larval retention zones~~,~~ ~~which~~ are known to be highly beneficial areas for the recruitment of fish and invertebrate larvae in wind-driven upwelling zones while promoting the biodiversity of the surrounding ecosystem. ~~Historically,~~ Point Sal also holds cultural significance for the Chumash people, with evidence of their occupation as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago; Chumash artifacts are visible throughout Point Sal, and analyses of burial sites from the area demonstrate the rich cultural ties to the traditional stewards of this land. Furthermore, Point Sal is still of importance to the Chumash people who visit and use the area today.

Protecting the waters of Point Sal aligns strongly with the goals set by the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), especially with regards to the protection of natural biodiversity found in relatively undisturbed marine ecosystems. Given the remote nature of Point Sal, its relative lack of human disturbance, and ~~increasing~~ potential for increased threats to the California MPAs found nearby, there is value in~~an urgent need to protect the ecological merits and~~ maximizing~~e~~ the ecological and biological benefits that Point Sal provides to the marine species that inhabit the area and to the broader Central California region. As development of the state's coastline and seascape progresses, protecting ~~these~~ relatively undisturbed~~untouched~~ areas will add to the resilience of the MPA network by providing refugia for marine life from encroaching threats. Furthermore, designating an MPA in the proposed area will improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities at Point Sal and support equitable access to coastal resources moving forward into the future.

See Petition Narrative for full rationale.

SECTION II: Optional Information

5. Date of Petition: 11/30/2023

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6. Category of Proposed Change

☐ Sport Fishing
☐ Commercial Fishing
☐ Hunting
☒ Other, please specify: MPAs, Section 632.

7. The proposal is to: (*To determine section number(s), see current year regulation booklet or https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs*)

☒ Amend Title 14 Section(s):Westlaw regulations.
☐ Add New Title 14 Section(s): Click here to enter text.
☐ Repeal Title 14 Section(s): Click here to enter text.

8. If the proposal is related to a previously submitted petition that was rejected, specify the tracking number of the previously submitted petition

Or ☒ Not applicable.

9. Effective date: If applicable, identify the desired effective date of the regulation.
If the proposed change requires immediate implementation, explain the nature of the emergency:

10. Supporting documentation: Identify and attach to the petition any information supporting the proposal including data, reports and other documents:

a. Proposed Point Sal SMR petition narrative
b. Figure 1 - Proposed Point Sal SMR habitat map
c. Appendix A - Climate-smart MPA design guidelines met by proposed Point Sal SMR
d. Appendix B - Proposed Point Sal SMR letter of support

11. Economic or Fiscal Impacts: Identify any known impacts of the proposed regulation change on revenues to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, individuals, businesses, jobs, other state agencies, local agencies, schools, or housing:

Current fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from the nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. The proposed Point Sal MPA overlaps with 14% of California fishing block 631, and 11% of California fishing block 632. According to the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, annual landings reported from these blocks over a 10-~~ten~~ year period from 2012 to 2022 were an average of 231,460 lbs by weight and $678,632 by value per year. This represents just 0.11% of the landings by weight, and 1.1% of landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10--year period. For this reason, and due to the relatively small proposed size of the MPA, we believe the establishment of an SMR in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

Our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.

12. Forms: If applicable, list any forms to be created, amended or repealed:

SECTION 3: FGC Staff Only

Date received: Click here to enter text.

FGC staff action:

- ☐ Accept - complete
- ☐ Reject - incomplete
- ☐ Reject - outside scope of FGC authority

Tracking Number

Date petitioner was notified of receipt of petition and pending action: _____

Meeting date for FGC consideration: _____

FGC action:

- ☐ Denied by FGC
- ☐ Denied - same as petition _____

Tracking Number

- ☐ Granted for consideration of regulation change

State of California – Fish and Game Commission
PETITION TO THE CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION FOR REGULATION CHANGE

Tracking Number: (2023-28MPA)

To request a change to regulations under the authority of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), you are required to submit this completed form to: California Fish and Game Commission, (physical address) 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320, Sacramento, CA 95814, (mailing address) P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090 or via email to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Note: This form is not intended for listing petitions for threatened or endangered species (see Section 670.1 of Title 14).

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Address:
Telephone number:
Email address:

2. Rulemaking Authority (Required) - Authority cited: Sections 200, 205(c), 265, 399, 1590, 1591, 2860, 2861 and 6750, Fish and Game Code; and Sections 36725(a) and 36725(e), Public Resources Code.

3. Overview (Required) - We propose the designation of a new State Marine Reserve in the waters around Point Sal, Central California to 1) protect this rich and productive ecosystem and biodiversity found within, 2) protect an important larval retention zone and enhance the connectivity dynamics within the region, and 3) enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network.

The proposed area aligns with state MPA design and feasibility guidelines provided by CDFW, and is bounded by the mean high tide line, the 3 nm state waters boundary, and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

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- 34.930008197 N lat. 120.666597401 W long. (NE corner)
- 34.880979714 N lat. 120.639473286 W long. (SE corner)

We propose regulations aligned with current State Marine Reserves: *"It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource."*

However, we recommend that the state consult with local Indigenous communities and Tribes before designation, to determine whether a State Marine Conservation Area with exemptions for cultural and subsistence use of relevant Indigenous communities and Tribes in the area is warranted.

4. Rationale (Required) - Located in Santa Barbara County, Point Sal is an ecologically rich and relatively remote promontory along the coastline that supports a diverse marine ecosystem and provides critical habitat for seabirds and marine mammals alike. The nutrient-rich waters found at this site allow for a diversity of ocean life to thrive here, with kelp beds, rich tidepools, and productive waters that support humpback whales, gray whales, a variety of sea lions and seals, sea otters, and a biologically important feeding area for endangered blue whales nearby. Offshore, Lion Rock is a significant roosting site for seabirds like the Brown pelican and Brandt's cormorant, and also acts as a relatively undisturbed haul out for sea lions, seals, and other pinnipeds, underlining the area's conservation value for these animals as the California coastline becomes increasingly developed. In addition, the leeward waters of Point Sal act as a larval retention zone, which are known to be highly beneficial areas for recruitment of fish and invertebrate larvae in wind-driven upwelling zones while promoting the biodiversity of the surrounding ecosystem. Historically, Point Sal also holds cultural significance for the Chumash people, with evidence of their occupation as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago; Chumash artifacts are visible throughout Point Sal, and analyses of burial sites from the area demonstrate the rich cultural ties to the traditional stewards of this land.

Protecting the waters of Point Sal aligns strongly with the goals set by the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), especially with regards to the protection of natural biodiversity found in relatively undisturbed marine ecosystems. Given the remote nature of Point Sal, its relative lack of human disturbance, and increasing threats to the California MPAs found nearby, there is an urgent need to protect the ecological merits and maximize the biological benefits that Point Sal provides to the marine species that inhabit the area and to the broader Central California region. As development of the state's coastline and seascape progresses, protecting these untouched areas will add to the resilience of the MPA network by providing refugia for marine life from encroaching threats. Furthermore, designating an MPA in the proposed area will improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities at Point Sal and support equitable access to coastal resources moving forward into the future.

See Petition Narrative for full rationale.

SECTION II: Optional Information

5. Date of Petition: 11/30/2023

6. Category of Proposed Change

☐ Sport Fishing
☐ Commercial Fishing
☐ Hunting
☒ Other, please specify: MPAs, Section 632.

7. The proposal is to: (*To determine section number(s), see current year regulation booklet or https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs*)

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8. If the proposal is related to a previously submitted petition that was rejected, specify the tracking number of the previously submitted petition

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d. Appendix B - Proposed Point Sal SMR letter of support

11. Economic or Fiscal Impacts: Identify any known impacts of the proposed regulation change on revenues to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, individuals, businesses, jobs, other state agencies, local agencies, schools, or housing:

Current fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. The proposed Point Sal MPA overlaps with 14% of California fishing block 631, and 11% of California fishing block 632. According to the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, annual landings reported from these blocks over a ten year period from 2012 to 2022 were an average of 231,460 lbs by weight and $678,632 by value per year. This represents just 0.11% of the landings by weight, and 1.1% of landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10 year period. For this reason, and due to the relatively small proposed size of the MPA, we believe the establishment of an SMR in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

Our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.

12. Forms: If applicable, list any forms to be created, amended or repealed:

SECTION 3: FGC Staff Only

Date received: 11/30/2023

FGC staff action:

- ☐ Accept - complete
- ☐ Reject - incomplete
- ☐ Reject - outside scope of FGC authority

Tracking Number

Date petitioner was notified of receipt of petition and pending action: _____

Meeting date for FGC consideration: _____

FGC action:

- ☐ Denied by FGC
- ☐ Denied - same as petition _____

Tracking Number

- ☐ Granted for consideration of regulation change

Petition to Designate a New State Marine Reserve at Point Sal, Central California
PETITION NARRATIVE

Point Sal is located in Santa Barbara County, California, roughly 50 miles (80 kilometers) to the northwest of Point Conception. The nearest city to Point Sal is Guadalupe, located about six miles to the northeast, and Vandenberg Space Force Base is located to the south. Known for its scenic beauty, rugged cliffs, and stunning ocean views, Point Sal is a relatively remote and undeveloped area along California's coastline. Its waters are home to rich biodiversity, productive oceanographic features, and intact food webs that are worth protecting. This petition calls for the designation of a new State Marine Reserve or State Marine Conservation Area allowing for cultural and subsistence use by Tribes and Indigenous communities in this area, to advance the goals of California's network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the face of climate change and threats from increased human activities and threats in the future.

Goals

The overall goals of this new MPA are to 1) protect this rich and productive ecosystem and the biodiversity found within, 2) to protect this larval retention zone and the connectivity dynamics within the region, and 3) to enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network.

Proposed boundaries

In keeping with state MPA design and feasibility guidelines provided by CDFW, the proposed area is bounded by the mean high tide line and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

a. 34.880667518 N lat. 120.726433061 W long. (SW corner)
b. 34.929894739 N lat. 120.727488272 W long (NW corner)
c. 34.930008197 N lat. 120.666597401 W long. (NE corner)
d. 34.880979714 N lat. 120.639473286 W long. (SE corner)

The proposed boundaries were drawn to align with visible landmarks and natural geographies as much as possible, with the northern boundary beginning at Mussel Point, and the southern boundary drawn at the end of Brown's Beach. The eastern boundary aligns with the mean high tide line, and the western boundary extends out to the edge of state waters as recommended by state feasibility guidelines.

The proposed area is 14.22 square miles with an alongshore span of 3.2 miles, which meets the state's minimum size guidelines and design recommendations. The proposed area is located 19 miles alongshore from Point Buchon SMR/SMCA, the nearest MPA to the north, which meets the state's minimum spacing recommendations, and 6.5 miles from Vandenberg SMR, the nearest MPA to the south.

Ecological significance of the area

The coastal waters around Point Sal in California support a diverse and dynamic marine ecosystem. The rocky coast is home to abundant and rich tidepools. The kelp beds found in waters leeward of the point provide habitat for endangered Southern sea otters and many other kelp-associated species. The rocks and coastal habitats around the point provide critical roosting and foraging habitats for multiple species of seabirds. State waters surrounding the point are home to a variety of feeding and migrating marine mammals, including bottlenose and common dolphins, harbor porpoises, humpback and gray whales, California sea lions, harbor seals, elephant seals, and Steller sea lions.[1]

An analysis of species, habitats, threats, and existing protections within the California Current found that the waters around Point Sal are among the top 5% in conservation value in the California Current.[2] Notably, the area remained within the top 5% regardless of whether conservation value was being measured utilizing the species richness index or the rarity index, with a significant portion of these areas falling into the top 2%. This region of California is also well-known as a marine biogeographic 'transitional zone' for ocean and coastal biota. Many species reach the southern or northern limits of their ranges here, making it an important biogeographic boundary along California's coast.[3]

The nutrient-rich waters in this region support a productive food web. Upwelling, where nutrient-rich deep waters rise to the surface, enhances primary productivity, providing ample food resources for a variety of marine organisms, from plankton to larger predators. A krill hotspot[4] and Biologically Important Area (BIA) for blue whale foraging are located just outside the proposed area,[5] indicating that these waters are productive enough to support feeding blue whales, which ingest up to 16 tons of krill per day.[6] The state waters within the proposed area are home to several other BIAs for marine mammal species, including a BIA for humpback whale foraging, a BIA for migrating gray whales, and BIA for resident harbor porpoises.[7]

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[1] Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan" (Santa Barbara County Parks Department, July 2002), https://ryono.net/pointsal/ptsalreserve.pdf.
[2] Nathan Elliott et al., "Assessment of Marine Protected Areas in the California Current" (Petaluma, CA: Point Blue, June 5, 2020), https://www.pointblue.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MPA-Assessment_Final.pdf.
[3] Ronald S. Burton, "Intraspecific Phylogeography Across the Point Conception Biogeographic Boundary," *Evolution* 52, no. 3 (June 1998): 734–45, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1558-5646.1998.tb03698.x.
[4] Jarrod A. Santora et al., "Mesoscale structure and oceanographic determinants of krill hotspots in the California Current: Implications for trophic transfer and conservation," *Progress in Oceanography* 91, no. 4 (December 2011): 397-409, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pocean.2011.04.002
[5] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Biologically Important Area Map," Web map, Cetacean & Sound Mapping, accessed November 20, 2023, https://cetsound.noaa.gov/biologically-important-area-map.
[6] Matthew S. Savoca et al., "Baleen Whale Prey Consumption Based on High-Resolution Foraging Measurements," *Nature* 599, no. 7883 (November 2021): 85–90, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03991-5.
[7] NOAA, "Biologically Important Area Map."

Lion Rock haul out and roosting site

Lion Rock, located off the southern coast of Point Sal, is an important haul out site for sea lions and other marine mammals. As many as 883 sea lions have been observed on the rock on a single day, and the site is also occasionally used by Steller sea lions and elephant seals.[8] Haulouts are critical to the behavioral cycles of foraging, resting, and breeding for pinnipeds. However, these species are highly sensitive to visual and auditory disturbance and will leave haulouts when they become stressed – even abandoning them permanently, if disturbances occur frequently. Undisturbed haulouts are thus necessary for the protection of these species. Given Point Sal's remote location, Lion Rock currently experiences little to no human-caused disturbance[9] and may be one of the few remaining undisturbed haulouts along the busy California coastline – making it especially important for the conservation of these marine mammals.

Lion Rock is also an important roosting site and breeding site for many seabird species. Roosting is a vital behavior for seabirds, providing essential rest, social interaction, protection, and nesting opportunities, thereby enhancing their energy conservation, reproductive success, and overall well-being in the dynamic marine environment. Seabirds like cormorants do not have oil-producing glands to help their feathers repel water, making roosting especially critical for these species to dry after foraging. Thousands of cormorants have been observed roosting on Lion Rock,[10] and it is also a roost site of significant importance for Brown Pelicans, which until recently were listed as endangered species.[11] Finally, Lion Rock is a breeding site of growing importance for Brandt's cormorants, with as many as 14 breeding pairs observed on the rock in recent years.[12]

<u>Connectivity and larval retention zone</u>

Although wind-driven upwelling is a vital source of nutrients for California ecosystems, this large-scale offshore transport of coastal ocean water poses a significant challenge to larval stages of marine organisms that must recruit to coastal environments. Headlands, such as found at Point Sal, can help to mitigate this effect by slowing down or recirculating ocean currents, and research has shown waters on the leeward sides of coastal promontories or headlands provide refuge for fish and invertebrate larvae against offshore transport during

[8] NMFS, NOAA, and Department of Commerce. Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Weapons Testing at Vandenberg Air Force Base; California. 87 FR 762 (Jan. 6, 2022). Available at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/01/06/2022-00032/takes-of-marine-mammals-incidental-to-specified-activities-taking-marine-mammals-incidental-to.
[9] Dan Robinette, Sara Acosta, and Julie Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network" (Petaluma, CA: PRBO Conservation Science, November 15, 2012).
[10] Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan."
[11] Dan Robinette and Julie Lanser, "Brown Pelican Roost Utilization Along the Coastal Margin of Vandenberg Air Force Base, 2004" (Stinson Beach, CA: PRBO Conservation Science, May 3, 2006).
[12] Robinette, Acosta, and Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network."

upwelling events.[13] These “larval retention zones” are critical for enhanced recruitment, and help to ensure that adult populations are supplied with larvae in recruitment-limited upwelling regions.[14] Larval retention zones also serve as biological hotspots, where upwelling delivers nutrients that then fuel phytoplankton growth and support marine food webs. This effect has been shown even for small headlands like Point Sal (e.g., Bodega Headland).[15]

Point Sal’s leeward waters are known to serve as a larval retention zone in this stretch of the Central Coast. One study used seabird foraging rates as a proxy for juvenile fish recruitment to explore whether seabird foraging and geographic indicators can be used to identify larval retention zones, in order to help inform MPA network spatial design.[16] The findings show that both long and short headlands—including Point Sal—lead to higher juvenile fish abundance, and that coastal orientation was an important determinant of juvenile fish abundance. Pelagic cormorant foraging rates were also found to be higher at south-facing coasts like Point Sal’s compared to other coastal orientations. This is due to weaker offshore advection caused by coastal upwelling along south-facing coasts, and eddies forming in the lee of the south-facing coasts of embayments.[17]

This biological evidence for local retention zones is supported by physical oceanography data. Multiple studies of oceanographic currents in the area show that within the Santa Barbara Channel, ocean currents primarily run from east to west.[18] Just north of Point Conception there is strong seasonal equatorward flow heading south. Around the area of Point Sal, the interaction of these westward and southward surface currents cause convergence.[19] Additionally, the region experiences episodic periods of wind relaxation in the spring, leading to less vigorous upwelling with important biological consequences for larval retention and surface productivity.[20]

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[13] Amber J. Mace and Steven G. Morgan, “Larval Accumulation in the Lee of a Small Headland: Implications for the Design of Marine Reserves,” *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 318 (August 3, 2006): 19–29, https://doi.org/10.3354/meps318019.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Dan Robinette, Nadav Nur, and Jaime Jahncke, “Spatial Patterns in Nearshore Juvenile Fish Abundance Throughout the California Network of Marine Protected Areas as Revealed by Seabird Foraging Rates,” *California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations* 60 (2019).
[17] Ibid.
[18] Clinton D. Winant, Edward P. Dever, and Myrl C. Hendershott, “Characteristic Patterns of Shelf Circulation at the Boundary between Central and Southern California,” *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans* 108, no. C2 (2003), https://doi.org/10.1029/2001JC001302.
[19] Sutara H. Suanda et al., “Wind Relaxation and a Coastal Buoyant Plume North of Pt. Conception, CA: Observations, Simulations, and Scalings,” *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans* 121, no. 10 (2016): 7455–75, https://doi.org/10.1002/2016JC011919.
[20] Louis W. Botsford et al., “Effects of Variable Winds on Biological Productivity on Continental Shelves in Coastal Upwelling Systems,” *Deep Sea Research Part II: Topical Studies in Oceanography*, The Role of Wind-Driven Flow in Shelf Productivity, 53, no. 25 (December 1, 2006): 3116–40, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr2.2006.07.011.

Historical and cultural use

Point Sal holds significant cultural and historical ties to the Chumash people, who have inhabited the region for thousands of years. There is abundant evidence of Chumash occupation of Point Sal as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago. Rock rings where homes once stood, grinding stones, and other Chumash artifacts are easily visible.[21] Human remains found at Chumash burial sites indicate that the diet of ancient peoples living at Point Sal was high in marine protein, demonstrating the strong link between coastal peoples and marine resources.[22] Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity and sense of place for many of the tribal people of Central California today.

Habitat

Since the creation of the California MPA network, a new dataset that allows for detailed delineation of the habitat categories used in the design of the MPA network for all California state waters has been completed and made available through the California State Mapping Program (CSMP). Using this dataset, we characterized the habitat types present in the area proposed for protection around Point Sal (Figure 1).[23]

The proposed area is characterized by a large amount of sandy bottom, with some rocky substrate south of the point and in the northeast portion of the area (8.3% shallow (0-30m) rocky bottom, 41.9% shallow sandy bottom, 1.2% deeper (30-100m) rocky bottom, and 48.6% deeper sandy bottom). Kelp beds are present on the shallow rocky bottom substrate (personal communications, Dan Robinette), supporting numerous marine species like rockfish and sea otters.[24]

Adding this area to the California state MPA network would increase the number of replicate sites for these four important habitat types, as recommended by the science-based guidelines for the MLPA planning process and recent peer-reviewed guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks.[25]

[21] Bureau of Land Management, “Point Sal,” Visit Point Sal, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.blm.gov/visit/point-sal.
[22] Theresa M. Schober and J. Eldon Molto, “Marine Resource Consumption in Ancient California,” *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 45, no. 1 & 2 (n.d.): 31–47.
[23] California State University, Monterey Bay, Seafloor Mapping Lab. 2014. California Seafloor Mapping Project - Undersea Imagery Archive 2007-2014. https://csumb.edu/undersea/seafloor-maps Accessed 2023.
[24] Condor Environmental Planning Services, “Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan.”
[25] Nur Arafeh-Dalmau et al., “Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management: Guidelines for Designing Climate-Smart Marine Protected Areas,” *One Earth* 6, no. 11 (November 17, 2023): 1523–41, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.10.002.

Land-sea connection

Coastal marine ecosystems are influenced by both ocean- and land-based activities. Conservation efforts focused on addressing ocean-based threats alone are often compromised by land-based impacts that affect coastal ecosystems, such as nutrient runoff, organic and inorganic pollutants, and the direct impacts associated with high levels of human traffic and visitation.[26] Planning for and designating MPAs that are linked with terrestrial reserves or adjacent to areas with little to no human impact can therefore considerably improve MPA conservation outcomes.[27] The proposed SMR is adjacent to Point Sal State Beach, which currently protects approximately 80 acres and includes just over 1 1/2 miles of ocean frontage. Due to its remote location, and possibly these terrestrial protections, Point Sal's terrestrial habitats remain relatively undisturbed and free of negative human impacts,[28] making the waters around Point Sal a particularly valuable area to protect.

Access and recreation

The coastline of the proposed SMR is currently accessible through Point Sal State Beach and Point Sal Trail. Recreational activities at Point Sal State Beach include fishing, beach combing, hiking, nature study, photography, picnicking, and sunbathing.

In 1998, heavy rains destroyed Point Sal Road in several places, which was the main access road for Point Sal State Beach. The road was closed until May 2008, when Air Force and County officials announced they had reached an interim agreement to provide access. They have since been "coordinating to place informational signs, fix fences and repair washed-out sections of the County road", though progress has been extremely slow. The road remains closed, although according to California's State Parks Department, efforts to develop a long-term access plan to Point Sal State Beach are ongoing.[29]

Point Sal State Beach is currently best accessed via Point Sal Trail, which is located at the end of Brown Road. This moderately challenging trail is approximately 12 miles round trip to the beach and back,[30] and is open year-round. It provides unparalleled access to untouched coastal wilderness, traversing astonishingly beautiful coastal habitats such as dunes, chaparral, windswept bluffs, and rocky cliffs. The trail is described as "a very popular area for hiking".[31]

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[26] David M. Stoms et al., "Integrated Coastal Reserve Planning: Making the Land–Sea Connection," *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 3, no. 8 (2005): 429–36, https://doi.org/10.1890/1540-9295(2005)003[0429:ICRPMT]2.0.CO;2.
[27] Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management."
[28] Robinette, Acosta, and Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network."
[29] California State Parks, "Point Sal SB," CA State Parks, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.parks.ca.gov/.
[30] County of Santa Barbara California, "Point Sal," County of Santa Barbara Parks, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.countyofsb.org/900/Point-Sal.
[31] All Trails, "Point Sal Overlook," Travel Website, AllTrails.com, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/california/point-sal-overlook.

By making the ocean more productive and resilient to climate change, stronger marine protections like the proposed Point Sal SMR can enhance shore-based recreation. When combined with efforts to increase access and connect more people to nature, additional state MPAs can give those from marginalized communities more equitable access to the ocean's resources and benefits. California's MPAs have been shown to increase the biomass of fishery-targeted species and promote "spillover" into nearby coastal areas, benefitting nearby fishing grounds.[32] The California Environmental Protection Agency identifies the adjacent city of Guadalupe as "disadvantaged" under CA Senate Bill 535, and their synthesis of environmental and socioeconomic indicators further reveals that Guadalupe – alongside Santa Maria and Lompoc – are underprivileged communities that experience significant cumulative impacts from pollution.[33] Given these communities' close proximity to Point Sal, implementing an SMR at the proposed site could enhance access for disadvantaged populations to valuable coastal resources and fishing opportunities. In addition to the designation of a new Point Sal SMR, we urge the state to redouble its efforts to provide access to Point Sal State Beach by reopening Point Sal Road.

Socioeconomic impacts

Current fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. The proposed Point Sal MPA overlaps with 14% of California fishing block 631, and 11% of California fishing block 632. According to the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, annual landings reported from these blocks over a ten year period from 2012 to 2022 were an average of 231,460 lbs by weight and $678,632 by value per year.[34] This represents just 0.11% of the landings by weight, and 1.1% of landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10 year period.[35,36] For this reason, and due to the relatively small proposed size of the MPA, we believe the establishment of an SMR in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

Our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.

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[32] Hunter S. Lenihan et al., "Increasing Spillover Enhances Southern California Spiny Lobster Catch along Marine Reserve Borders," *Ecosphere* 13, no. 6 (2022): e4110, https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.4110.
[33] OEHHA, "CalEnviroScreen 4.0," Text, CA.Gov, September 20, 2021, https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40; OEHHA, "Final Designation of Disadvantaged Communities Pursuant to Senate Bill 535" (CalEPA, May 2022).
[34] Assuming equal distribution of effort and value across all years. Because smaller timescales resulted in confidential data outputs from the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, we aggregated 10 years of landings data from both blocks to calculate average annual landings data. However, the state should look into the confidential data to find more detailed estimates of fisheries landings from this area.
[35] We defined the Central Coast region as all fishing blocks from Point Ano Nuevo to Point Conception: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=144496&inline
[36] California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Marine Fisheries Data Explorer," database, MFDE, accessed November 21, 2023, https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Data-Management-Research/MFDE.

Historical context

During the MLPA planning process, a large SMR around Point Sal was proposed in External Proposed MPA Package AC. The proposed SMR was 21.92 mi^2, with an alongshore span of 6.1 miles and depth range of 0-192 feet. Based upon a review of the historical documents provided by the Fish & Game Commission in October 2023, it is not clear why the state chose not to designate this proposed SMR at that time.

Future stressors may compromise California's coastal waters and nearby MPAs

There is increasing pressure to develop resources in and otherwise utilize California's coastal waters. For example, as efforts intensify to mitigate and adapt to climate change, the state is investing in offshore wind and desalination plants. Interest in ocean-based carbon dioxide removal (CDR) is growing, and aquaculture activities are proliferating. Scientists warn that a rising wave of ocean industrialization, such as underway in California's waters, will pose additional strain on marine biodiversity.[37]

MPAs along the central coast of California will likely experience these types of stressors in the coming decade. Vandenberg SMR, located 17 km to the south of this proposed area, and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, located 50 km to the north, are both sited near potential future offshore wind development projects. The proposed California Demonstration Project (CADEMO) seeks to place four floating offshore wind turbines in state waters just outside the boundaries of Vandenberg SMR, and would deliver power via a subsea cable traveling under the seafloor to an onshore cable landing site at Vandenberg Space Force Base. The Morro Bay Wind Energy Area is located in federal waters just outside Point Buchon SMCA, and two leases have recently been issued to commercial wind developers to begin planning for offshore wind development. Offshore wind construction and operations are expected to impact the marine environment through increased ocean noise, collisions with turbines, entanglements, the introduction of electromagnetic fields, alterations to existing habitats and hydrodynamics, and the possible release of contaminants.[38] While the state of California is working closely with developers and the federal government to minimize the environmental impacts of these projects as much as possible, it stands to reason that the region, including Vandenberg SMR and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, will experience some level of adverse impact related to the development of heavily industrialized renewable energy projects.

In addition, Point Buchon SMR/SMCA is located just north of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, which uses seawater for its once-through cooling process. The plant's intake pipes draw in more than 2.5 billion gallons of water per day. This large and continuous seawater withdrawal is estimated to kill roughly 1.5 billion fish in early life stages each year, as creatures are sucked

[37] Douglas J. McCauley et al., "Marine Defaunation: Animal Loss in the Global Ocean," *Science* 347, no. 6219 (January 16, 2015): 1255641, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1255641.
[38] NOAA Fisheries, "Offshore Wind Energy: Protecting Marine Life," Protecting Marine Life, National, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/offshore-wind-energy/protecting-marine-life.

into the cooling systems or become impinged against the screens on the open-water pipes.[39] The cooling water is also discharged back into the ocean water at a warmer temperature, which can cause additional harm to kelp, fish, and other marine life in the area.[40] While Diablo Canyon's intake is not directly within the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA cluster, the area of source water being drawn into the plant likely overlaps with the MPA boundaries and has the potential to withdraw marine life out of the protected area.

As the increase of local stressors are likely to strain resources in the Vandenberg and Point Buchon MPAs, a new MPA at Point Sal could help to protect similar habitat not subject to these local stressors, adding a helpful replicate MPA to serve as an insurance policy for the region's MPA network.

Climate resilient MPA networks

Changing ocean conditions, such as warming temperatures, acidification, and reduced oxygen, combined with increasing crowding, and pressure on our ecosystems, will compound local stressors mentioned above – putting California's spectacular marine biodiversity at elevated risk. MPAs are increasingly recognized as an important ocean-climate solution. Fully protected MPAs can allow for disturbed and degraded areas to recover, and also promote and retain complex, intact food webs and ecosystems that are better at resisting future stressors.[41] A recent meta-analysis of more than 22,000 peer-reviewed studies spanning more than 200 MPAs around the world demonstrated that marine reserves can significantly enhance carbon sequestration, coastal protection, biodiversity, and the reproductive capacity of marine organisms as well as fishers' catch and income.[42]

Further, when designed with climate resilience in mind, MPA networks can provide greater resilience than single MPAs on their own.[43] A new analysis focused on the California Bight has identified 21 actionable guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks across large geographies and international boundaries.[44] The designation of a new MPA at Point Sal would meet or help to advance at least 11 of these climate-smart MPA design guidelines (Appendix A). Specifically, a new MPA at Point Sal would help to increase habitat representation and

[39] Mackenzie Shuman, "How California's Last Remaining Nuclear Power Plant Transformed Marine Life off the Coast," *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, March 25, 2022, https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/environment/article258804173.html.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Lewis A.K. Barnett, Marissa L. Baskett, and Louis W. Botsford, "Quantifying the Potential for Marine Reserves or Harvest Reductions to Buffer Temporal Mismatches Caused by Climate Change," *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 72, no. 3 (March 2015): 376–89, https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2014-0243; Lewis A. K. Barnett and Marissa L. Baskett, "Marine Reserves Can Enhance Ecological Resilience," ed. Peter Mumby, *Ecology Letters* 18, no. 12 (December 2015): 1301–10, https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.12524; Callum M. Roberts et al., "Marine Reserves Can Mitigate and Promote Adaptation to Climate Change," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 24 (June 13, 2017): 6167–75, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1701262114.
[42] Juliette Jacquemont et al., "Ocean Conservation Boosts Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation," *One Earth* 5, no. 10 (October 2022): 1126–38, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2022.09.002.
[43] Roberts et al., "Marine Reserves Can Mitigate and Promote Adaptation to Climate Change."
[44] Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management."

replication; protect critical and unique areas relevant to the life histories of important California species; incorporate and enhance connectivity across the broader MPA network; provide permanent protections better suited for the maintenance of ecosystem function and resilience at relevant timescales for climate resilience, and; enhance the MPA network's protections for healthy and relatively undisturbed habitats (Appendix A). In the face of increasing impacts related to climate change, it is critical that the state adaptively manage its MPA network with climate resilience in mind.

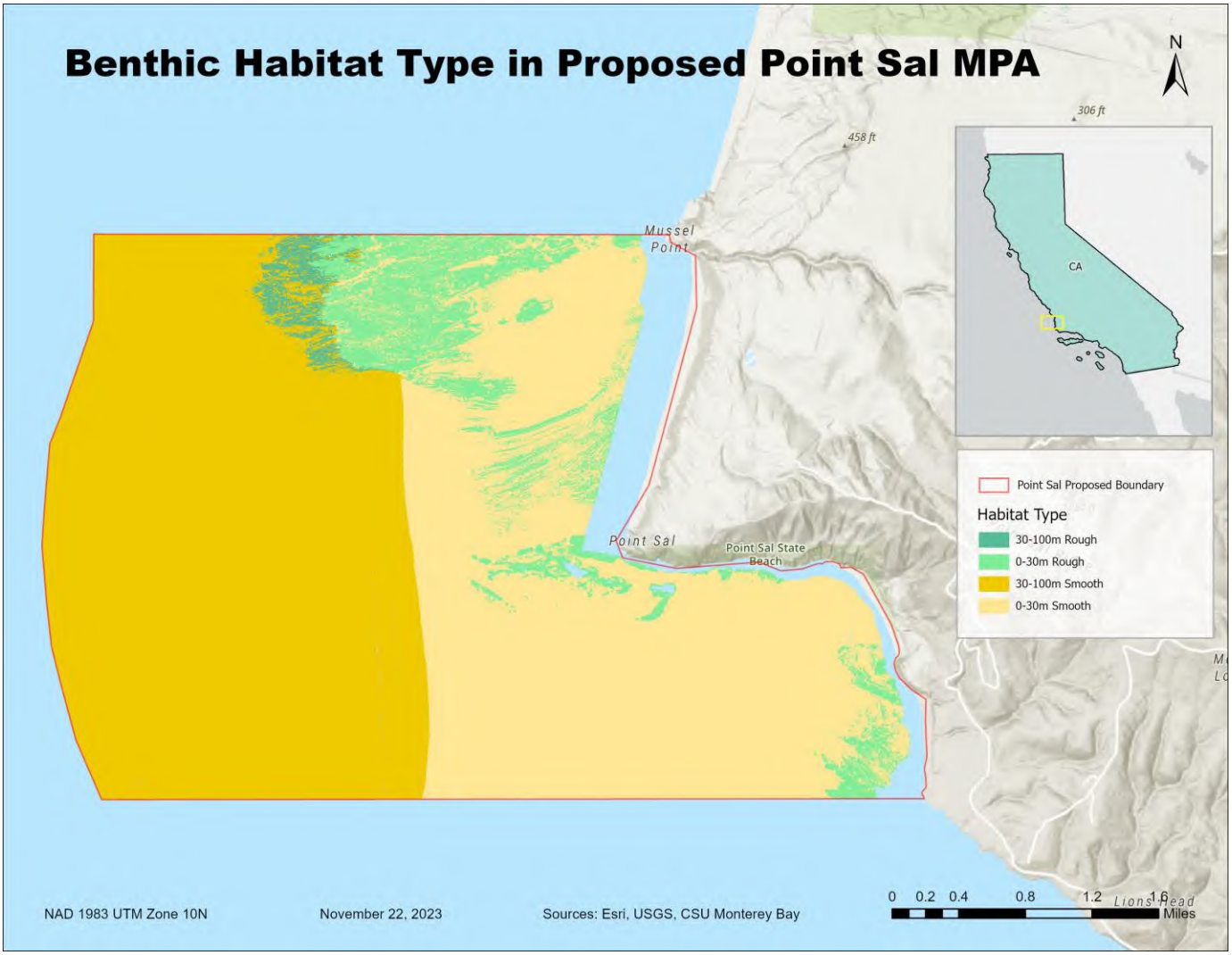
Relevance to MLPA Goals and DMR Recommendations

This proposed Point Sal SMR contributes directly to MLPA Goals 1, 2, 3, and 6 (California Marine Life Protection Act). Protecting the rich biodiversity, relatively undisturbed habitats, and important larval retention zone found in the relatively undisturbed waters around Point Sal would help to protect the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems subject to minimal human disturbance.

In addition, this petition helps to advance DMR Recommendation 4.b.) "Identify and utilize best science-based approaches to inform potential changes to the MPA Network in order to enhance Network performance." New and groundbreaking peer-reviewed guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks have recently been developed, and the proposed MPA at Point Sal aligns strongly with these guidelines.[45] We recommend the state consider these guidelines for the review and implementation of additional proposals to enhance and expand California's MPA network.

We must pass on a healthier ocean for future generations to experience, benefit from, and enjoy. California has the opportunity now to protect the conservation legacy of our iconic coastal state, including its rich and diverse marine wildlife. We urge the state to designate a new MPA at Point Sal to enhance the protection and climate resilience of our coastal and ocean resources, for the benefit of current and future generations of Californians.

[45] Ibid.


Benthic Habitat Type in Proposed Point Sal MPA
N
306 ft
458 ft
Mussel Point
CA
Point Sal
Point Sal State Beach
Point Sal Proposed Boundary
Habitat Type
30-100m Rough
0-30m Rough
30-100m Smooth
0-30m Smooth
Lions Head
0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6
Miles
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N
November 22, 2023
Sources: Esri, USGS, CSU Monterey Bay

Appendix A - Climate-smart MPA guidelines identified by Arafeh-Dalmau et al. 2023 met or advanced by the proposed Point Sal MPA

Category	Specific guideline *(with California Bight-specific guideline in italics)*	Rationale
Habitat representation and replication	1. Represent at least 30% of each habitat type in each biogeographic subregion. Ensure representation of the variation in biodiversity across geographic gradients. Habitat representation targets should consider habitat rarity and vulnerability, and fishing pressure and management outside reserves. *Habitat types include intertidal, subtidal, biogenic (e.g., kelp forests, seagrass beds), and deep-sea habitats.*	Pt. Sal protections would increase representation and replication of nearly all habitat types along the central coast of California, including intertidal, subtidal, kelp forests, deep and shallow rocky bottom, and deep and shallow sandy plains. If designated as described in this petition, the new Point Sal MPA would contribute 36 square miles, or 0.68%, toward California's goal to protect 30% of coastal waters by 2030, and increase MPA coverage in the Central Coast ahead of potential large-scale disturbances to the region related to offshore wind development.
	3. Represent at least three examples of each habitat type in widely separated reserves to reduce the chance that they will all be impacted by a large-scale disturbance.	
	4. Represent habitats used by focal species for ecosystem resilience.	Protections would increase representation and coverage of kelp forest habitat used by sea otters, an important and iconic California predator that contributes to ecosystem resilience.
Protecting critical and unique areas	5. Protect critical areas in the life history of focal species in marine reserves. Critical areas include spawning, nesting, or breeding areas, nursery habitats (e.g., estuaries and seagrass beds), and resting and feeding areas.	Pt. Sal proposal would protect larval retention zone for commercially important fish and invert species, a biologically important area (BIA) for feeding humpback whales, a BIA for migrating gray whales, roosting habitat for the Brown pelican (endangered until only recently), Brandt's cormorants, and other seabirds, an important haul-out for resting and breeding pinnipeds, and protections for kelp beds which are critically important for endangered Southern sea otters and many other important California marine species.
	7. Protect areas with special and unique biodiversity in marine reserves. Protect special and unique features including areas with remaining populations of rare species, protected species, unique habitats, healthy habitats, high species richness, and endemic species.	Pt. Sal is a remote and relatively untouched area. Proposal would protect special and unique features such as healthy habitats far from human impacts.
Incorporating connectivity	10. Consider movement patterns of adult and juvenile organisms when determining the size of marine reserves.	This proposal meets the state of California's minimum size guidelines, which took connectivity dynamics and the

Appendix A - Climate-smart MPA guidelines identified by Arafeh-Dalmau et al. 2023 met or advanced by the proposed Point Sal MPA

	Ensure marine reserves extend from intertidal to deeper habitats.	movement patterns of species with small home ranges into account for design. Proposed MPA extends from shallow intertidal to deeper habitats, up to a depth of 100m.
	11. Consider transboundary larval dispersal to replenish populations within marine reserves and in adjacent areas, enhance metapopulation persistence, and support fisheries in adjacent areas. Consider larval dispersal distances for transboundary management. *Marine reserves should be separated by no more than 25–100 km to ensure connectivity of species with short dispersal distances (e.g., abalone)*	The Pt. Sal proposal meets the minimum spacing guidelines provided here. California's system of MPAs was designed as an interconnected network, with MPAs alternately serving as sources and sinks for marine life. These meta-dynamics are expected to buffer natural and human-caused fluctuations in populations of marine species. The addition of a new strongly protected MPA in this region of the coast could strengthen the network dynamics in this region, allowing ecosystems to resist and adapt to changing ocean conditions and recover from disaster events.
	13. Consider changes in larval duration and habitat availability due to changes in climate and ocean chemistry. *Simulations suggest that a decrease in planktonic larval duration and giant kelp availability due to climate change will weaken the number and geographic scale of connections, decreasing transboundary connectivity and increasing isolation.*	Pt. Sal contains a larval retention zone in the leeward waters south of the point. Larval retention zones are especially important for larval recruitment in wind-driven upwelling areas, and may provide critical recruitment hotspots should larval duration and connectivity decrease overall.
	14. Facilitate range shifts of species driven by climate change. Distribute reserves across geographic, latitudinal, and depth gradients to facilitate the latitudinal and depth shifts of species in response to climate change	Pt. Sal lies within an important transitional zone for marine and coastal biota. Many species reach the southern or northern limits of their ranges here, making it an important biogeographic boundary along California's coast. As temperatures warm and southern species shift their range northward, protections will help to facilitate range shifts.
Allowing time for recovery	15. Establish marine reserves for the long term (>25 years), preferably permanently, to allow populations of focal species to recover and replenish adjacent areas and maintain ecosystem functioning and resilience.	California's MPAs are permanent.
Minimizing and avoiding local threats	20. Establish marine reserves in areas with lower levels of cumulative threats for each biogeographic region.	Pt. Sal is a remote and relatively untouched area. Proposal would protect special and unique features such as healthy habitats far from human impacts.

November 30, 2023

Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: <u>Decadal Management Review Marine Protected Areas Petition Process: Point Sal, CA</u>

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit recommendations for the adaptive management of California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) network as part of the Decadal Management Review process. The undersigned organizations strongly support the designation of a new State Marine Reserve or a State Marine Conservation Area with exceptions for cultural and subsistence take by local Indigenous communities and/or Tribes around Point Sal.

Located in Santa Barbara County, Point Sal is an ecologically rich and relatively remote promontory along the coastline that supports a diverse marine ecosystem and provides critical habitat for seabirds and marine mammals alike. The nutrient-rich waters found at this site allow for a diversity of ocean life to thrive here, with kelp beds, rich tidepools, and productive waters that support humpback whales, gray whales, a variety of sea lions and seals, sea otters, and a biologically important feeding area for endangered blue whales nearby. Offshore, Lion Rock is a significant roosting site for seabirds like the recently endangered Brown pelican, and also acts as an undisturbed haul out for sea lions, seals, and other pinnipeds, underlining the area's conservation value for these animals as the California coastline becomes increasingly developed. In addition, the leeward waters of Point Sal act as a larval retention zone, which are highly

beneficial areas for enhancing the recruitment of fish and invertebrate offspring in upwelling zones while promoting the biodiversity of the surrounding ecosystem. Historically, Point Sal also holds cultural significance for the Chumash people, with evidence of their occupation being as recent as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago. Chumash artifacts are visible throughout Point Sal, and analyses of burial sites from the area demonstrate the rich cultural ties to the traditional stewards of this land.

Protecting the waters of Point Sal aligns strongly with the goals set by the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), especially with regards to the protection of natural biodiversity found in relatively undisturbed marine ecosystems. Given the remote nature of Point Sal, its relative lack of human disturbance, and increasing threats to the California MPAs found nearby, there is an urgent need to protect the ecological merits and maximize the biological benefits that Point Sal provides to the marine species that inhabit the area and to the broader Central California region. As development of the state's coastline and seascape progresses, protecting these untouched areas will add to the resilience of the MPA network by providing refugia for marine life from encroaching threats. Furthermore, designating an MPA in the proposed area will improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities at Point Sal and support equitable access to coastal resources moving forward into the future.

We commend the continued work of the Commission to advance the conservation of our state's valuable and unique marine resources. Designating a protected area at Point Sal will further bolster the strength of California's MPA network, advance the goals of the MLPA, and safeguard our coastal ecosystems against future stressors such as climate change. Thank you for your consideration of this petition and the opportunity to contribute our input on this historic process.

Sincerely,

Dennis Arguelles
Southern California Director
National Parks Conservation Association

Steve Bardwell
President
Morongo Basin Conservation Association

Andrew Christie
Chapter Director
Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter

Joe Connett
Member
Sierra Club Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter

Laura Deehan
State Director
Environment California Research and Policy Center

Rikki Eriksen
Director of Marine Spatial Ecology
California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

Pamela Flick
California Program Director
Defenders of Wildlife

Pamela Heatherington
Board of Directors
Environmental Center of San Diego

Azsha Hudson
Marine Conservation Analyst
Environmental Defense Center

Susan Jordan
Executive Director
California Coastal Protection Network

Sharon Musa
Urban to Wild Los Angeles Program Manager
The Wilderness Society

Manuel Oliva
Chief Executive Officer
Point Blue Conservation

Robin Pelc
Principal Scientist
SeaChange Scientific Consulting, LLC

Teresa Romero
President
Native Coast Action Network

Dan Silver
Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League

Tomas Valadez
California Policy Associate
Azul

Robert Vergara
Roger Arliner Young (RAY) Ocean Conservation Fellow
Natural Resources Defense Council

Erin Woolley
Senior Policy Strategist
Sierra Club California

Attachment 1

California Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2023 Decadal Management Review Marine Protected Area Petition Evaluation

COMPANION DOCUMENT

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE

CALIFORNIA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

July 2026

This document is the 2023 Decadal Management Review Marine Protected Area Petition Evaluation Companion Document (Companion Document). The Companion Document and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Transmittal Memo should be read in advance of the 2023 Bin 2 Petition Evaluations as it includes supplemental information and additional context for the evaluations.

The Companion Document was originally released March 20, 2026 along with CDFW's evaluations and recommendations for the ten Non-tribally-led Petitions. This July 2026 version of the Companion Document includes the following additions: a detailed timeline of the 2023 MPA Petition milestones, updates related to tribal outreach and engagement, a new section on Climate Resilience and MPAs, and additional supplemental information for Question 5 (information gaps) and Question 9 (MPA Network design and Levels of Protection (LOP)) of the evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

At its February 14-15, 2024, meeting, the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGC) referred 20 Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions to CDFW for review, evaluation, and recommendation. These petitions were sorted into Bin 1 and Bin 2 Petitions. The Marine Resources Committee (MRC) considered CDFW's recommendations on 5 Bin 1 Petitions at the November 6-7, 2024 MRC meeting and CFGC adopted the MRC's recommendations at the December 11-12, 2024 CFGC meeting. See Table 1 for a comprehensive overview of process milestones for the 2023 MPA Petitions.

On August 14, 2025, CFGC approved an evaluation framework (Framework) for the 15 Bin 2 Petitions referred to CDFW proposing changes to the MPA Network. CDFW developed the Framework, with support from staff at CFGC and Ocean Protection Council, based on the adaptive management process outlined in chapter 4 of the 2016 Master Plan for MPAs. The 2016 Master Plan directs CDFW and CFGC to use the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Goals and mandates, Master Plan objectives, and Science Advisory Team (SAT) Science Guidelines established during the MLPA Initiative planning process as the primary basis for evaluating any action taken to make changes to the MPA Network. The 2016 Master Plan adaptive management process also includes consideration of emerging issues, such as changes to the MPA Network that would enhance climate resilience and/or help mitigate climate impacts. CDFW considered climate change effects throughout the evaluation, recognizing that the effects of climate change are overarching and climate resilience is an implicit goal of adaptive management of the MPA Network as a whole. The Framework also draws from the Decadal Management Review (DMR) and Recommendations, and the MPA Regulation Change Petition Framework approved by CFGC at their August 2023 meeting, which is rooted in the DMR Recommendation cornerstones of MPA Governance, MPA Management Program Activities, and MPA Network Performance.

The Framework includes the following sections:

I. Petition Summary
II. CDFW Recommendations with Brief Justifications
III. Bin 2 Petition Grouping: Identify Tribally-led Petitions
IV. CDFW 2023 MPA Bin 2 Petition Narrative and Evaluation
V. Supplemental Analyses, Data and Information, and Citations

CDFW used the Framework to transparently evaluate petitions and develop recommendations to CFGC for the 2023 MPA Bin 2 Petitions. The evaluations were based on materials submitted in December 2023 and amendments received through March 2025. Subsequent changes, improvements, or stakeholder engagement undertaken by petitioners after March 2025 were not considered. CDFW recognizes that new information on these petitions may be available for CFGC consideration.

The Bin 2 Petitions and petition actions vary in complexity, and the Framework is designed to address this spectrum of complexity. In some cases, it was more appropriate to evaluate Bin 2 Petitions as a whole and in other cases, it was more appropriate to evaluate the individual proposed actions or grouped proposed actions that were similar within a petition. Not all evaluation components in Section IV applied to every proposed action or petition as they were not all relevant to each proposed action or petition. CDFW applied the evaluation components as appropriate, and the level of detail varied based on factors such as applicability of the question or information available. Non-regulatory requests were not evaluated through the Framework. For some petitions, CDFW recommended an alternative pathway to achieving the desired outcome of the proposed change.

The DMR indicated the MPA Network is meeting expectations and functioning effectively towards achieving the Goals of the MLPA. Therefore, significant regulatory changes to the MPA Network should meet a high threshold of demonstrated conservation value and need, as well as clear, science-supported benefit.

This evaluation is not the only process by which regulatory changes have been considered as part of the adaptive management of the MPA Network. Since implementation of California's MPA Network, targeted legislative and regulatory refinements have been identified to align MPAs with their original intent, clarify or correct provisions, or address priority management and enforcement issues. Since 2013, four legislative amendments and seven regulatory packages have been enacted to strengthen and support the adaptive management of the MPA Network and Management Program. The regulatory amendments:

- 2014 – Clarified and corrected provisions, including general provisions, definitions, take, and boundaries
- 2015 – Clarified and corrected provisions, including general provisions, definitions, take, and boundaries. This includes refining and correcting boundary coordinates for 106 MPAs
- 2016 – Added provisions for tribal take in north coast MPAs
- 2018 – Repealed a special closure due to conflict with private property
- 2018 – Added provisions for tribal take in south coast MPAs and amended boundaries to better align with historical subsistence and cultural use
- 2022 – Cleaned up State Marine Recreational Management Area language
- 2023 – Provided a mechanism for operation and maintenance of pre-existing artificial structures in MPAs

The legislative amendments include Senate Bill 96 (2013), Assembly Bill 298 (2015), Assembly Bill 2369 (2018), and Assembly Bill 63 (2021). See Appendix G of the Decadal Management Review for more information about regulatory packages and legislative amendments that apply to MPA Network management implemented since 2012. All amendments were deliberately and carefully constructed, consistent with directives in the Fish and Game Code (§§2853 and 2855), MLPA, and the Master Plan for MPAs, to preserve the integrity of the MPA Network.

CDFW remains committed to adaptive management through regulatory and non-regulatory pathways and will continue to work with tribes and partners to advance the Recommendations of the DMR through a science-based, inclusive statewide process consistent with the requirements of the MLPA and Master Plan for MPAs.

Table 1. Summary of 2023 MPA Petition Process Milestones.

Date	Milestone
Aug 2023	California Fish and Game Commission (CFGC) approves DMR adaptive management recommendation prioritization framework and supported the Marine Resources Committee preference to consider changes to the MPA Network using the existing CFGC petition process
Oct 2023	CFGC releases "Overview of Process to Consider Potential Changes to California's MPA Network"
Dec 2023	CFGC receives 20 MPA-related petitions with 80+ actions
Feb 2024	CFGC refers all 20 petitions to CDFW for evaluation
Apr 2024	CFGC adopts 3-phased approach to petition evaluation

Date	Milestone
Aug 2024	CFGC approves binning petitions, requests CDFW evaluate the five Bin 1 Petitions and develop a proposed framework to evaluate 15 Bin 2 Petitions
Nov 2024	CDFW releases recommendations for five Bin 1 Petitions
Dec 2024	CFGC makes decisions on Bin 1 Petitions and establishes March 14, 2025 deadline for amendments to Bin 2 Petitions
Mar 14, 2025	Deadline for amendments to Bin 2 Petitions
Apr 2025	CFGC refers amended Bin 2 Petitions to CDFW for evaluation
Apr-May 2025	CDFW develops Draft Bin 2 Petition Evaluation Framework with Ocean Protection Council and CFGC staff
May 2025	Update and discussion at CFGC Tribal Committee (TC) meeting on Bin 2 MPA Petitions and proposed approach for evaluations
Aug 2025	Update and discussion on 2023 MPA Petitions and Draft Evaluation Framework at CFGC TC and CFGC. Four Tribally-led petitions identified and CFGC approves framework for evaluating Bin 2 MPA Petitions
Dec 2025	Update and discussion at CFGC TC on Bin 2 MPA Petitions; identifies one more Tribally-led petition; directs CDFW to return to April 2026 CFGC TC to discuss MPA Petitions prior to releasing evaluations for the Tribally-led petitions
Mar 20, 2026	CDFW releases evaluations and recommendations for the 64 proposed actions in the ten non-Tribally-led Bin 2 MPA Petitions and the Companion Document
Apr 2026	Update and discussion at CFGC TC on five Tribally-led petitions. CFGC accepts amendments to four of the Tribally-led petitions and refers them to CDFW for evaluation
Apr-May 2026	Regional CFGC meetings discussing Bin 2 MPA Petitions • April 21, 2026 in San Mateo, Del Norte through Monterey counties petitions • May 5-6, 2026 in Goleta, alongshore San Luis Obispo through Santa Barbara counties petitions (day 1) and Northern Channel Islands (day 2) • May 19, 2026 in San Clemente, Los Angeles through San Diego counties petitions, including Santa Catalina Island
July 2026	CDFW releases evaluations and recommendations for the 9 proposed actions in the five Tribally-led Bin 2 MPA Petitions and the revised Companion Document

SUPPLEMENTAL EVALUATION INFORMATION

CDFW compiled supplemental information and additional context for the Tribally-led etitions, the topic of climate resilience and MPAs, and the responses to Evaluation Questions 1, 2a, 5, 9, 10a, and 14, and Section V. Supplemental Analyses, Data and Information, and Citations. CFGC staff conducted the analysis and prepared the responses for Questions 16 and 17 and provided additional context for their evaluations below. The information provided here was common across the evaluations and is included here to prevent having to repeat it in each evaluation.

TRIBALLY-LED PETITIONS

This Companion Document includes a summary of the process for identifying Tribally-led petitions, CDFW's outreach to all California Native American tribes throughout the petitions process, and a summary of outreach and engagement with Tribally-led petitioners (Attachment A below). As directed by CFGC, CDFW evaluated the Tribally-led petitions with the CDFW 2023 MPA Bin 2 Petition Evaluation Framework. Tribally-led petitions, per CFGC direction, were discussed at the April 14, 2026, CFGC Tribal Committee meeting. *Note: California Native American tribe is the preferred term to use per the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs when generally mentioning tribes of California, both federally and non-federally recognized.*

The following petitions were identified by CFGC as Tribally-led petitions:

- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians: Designate a New Chitqawi SMCA Near Morro Bay with a Tribal Take Exemption for Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (2023-19MPA_AM1)
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians: Establish Co-Management at Point Buchon SMCA, Change the Name, and Add a Tribal Exemption for Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians at Point Buchon SMCA, and Change the Boundary at Point Buchon SMR (2023-20MPA_AM1)
- Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation: Remove Recreational Take of True Smelt and Change the Boundary at Pyramid Point SMCA (2023-21MPA_AM1)
- Northern Chumash Tribal Council: Designate a New SMCA Near Point Sal with an Allowance for Recreational Take of Finfish by Hook-and-Line from Shore (2023-28MPA_AM2)
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians: Designate a New SMCA Near Mishopshno/ Carpinteria with an Allowance for Recreational Take of Finfish by Hook-and-Line From Shore and a Tribal Take Exemption for Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (2023-29MPA_AM2)

Summary of Tribal Outreach and Engagement with California Native American Tribes for the 2023 MPA Petitions

In late 2023, CFGC received 20 petitions from California Native American tribes (tribes) and the public requesting changes to California's MPA Network. CFGC referred the 2023 MPA Petitions to CDFW to evaluate in early 2024. This document provides a summary of tribal outreach and engagement with California Native American tribes for the 20 2023 MPA Petitions, including five Tribally-led petitions, proposing approximately 70 changes to the MPA regulations for MPAs from southern California to the Oregon border (2023 MPA Petitions).

Summary of CDFW tribal outreach for all 2023 MPA petitions

Since receiving the petitions, CDFW has provided regular updates on the status of the 2023 MPA Petitions and petition evaluation process through email communications and mailed letters to the CDFW tribal contact list. The CDFW tribal contact list includes over 400 individuals across the state who represent and/or work for a California Native American tribe. The statewide list is maintained by CDFW's Tribal Liaison and includes people on the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) contact list and others who have elected to receive updates from CDFW related to tribes. These updates included offers for consultation and meetings between tribes and CDFW. In October 2025, CFGC and CDFW sent letters via email and postal mail to the CDFW tribal contact list to specifically offer formal consultation or informal meetings on the 2023 MPA Petitions. CDFW also presented written and verbal updates at meetings of CFGC's Tribal Committee. These outreach efforts to tribes are summarized in Table 2.

Summary of additional outreach and engagement with tribes for Tribally-led petitions

At the August 12, 2025, CFGC's Tribal Committee meeting, the Tribal Committee identified four of the 2023 MPA Petitions as Tribally-led petitions, which are petitions that were submitted by a tribe, representative designated by a tribe, or tribal organization, or have a tribal co-sponsor. These included:

- 2023-19MPA submitted by Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
- 2023-20MPA submitted by Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
- 2023-21MPA submitted by Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation
- 2023-29MPA submitted by Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC), Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (SYBCI), and Environmental Defense Center

At the May 7, 2025, meeting, CFGC's Tribal Committee requested CDFW send additional offers to all tribes for consultation on the remaining 2023 MPA Petitions and to reach out to offer to meet with tribes associated with the Tribally-led petitions. On October 16,

2025, CDFW distributed to the CDFW statewide tribal contact list a letter offering joint tribal consultation with CDFW and CFGC on any 2023 MPA Petition. This letter was also included in the fall quarterly CDFW Tribal Updates email. As of July 2026, no tribes have requested consultation.

On November 24, 2025, CFGC received a letter from Northern Chumash Tribal Council and NRDC indicating that Northern Chumash Tribal Council was a formal co-sponsor for petition 2023-28MPA, and requested CFGC consider the petition a Tribally-led petition.

At the December 9, 2025, CFGC Tribal Committee meeting, the CFGC Tribal Committee reconsidered the designation of petition 2023-28MPA and recommended CFGC designate it as a Tribally-led petition in light of the November 2025 co-sponsorship from Northern Chumash Tribal Council. At the December 11, 2025, CFGC meeting, CFGC designated petition 2023-28MPA as a Tribally-led petition. CFGC's Tribal Committee requested that before releasing the Tribally-led petition evaluations, CDFW engage with the tribes leading or co-leading petitions, including to better understand the intent of the petitions, and then share an update on the engagement and any clarifications on the petitions at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting. CFGC's Tribal Committee and CFGC reaffirmed that CDFW should use the Evaluation Framework approved by CFGC in August to evaluate the Tribally-led petitions.

At the February 11, 2026, CFGC meeting, CFGC approved the addition of an agenda item for CDFW to provide an update and to have a discussion on the Tribally-led petitions at the April 14, 2026, Tribal Committee meeting.

Between September 2025 and June 2026, CDFW participated in discussions with representatives of tribes regarding the Tribally-led petitions.

At the April 14, 2026, CFGC Tribal Committee meeting, tribal representatives provided an overview and clarifications for the five Tribally-led petitions. SYBCI proposed amendments to 2023-19MPA, 2023-20MPA, and SYBCI and NRDC proposed amendments to 2023-29MPA_AM1. Northern Chumash Tribal Council and NRDC proposed amendments to 2023-28MPA_AM1. No amendments were proposed for 2023-21MPA. CDFW presented an update on tribal outreach and engagement since December and summarized the clarifications and proposed amendments for the Tribally-led petitions. At the meeting on April 15, 2026, the CFGC Tribal Committee recommended to CFGC that CDFW evaluate the Tribally-led petitions according to the proposed amendments and clarifications discussed during the meeting. CFGC subsequently referred the amended petitions (2023-19MPA_AM1, 2023-20MPA_AM1, 2023-21MPA_AM1, 2023-29MPA_AM2, and 2023-29MPA_AM2) to CDFW for evaluation using the Evaluation Framework approved by CFGC in August 2025.

Table 2. Summary of CDFW tribal outreach and engagement to date related to the 2023 MPA Petitions and petition process, including communication method and type of content. Unless otherwise specified, all tribal outreach communications included tribes listed on the CDFW tribal contact list maintained by CDFW's Department Tribal Liaison, which includes 400 people from the NAHC Contact List and additional tribal representatives.

Date	Method	Content
5/31/2024	Email	Released Blog Post: Seeking Your Feedback to Help Manage California's Marine Protected Area Network
10/4/2024	Email	CDFW Informational MPA DMR Petition Process Update: Background, DMR petition process, next steps, upcoming meetings
10/25/2024	Email	Released Blog Post: MPA Day
11/22/2024	Email	CDFW Informational MPA DMR Petition Process Update: Background, DMR petition process, next steps, upcoming meetings
4/11/2025	Email	CDFW Tribal Liaison provided Department update email, including CDFW Informational MPA DMR Petition Process Update
5/7/2025	Tribal Committee: Meeting Materials	Written Informational Update: California's Marine Protected Area Network Decadal Management Review and Subsequent Marine Protected Area Regulation Amendment Petition Process (pg. 99 of 129) Verbal update on the 2023 MPA Petitions and draft evaluation framework by Susan Ashcraft, CFGC Marine Advisor
8/14/2025	Tribal Committee: Meeting Presentation	Presentation by Craig Shuman, CDFW Marine Region Manager, on 2023 MPA Petitions and draft evaluation framework. Tribal Committee identified four Tribally-led petitions
9/2025	Email	CDFW invitation to meet to discuss petitions sent to petitioners for the four Tribally-led petitions
10/16/2025	Mail	Invitation Letter for joint tribal consultation with CDFW and CFGC on any 2023 MPA Petition
10/17/2025	Email	CDFW Tribal Liaison - Department update email, including CDFW Informational MPA DMR Petition Process Update and Invitation Letter for Joint Tribal Consultation
10/20/2025 – 6/24/2026	Meetings	Discuss Tribally-led petitions with tribal petitioners

Date	Method	Content
12/9/2025	Tribal Committee	CDFW update on the 2023 MPA Petitions and upcoming release of CDFW petition evaluations and outlining three regional meetings to be held to discuss petitions and evaluations
4/14/2026	Tribal Committee	CDFW presentation to provide an update on tribal outreach and engagement, and summarize clarifications and proposed amendments for Tribally-led petitions
6/26/2026	Email	CDFW Tribal Liaison provided Department update email, including CDFW Informational MPA DMR Petition Process Update and upcoming meetings to discuss the 2023 MPA Petitions

CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND MPAS

Since implementation of California's MPA Network, the state's coastal ecosystems have experienced increasingly significant climate-driven changes, including marine heatwaves, ocean acidification, and shifting species distributions. Although climate change was not explicitly incorporated into the MLPA Initiative planning process, the MPA Network was designed using resilience-oriented principles. Foundational design elements such as habitat replication, larval connectivity, and varying levels of protection were incorporated conservatively to support biodiversity, ecological function, and ecosystem resilience under uncertain and changing environmental conditions, including natural disturbances, decadal oceanographic variability, and unanticipated increases in fishing pressure.

MPAs are most effective at reducing extractive pressures, and their contribution to climate resilience depends in part on whether they measurably enhance key network attributes, such as connectivity, habitat replication, and protection of climate refugia. CDFW evaluated whether proposed changes were likely to meaningfully contribute to MPA Network performance through improvements to connectivity, habitat redundancy, or related ecological functions or provide measurable ecological benefits relative to the current performance of the MPA Network. Where existing MPAs already meet the SAT Science Guidelines established during the MLPA Initiative planning process, and proposals do not provide evidence the proposed change would demonstrably improve connectivity, redundancy, or resilience under changing environmental conditions and as specifically defined in the SAT Science Guidelines, the addition or expansion of a protected area alone is insufficient to conclude that climate resilience would be enhanced. Although there is broad evidence of increasing environmental stressors, restricting fishing alone will not address their cumulative impact. The existence of multiple stressors does not justify specific boundary modifications or new MPAs in the

absence of strong evidence that the proposal would likely result in site-specific ecological benefits.

MPAs may confer some resiliency to climate change by providing a buffer from some of these stressors, especially MPAs that limit or completely exclude fishing. Management of California's fisheries is mandated by the Marine Life Management Act, which includes objectives such as ecosystem protection, sustainability, and rebuilding populations, among others (Fish & G. Code § 7050). While the primary function of MPAs in California is to protect and enhance marine habitats and populations, understanding how effective fisheries management measures interact with a functioning MPA Network to bolster resiliency to climate change in California is still a critical knowledge gap identified in the DMR to be addressed through implementation of Recommendations 26-28 that focus on influencing factors and fisheries integration.

The absence of demonstrable ecological gains is particularly relevant where proposed changes could result in substantial socioeconomic impacts to ocean users. This underscores the importance of grounding management decisions in clear, place-based specific evidence of functional ecological improvement and considering socioeconomic impacts so that anticipated conservation benefits are considered relative to potential trade-offs in those areas.

CDFW 2023 MPA BIN 2 PETITION EVALUATION

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Question 1: Does the proposed change support the MPA Network in meeting one or more of the MLPA Goals and align with MPA Master Plan adaptive management objectives?

The MLPA Goals and Master Plan objectives are inextricably linked and act as the foundational tools that CDFW utilizes for effective adaptive management of the MPA Network. Individual MPAs in the MPA Network were not necessarily designed to address all six Goals of the MLPA but instead act as an important component of a functioning MPA Network that was designed to holistically address the MLPA Goals. As such, CDFW has evaluated the proposed actions within the broader adaptive management framework and how the proposed action may or may not align with the MLPA Goals/Master Plan objectives and advance MPA Network management.

MLPA Goals

1. Protect the natural diversity and abundance of marine life, and the structure, function and integrity of marine ecosystems.

2. Help sustain, conserve and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted.
3. Improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal human disturbance, and to manage these uses in a manner consistent with protecting biodiversity.
4. Protect marine natural heritage, including protection of representative and unique marine life habitats in CA waters for their intrinsic values.
5. Ensure California's MPAs have clearly defined objectives, effective management measures and adequate enforcement and are based in sound science guidelines.
6. Ensure the State's MPAs are designed and managed, to the extent possible, as a network.

Master Plan Adaptive Management Objectives

- Protect the structure and function of marine ecosystems
- Improve native marine life populations, including those of economic value
- Ensure minimal disturbance while allowing for sustainable opportunities for recreation, education and research
- Ensure comprehensive representation of all key habitats, including unique habitats
- Use learning acquired through administration of the MPA Management Program to adaptively manage the objectives, management measures, enforcement efforts, and scientific guidelines to inform management decisions
- MPAs function as a cohesive statewide network

Question 2a: Does the proposed change advance adaptive management recommendations in the Decadal Management Review?

California's Marine Protected Area Network Decadal Management Review
DMR Adaptive Management Recommendations

Question 5: Are there significant information gaps that need to be filled to inform the evaluation of the proposed change?

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

There are information gaps related to assessing issues around equity and access for traditionally underserved or marginalized communities within the existing MPA Network, as well as the proposed changes in the Bin 2 petitions. The DMR includes recommendations to advance work in this area that the MPA Management Program intends to work on in the near future. Also, see response for Questions 14 and below.

Economic and Fiscal Impacts

The CFGC petition form, Petition to the California Fish and Game Commission for Regulation Change, requires the petitioner to complete the section, "Economic or Fiscal Impacts: Identify any known impacts of the proposed regulation change on revenues to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, individuals, businesses, jobs, other state agencies, local agencies, schools, or housing." Responses provided in the Bin 2 Petitions often had limited data related to potential economic and fiscal impacts, particularly those related to individuals or businesses, including individuals from the sport and commercial fishing industries. This may be due to limited time provided to petitioners to prepare petitions or to the limited existence of this data. However, given the scope and timeline of this analysis, CDFW did not have the ability to provide a supplemental analysis of the economic or fiscal impacts for the 73 changes proposed across the 15 Bin 2 Petitions.

Fish and Game Code section 2853 highlights that the Marine Life Protection Program (now the MPA Management Program) must include a process for the establishment, modification, or abolishment of existing MPAs or new MPAs, that involves all interested parties, including, but not limited to, individuals from the sport and commercial fishing industries, aquaculture industries, coastal and ocean tourism and recreation industries, marine conservation organizations, local governments, marine scientists, and the public (Fish & G. Code § 7050 (b)(7)), and that facilitates the designation of MPAs consistent with the Master Plan adopted pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2855. Fish and Game Code section 2855 states that when making decisions regarding the siting of new MPAs and major modifications of existing MPAs, CDFW shall take into account relevant information including, but not limited to, the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of various alternatives.

CDFW's Bin 2 MPA Petition evaluations include preliminary assessments of socioeconomic impacts to commercial and recreational fisheries, but these assessments are not a substitute for the relevant information required by Fish and Game Code section 2855. The evaluations do not include an assessment of any socioeconomic benefits or impacts beyond impacts to commercial and recreational fisheries. Implementation of the regulatory changes proposed in the Bin 2 MPA Petitions are anticipated to have socioeconomic impacts, some of which may be significant to individuals or businesses; and additional data and information are needed to meet the level of analyses required by Fish and Game Code section 2855.

Question 9: Does the proposed change improve individual MPA or MPA Network design so that it better aligns with or meets the MPA science guidelines?

To ensure consistency across petition evaluations, CDFW developed a decision tree to evaluate if a proposed action would improve individual MPA or MPA Network design and/or improve alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines (Figure 1). The decision tree includes considerations such as whether the proposed change has the potential to affect the MPA's size or Level of Protection (LOP) and includes a framework to respond to the question. The science-based design criteria were developed by the SAT during the MLPA Initiative planning process to provide quantitative guidance for achieving network-scale ecological objectives (e.g., North Coast Study Region guidance Executive Summary from the North Coast SAT Methods Used to Evaluate MPA Proposals). While there were slight deviations between planning regions in the amount of individual habitat types necessary to meet habitat representation and replication targets, key design elements were consistent statewide. MPAs intended to contribute to ecological goals were required to be at least 9 square miles in size and meet one of the three highest LOPs (Very High, High, or Moderate-High). Importantly, the analysis focused not only on whether proposals meet SAT Science Guidelines, but on whether they would likely provide a net ecological benefit to the MPA Network in addition to meeting SAT Science Guidelines—that is, likely to have measurable improvements beyond existing conditions.

Levels of Protection

California's SAT developed the LOP framework during the MLPA Initiative planning process. California's SAT LOP framework is specifically designed to evaluate fishing-related impacts within the state's MPAs and considers the species that may be taken, the gear used, the geographic region, and the potential direct and indirect ecological effects of those activities on species and habitats. As a result, the SAT LOP framework is the most appropriate framework to use when considering proposed changes or additions to the MPA Network as it was tailor-made for evaluating and comparing California's MPAs.

The SAT LOP framework differs substantially in scope, structure, and application from the protection categories defined in Grorud-Colvert et al.'s (2021) MPA Guide[1]. Although the MPA Guide provides a valuable global framework for making standardized comparisons of MPA outcomes worldwide, it is not an appropriate framework for evaluating California's 2023 MPA Petitions. The two frameworks were developed for different purposes, applied different criteria, and the frameworks differ in scale and structure. Given the two frameworks have different scales and approaches, protection categories

[1] Grorud-Colvert *et al.* (2021). *T*he MPA Guide: A framework to achieve global goals for the ocean. *Science* **373**, eabf0861(2021). DOI:10.1126/science.abf0861; see also https://mpa-guide.protectedplanet.net/resources

that appear similar in name may represent substantially different regulatory conditions and ecological outcomes under the two systems.

The MPA Guide was designed to compare MPAs globally as MPAs around the world vary from fully protected with strong implementation measures (such as those in California's MPA Network), to MPAs on paper only or those that allow activities such as intensive fishing and/or large impact infrastructure and aquaculture. The MPA Guide uses broad activity-based classifications that consider multiple categories of human use. Fishing is treated as one of several activity categories evaluated. Others include dredging and dumping, anchoring, infrastructure, aquaculture, non-extractive activities, and mining. The MPA Guide includes protection levels based on the number and types of activities allowed, without differentiating by species, fine-scale gear type(s), or geographic context. The MPA Guide captures the global scale of allowed activities in MPAs worldwide and categorizes these into four LOPs. The approach enables comparisons across global habitats and activities, which vary greatly. In contrast, California's SAT LOP framework has six levels of protection and is specifically tailored to the fisheries, gear types, species, and habitats in the MLPA planning regions, which enable precise assessments of potential contribution to ecological goals as well as comparisons within California's MPA Network.

In addition to being more relevant to California, the SAT LOP framework applies a more precautionary approach than the MPA Guide framework. During the MLPA Initiative planning process, the SAT evaluated allowed activities under the assumption that they could occur at maximum plausible intensity over time. This reflected the expectation that MPA access would remain open to all users and that fishing pressure could increase unpredictably in the future. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, California experienced an unanticipated surge in the harvest of intertidal organisms for sale and subsistence. By comparison, under the MPA Guide LOP framework, potential future increases or sudden changes in fishing intensity, such as the example described above, are not explicitly incorporated into protection level assignments. Instead, the 2021 MPA Guide evaluates activities based on their current intensity, scale, duration, frequency, and overall present-day impact. Its framework is therefore intended to categorize MPAs according to contemporary cumulative impact levels rather than to distinguish in detail among specific fishing practices or ecological interactions. Consequently, the LOPs between the two frameworks are not comparable, and the SAT LOP framework is the most appropriate framework to use for evaluating the 2023 MPA Petitions.

Please see the CDFW Science Guide to California's MPA Network for more specific information on science evaluation of MPA proposals during the MLPA Initiative planning process, including LOPs, as well as a current assessment of how the MPA Network conforms to the SAT Science Guidelines.

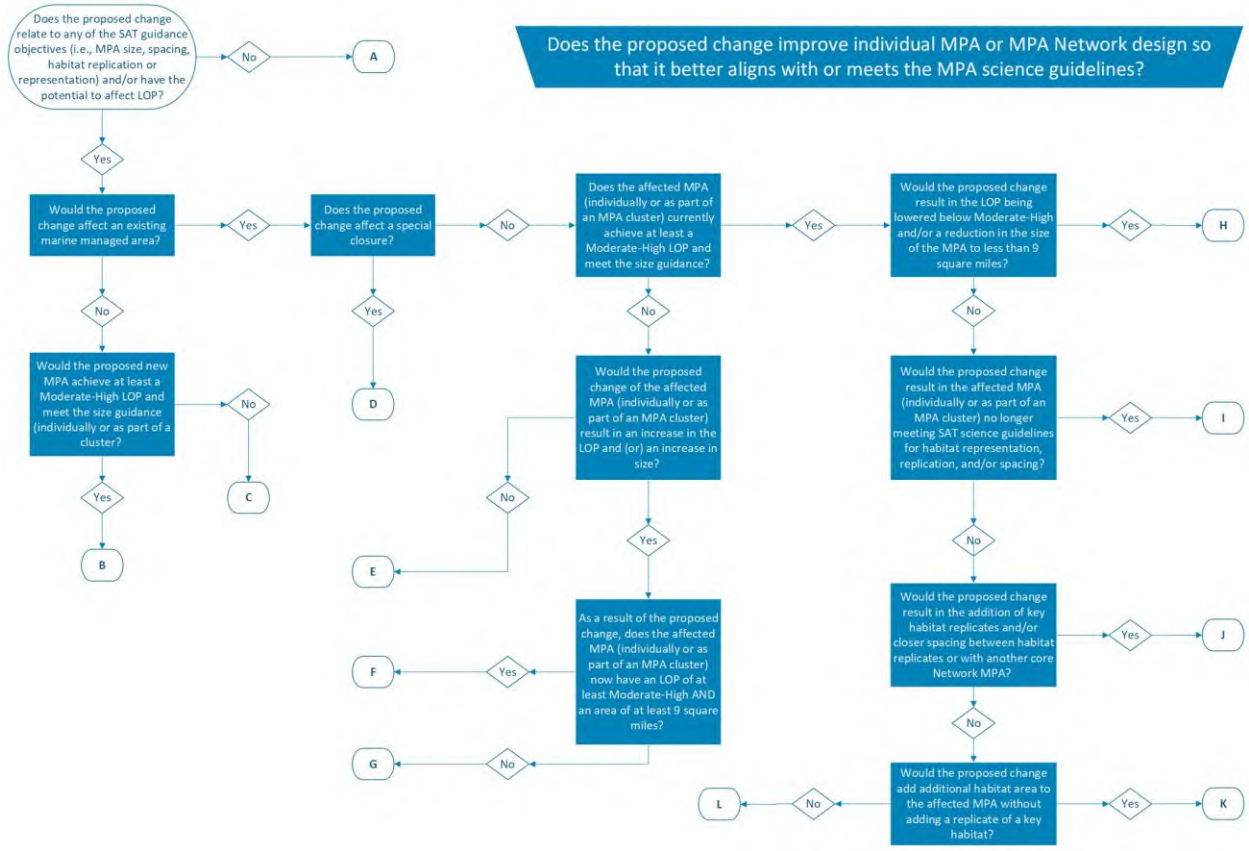


Figure 1. Decision tree framework used to formulate responses for Question 9 for each proposed action. The starting point, at the upper left corner, is based on whether the proposed change has the potential to affect the MPA's size or Level of Protection (LOP). The rest of the questions help to identify the effects such a change may have on the design of the individual MPA and the MPA Network. Based on this decision tree, the effects of a proposed action were determined to belong to one of the following groups:

A. Not applicable because the proposed action does not affect MPA size or LOP. Proposed action does not improve the design of the individual MPA or the MPA Network, nor does it enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
B. New MPA meets minimum size and LOP requirements. Proposed action would improve MPA Network design and enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
C. New MPA does not meet minimum size and/or LOP requirement. Proposed action does not improve MPA Network design, nor does it enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
D. Not applicable because the SAT Science Guidelines do not apply to special closures. Proposed action does not improve MPA Network design, nor does it enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.

E. Neither existing MPA nor as proposed meets minimum size and/or LOP requirement. Proposed action does not improve the design of the individual MPA or the MPA Network, nor does it enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
F. Existing MPA does not meet minimum size and/or LOP requirement, but would meet both as proposed. Proposed action improves the design of the individual MPA and the MPA Network, and enhances alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
G. Existing MPA does not meet minimum size and/or LOP requirement. Proposed change improves individual MPA design, but does not improve MPA Network design or enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
H. Existing MPA meets minimum size and LOP requirements, but no longer would as proposed. Proposed action does not improve the design of the individual MPA or the MPA Network, nor does it enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
I. Existing MPA meets minimum size and LOP requirements. MPA as proposed meets both criteria but no longer meets one or more SAT Science Guidelines. Proposed action does not improve the design of the individual MPA or the MPA Network, nor does it enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
J. Existing MPA meets minimum size and LOP requirements. Proposed action results in meeting additional SAT Science Guideline(s). Proposed action improves design of individual MPA and MPA Network, and enhances alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
K. Existing MPA meets minimum size and LOP requirements. Proposed action increases the amount of habitat(s) protected but additional SAT Science Guidelines are not met. Proposed action improves the design of the individual MPA but not of the MPA Network, and does not enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.
L. Both existing MPA and as proposed meet minimum size and LOP requirements. Proposed action does not improve the design of the individual MPA or the MPA Network, nor does it enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines.

Question 10a: Does the proposed change align with CDFW Feasibility Guidelines?

CDFW Feasibility Guidelines

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?

CDFW is committed to improving access to marine resources in California for traditionally underserved and marginalized communities. This question was included in

the evaluation framework because of that commitment, as well as input from partners to prioritize improvement of accessibility and recommendations from the DMR to integrate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles into MPA Network management. However, after exploration of the available information and methods that could be used to address this question for each proposed action, CDFW originally determined that providing the level of evaluation this question and the relevant communities deserve would not be possible within the scope and timeline of the petition evaluations. Most of the petitions did not include sufficient information to accurately assess benefits and/or impacts to historically marginalized and underserved communities. Additional details and outreach were needed by petitioners to support this portion of the analysis.

At the time, CDFW reviewed multiple information sources, and found there are many different approaches to defining and identifying "traditionally underserved or marginalized communities." CDFW reviewed the definition of disadvantaged communities (DACs) in Senate Bill 535, which is based on pollution burden and federally recognized tribal status (a map of DACs per this definition is available here, data used to determine community status is available through the CalEnviroScreen tool).

CDFW also considered the definition of DACs utilized by the California Department of Water Resources, where DACs are areas where median annual household income is 80% or less of the statewide median annual household income (a map of those communities is available here).

CDFW found the data and information in the California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation's Vulnerable Communities Platform to be valuable in understanding access issues related to the MPA Network. The Vulnerable Communities Platform provides information on more specific and potentially applicable metrics, such as food insecurity and linguistic isolation, which could be used to better understand access issues (e.g., subsistence fishing, language access for outreach materials, individual indicators data is available here).

In the March 2026 Companion Document, CDFW's primary findings for Question 14 were that additional information and time were needed, including completion of some DMR Recommendations, to sufficiently address the question.

Following CDFW's submission of the petition evaluations, CFGC, CDFW, and Ocean Protection Council received substantive feedback identifying two areas of concern. First, the response to Question 14 was unsatisfactory and that people, including Commissioners, wanted to see additional analysis for Questions 14 and 16. Second, people identified a broader need for more robust engagement with, and meaningful

incorporation of the perspectives of, traditionally underserved and marginalized communities throughout the process.

At the Regional 2023 MPA Petitions meeting on May 19, 2026, CFGC directed CDFW to convene experts in Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion within the agency and at partner agencies to provide additional analyses. CDFW's Deputy Director of Strategic Engagement, Equity, and Partnerships led this work in collaboration with California Natural Resources Agency, CFGC staff, and Ocean Protection Council and released a separate document with supplemental information for Question 14 and 16.

Question 16: Is the proposed change consistent with the CFGC Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy?

CFGC staff conducted this analysis and prepared the response to Question 16, which was supplemented by a July 2026 document prepared as described in the paragraph above.

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Overview

The CFGC Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (JEDI Policy) reflects CFGC's deep commitment and responsibility to support safe and equitable access to California's thriving native wildlife and natural habitats, supported by inclusive decision-making that reflects the needs and values of the state's diverse communities. The policy acknowledges the significant past injustices experienced by historically marginalized and underserved communities and seeks to correct the burdens these communities have faced in accessing nature, participating in regulatory decision-making, and the privilege often associated with outdoor access. The JEDI Policy also considers and seeks to correct the disproportionate burdens on California Native American tribes and recognizes their interwoven stewardship relationships with the environment.

The JEDI Policy identifies 13 individual commitments referred to as "actions" that guide how CFGC advances its JEDI commitments. Implementation of the policy has been an ongoing priority of CFGC since its adoption in February 2022 and CFGC staff are continuing to explore meaningful ways to meet its commitments. Inclusion of the JEDI Policy in the Framework was intended to highlight this commitment.

Evaluation of MPA Petitions

Evaluating MPA petitions for their consistency with CFGC's JEDI Policy marked the first time CFGC staff attempted to systematically apply the policy's principles to inform CFGC decision-making. Through the process of evaluating MPA petitions against the JEDI Policy, CFGC staff found it was unable to make determinations about whether, or to

what extent, any specific petition advances or conflicts with the JEDI Policy. The findings are described in detail here, along with next steps to resolve these limitations moving forward.

CFGC staff reviewed the pending MPA petitions to identify conceptual intersections with JEDI principles. Of the 13 commitments in the policy, 7 are not relevant to the evaluation because they focus on internal operations, partnerships, and governance processes. The remaining six are directly applicable to the MPA petitions:

- Considering and correcting for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities,
- Improving responsiveness to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users,
- Amplifying tribal voices and issues,
- Considering the implications of decisions on subsistence activities,
- Improving and championing safe and equitable access to abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations, and
- Promoting cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife that CFGC regulates.

In seeking to apply the six applicable commitments, staff identified several knowledge gaps that limited its ability to provide consistent or objective petition-level JEDI determinations. Ultimately, CFGC staff concluded that there is insufficient information available to meaningfully assess potential JEDI-related implications of petitions in a manner that reflects the intent of the policy.

Key concepts such as subsistence activities, equitable access to abundant fish and wildlife populations, and cultural, community and economic opportunities do not have CFGC-adopted definitions, metrics, or measurable criteria. Without clearly articulated definitions, datasets, or rubrics, petition-specific JEDI assessments would be inherently speculative. Staff have, however, gained a clearer understanding of these gaps, which will be important to address in future policy implementation.

Tribally-Led Petitions

One area that CFGC has already recognized is the distinct role of petitions that amplify tribal voices, which is reflected in how CFGC has grouped these petitions for discussion. Five petitions were submitted either by a tribe or with tribal participation as co-sponsors for petitions submitted by non-tribal proponents. CFGC has grouped these as “Tribally-led,” which includes tribally co-sponsored petitions. Some of these petitions advance tribally identified MPA names and, in some cases, include recommendations related to pursuing co-management or co-stewardship. Collectively, they reflect the

interests of federally recognized tribes as well as non-federally recognized tribal communities with enduring relationships to California's coast. Many of these proposals have the potential to foster long-term partnerships or shared leadership with California Native American tribes, which are considered marginalized and/or underserved communities, supporting the broader intent of CFGC's JEDI Policy.

Petitioner Intent

CFGC staff acknowledges that several petitions explicitly reference, within their petition rationale(s), goals related to equitable access, subsistence activities, long-term abundance of fish and wildlife, or other JEDI-related intentions. While the stated intentions are important context, the previously described evaluation limitations prevented staff from assessing the degree to which these intentions may achieve the goals. CFGC staff acknowledges that changes to harvest or non-consumptive access may relate to subsistence or equity considerations, but cannot reliably characterize the nature or extent of those relationships without risking over-generalization or speculation.

Current and Future Focus

In the absence of the tools needed for petition-level JEDI analysis, and because many JEDI commitments were intended primarily to guide CFGC processes, CFGC staff began to focus on the overall petition process, including the planning for the regional MPA petition meetings. CFGC staff efforts have included: consulting with partners to inform development of approaches to support safe and inclusive participation, selecting meeting locations near affected communities to reduce travel barriers, elevating tribal voices, increasing transparency about meeting format and expectations, and exploring additional ways to provide accessible engagement opportunities. The regional meetings an opportunity for CFGC to engage with local communities regarding MPA petitions. Proposals that reflect community knowledge, lived experience, and local needs align more closely with the inclusive decision-making envisioned by the JEDI Policy. Public comments emphasizing the level of community engagement, or lack thereof, were not considered when conducting the petition evaluations.

Evaluation of the MPA petitions has highlighted critical next steps needed to strengthen CFGC's ability to apply the JEDI Policy in future evaluations. Consistent with the intent of Recommendation 8 in CDFW's Marine Protected Area Network Decadal Management Review — a mid-term priority focused on evaluating the accessibility of MPAs to various community groups — staff recognizes that broader collaborative efforts with various partners will be needed to establish the foundational elements for integrating JEDI considerations across the MPA Network. Advancing this work will support both the

CFGC's JEDI Policy goals and more meaningful future evaluations, beyond what is possible within the limited scope of this petition process.

Links

JEDI Policy: California Fish and Game Commission Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, approved February 16, 2022

JEDI Policy Definitions: California Fish and Game Commission JEDI Definitions

Question 17: Is the proposed change consistent with the CFGC Coastal Fishing Communities Policy?

CFGC staff conducted this analysis and prepared the responses to Question 17 for the proposed actions in the evaluations. CFGC staff provided this additional context for their evaluations of Question 17.

Coastal Fishing Communities Policy Overview

The CFGC Coastal Fishing Communities (CFC) Policy guides CFGC, in partnership with CDFW, in supporting the long-term needs, social well-being, and economic health of California's coastal fishing communities while upholding the conservation and management goals central to both agencies' missions and mandates. The CFC Policy defines coastal fishing communities broadly as: (a) social, cultural, economic, and/or place-based groups whose members are dependent upon, engaged in, or benefit from local, wild-capture, commercial, recreational, or subsistence marine harvest or processing to meet the social and economic needs of the community, (b) include, but are not limited to, the businesses and organizations that depend upon or support those activities, and (c) may be a subset or member of larger or associated coastal communities. Adopted in February 2024, the CFC Policy formalizes a vision for how CFGC engages with fishing communities, incorporates their needs into decision-making, and contributes to their resilience.

Evaluation of MPA Petitions

Evaluating MPA petitions for their consistency with CFGC's CFC Policy marked the first time CFGC staff have attempted to apply the policy's principles to inform CFGC decision-making. Through the process of evaluating MPA petitions against the policy, CFGC staff found they were unable to make determinations about whether, or to what extent, any specific petition advances or conflicts with the goals of the CFC Policy. The findings are described in detail here, along with next steps to resolve these limitations moving forward.

The goal of Question 17 is to identify where petitioned actions may conceptually intersect with the CFC Policy—not to evaluate biological outcomes addressed elsewhere in the petition evaluation framework or provide a full socioeconomic analysis.

As CFGC staff applied the CFC Policy to each petition and its proposed actions, it became clear that only limited information is currently available to assess potential implications for coastal fishing communities. The policy encompasses broad aims, such as maintaining or enhancing fishing opportunities, supporting community resilience and adaptive capacity, and ensuring coastal fishing community interests are meaningfully factored into CFGC decision-making.

However, CFGC does not yet have detailed economic, demographic, or cultural data to determine how proposed regulatory changes may affect specific coastal fishing communities. Existing statewide information—primarily the Ocean Sport Fishing web application and community profiles from FishingCommunities.net, last updated in 2023 using 2021 data—provides useful general context on ports, landings, and community characteristics. CFGC staff expertise and experience also contributed to the understanding of impacts of petitioned actions on nearby coastal fishing communities. These sources of information do not provide the level of resolution necessary to draw conclusions about individual community dependence, vulnerability, or long-term resilience.

Given the limitations, CFGC staff focused the evaluation on three elements that could be consistently and objectively applied across all petitions:

- Describes the nature of the proposed regulatory change,
- Identifies whether a petition action would increase, decrease, or have no direct effect on commercial or recreational fishing opportunity within or near the affected MPA, and
- Identifies the coastal fishing communities most geographically-proximate to the affected area, by identifying the nearest ports or harbors and travel distance between them, although these do not necessarily reflect smaller coastal fishing communities that may be affected.

Some petition actions were given “not applicable” responses, reflecting that those actions are not subject to evaluation as they are either not regulatory change requests or they are proposals outside of the regulatory framework for MPA management.

Some petitions propose increasing fishing opportunities, which could conceptually support short- or long-term community resilience within the context of California’s existing fishing regulations and the broader fisheries management goals, and other petitions propose strengthening or expanding MPAs, which may confer long-term

ecological benefits that indirectly support fishing communities. However, CFGC staff cannot evaluate the proposed changes on biological, stock-related, or long-term effects relative to supporting fishing opportunities under this question.

A full understanding of potential benefits or impacts to coastal fishing communities requires meaningful input from the community members themselves—commercial, recreational, and subsistence harvesters, as well as the businesses and organizations that support local fishing economies. CFGC staff view this evaluation as an initial step based on the information currently available, and not as a comprehensive assessment of the lived experience, priorities, or needs of individual communities. Public comments that provide such feedback have not been directly considered in the evaluation. While CFGC has received a wealth of public comments to inform its understanding of the range of views thus far, CFGC's upcoming regional MPA petition review meetings will provide an important opportunity for commenters to further supplement CFGC staff's analysis with direct feedback from those most connected to the affected areas. Continued dialogue with coastal fishing communities will help strengthen the foundation for applying the CFC Policy in future decision-making and improve CFGC's ability to better understand and support the adaptive capacity and long-term resilience of California's fishing communities over time.

Possible next steps in policy implementation and pathways to begin filling data gaps are anticipated for discussion at a future CFGC Marine Resources Committee meeting. This discussion ideally would lead to developing options and needs to enable integrating consideration of the CFC Policy into CFGC's decision-making.

Links

CFC Policy: California Fish and Game Commission Coastal Fishing Communities Policy, adopted February 14, 2024 (also included on the following page)

Current Regulations Map: Ocean Sport Fishing Web App

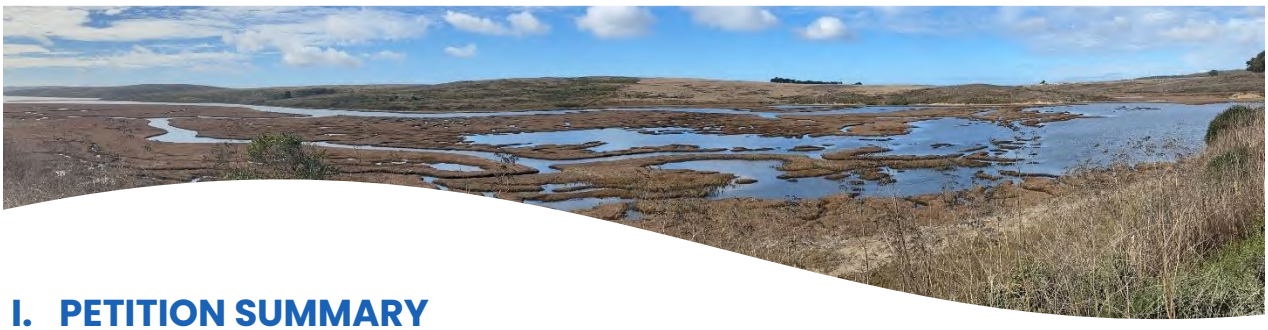
Partner website, California Fishing Communities, providing profiles of the history, economics, and culture of California's fishing communities (last updated in 2023 with 2021 data): FishingCommunities.net

SUMMARY OF OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

After completing the evaluations, none of the petition evaluations had information to include in this section beyond what was provided in the other five sections of the evaluation. Consequently, this section was removed from the evaluations.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Evaluation of 2023 Decadal Management Review Marine Protected Area Petition:

Designate a New SMCA Near Point Sal with an Allowance for Recreational Take of Finfish by Hook-and-Line From Shore (2023-28MPA_AM2)



I. PETITION SUMMARY

CFGC Tracking Number	2023-28MPA_AM2
Petition Contact/Affiliation	Lisa Suatoni, Natural Resources Defense Council; co-sponsored by Northern Chumash Tribal Council
Number of Proposed Actions	1
Affected MPAs	Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA; proposed new MPA)
Petition Summary	Designate a new SMCA that is just over 9 sq mi around Point Sal in central California with allowance for recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore; consult with tribes to identify a traditional tribal name for the new MPA; include language to allow for take incidental to mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base, discretionally restrict public entry, and require CDFW to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commander of Vandenberg Space Force Base for the mutually beneficial management and administration of the Point Sal SMCA; and then work to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement among CDFW, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC), and other interested tribes.
Link to StoryMap page	2023-28MPA_AM2

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE

CALIFORNIA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

July 2026

II. CDFW RECOMMENDATIONS AND BRIEF JUSTIFICATION

Note: If a change to the Marine Protected Area (MPA) regulations is not needed to address the proposed change, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) did not evaluate the proposed change using the framework. However, CDFW may recommend an alternative pathway to achieving the desired outcome of the proposed change.

Petition Action ID and Proposed Action	Petitioner's Stated Rationale and Brief Justification for Proposed Actions
2023-28MPA_AM2 Designate a new SMCA that is just over 9 sq. mi. around Point Sal in central California with allowance for recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore; consult with tribes to identify a traditional tribal name for the new MPA; include language to allow for take incidental to mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB), discretionally restrict public entry, and require CDFW to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commander of VSFB for the mutually beneficial management and administration of the Point Sal SMCA; and then work to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement among CDFW, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC), and other interested tribes.	The petitioner states that the goals of the proposed change are to, "(1) advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, (2) protect this rich and productive ecosystem and the biodiversity found within, (3) to protect this larval retention zone and the connectivity dynamics within the region, and (4) to enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network." The petitioners included regulatory language regarding VSFB following conversations with officials at VSFB to accommodate base activities.

CDFW Recommendation and Brief Justification

Support with an Alternative Pathway the non-regulatory request to advance co-management.

At the April 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting, the tribe confirmed the intent is to pursue co-management with CDFW through non-regulatory means. CDFW may enter into tribal co-management agreements with tribes at any time and these do not require action from CFGC or consideration through CFGC's petition process or rulemaking.

The non-regulatory request to advance co-management is aligned with the state's commitments to strengthening and sustaining effective government to government relationships between the state and tribes (Governor Brown's Executive Order B-10-11, Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-15-19, the 2020 Ancestral Lands Policy, and the California Natural Resources Agency Tribal Stewardship Policy) and would advance the following DMR Recommendations: (1) Improve state agencies' tribal engagement and relationship building efforts, (2) Create a clear pathway to tribal MPA management, and (24) Work with CFGC and partners to better incorporate marine cultural heritage into the design of the MPA Network, which may lead to advancements in (3) Building tribal capacity to participate in MPA management activities (CDFW 2022).

Recognizing the deep cultural and historical ties of California Native American tribes to their ancestral lands and waters, and consistent with these priority recommendations from the DMR, CDFW is committed to exploring opportunities for co-management and co-stewardship of California's MPAs as well as within areas outside MPA boundaries with NCTC and other interested tribes. These opportunities may be initiated and developed through non-regulatory frameworks and agreements outside of the CFGC petition process and could likely occur on a faster timeline than through the adoption of new MPAs through the CFGC's regulatory process.

Regarding the regulatory request in 2023-28MPA_AM2 to establish a new SMCA around Point Sal that allows recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore:

CDFW was tasked with evaluating the 2023 Bin 2 MPA petitions using guidance from the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), Master Plan, DMR recommendations, and the approved evaluation framework. CDFW thoroughly evaluated this petition within the framework adopted by CFGC and presents the available information here. An MPA was considered at Point Sal during the MLPA Planning Process but was not selected, in part due to socioeconomic considerations. As proposed, the Point Sal MPA would not enhance MPA Network design beyond what the current MPA Network offers because of the Moderate-low Level of Protection (LOP). However, there are alternative designations that can be

used to recognize the cultural significance of the location or that would offer greater ecological protections than the proposed SMCA, consistent with Science Advisory Team (SAT) Science Guidelines established during the MLPA Initiative planning process (i.e., SMR, Special Closure). The various designations (i.e., SMCA as proposed, SMCPA, MPA with at least a Moderate-high LOP, and Special Closure) meet different objectives and there are tradeoffs among the alternatives that CFGC will need to consider (e.g., robust ecological protections would limit tribal take and recreational and commercial fishing) (See Table 1). Below are CDFW's findings after applying the approved Evaluation Framework, followed by Table 1 with considerations for the proposed new Point Sal SMCA compared to alternatives that would better meet the petitioner's stated objectives in a manner that is consistent with the SAT Science Guidelines and CDFW Feasibility Guidelines (CDFW 2010), concluding with a list of potential CFGC actions related to this petition.

CDFW recommends CFGC consider the following:

The proposed SMCA currently includes an allowance for recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore, which is an activity with an assigned Moderate-low LOP. As proposed, the SMCA would offer minimal additional protections relative to the ecological goals described in the petition. Section II of CDFW Feasibility Guidelines (MLPA Goals, Regional Objectives and Site Specific Rationale; CDFW 2010) state that the proposed goals and regional objectives should be consistent with SAT Scientific Guidelines and that the objectives identified for each MPA should be consistent with the design and the allowed take. The MLPA Goals and site-specific objectives identified in the petition for the proposed SMCA are not aligned with the proposed take regulations (e.g., ecological Goals 1 and 2 cannot be attributed to an MPA with an assigned LOP below Moderate-high). The proposed MPA would need to be redesigned to meet the stated goals in the petition and ensure alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines and CDFW Feasibility Guidelines (CDFW 2010). A State Marine Reserve (SMR) with a Very High LOP or a highly protected SMCA (at least a Moderate-high LOP) would align with Goals 1 and 2 by offering stronger protection and would serve as a backbone MPA and add three habitat replicates (i.e., rocky intertidal, beach, and nearshore soft substrate habitat). However, these habitats are currently well replicated in this region of the MPA Network (Table 2), so the extent to which an additional highly protected MPA would enhance local protection or regional connectivity would warrant additional site-specific ecological monitoring data. A reevaluation of MPA Network-wide connectivity using up-to-date average ocean circulation is intended for inclusion in the next DMR to support future assessments of regional connectivity and MPA Network performance, but this is currently a data gap.

The proposed new SMCA at Point Sal would limit NCTC's and other tribes' ability to continue subsistence practices and cultural harvest other than hook-and-line fishing for

finfish from shore. As proposed, the SMCA would prohibit shore-based recreational take of other species (e.g., seaweed and invertebrates such as crab and mussels), as well as offshore/boat fishing. Modifying the proposed SMCA design to provide additional take allowances for NCTC and other non-federally recognized tribes would further diverge from the MPA's ability to meet the ecological goals stated in the petition (MLPA Goals 1 and 2). In contrast, designing the MPA to meet ecological objectives would require an SMCA design with at least a Moderate-high LOP or an SMR with a Very High LOP. Both of these designations would further limit tribal take, including take associated with any cultural or subsistence practices, unless a federally-recognized tribe seeks, and CFGC approves, a tribal take exemption within a SMCA. Current legislative and regulatory frameworks provide pathways for tribal take exemptions for federally recognized tribes (25 C.F.R. § 83, Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14 § 632, subd. (a)(11)). No such pathway exists for non-federally recognized tribes. It is unclear how the proposed change may affect other tribal management and monitoring activities.

The proposed new SMCA at Point Sal was considered in context of potential benefits to the existing MPA Network. The proposed new MPA at Point Sal would be in an area of coastline that is not currently deficient in meeting SAT Science Guidelines for habitat replication or protection. The closest backbone MPAs containing key habitats that would be replicated in the proposed Point Sal SMCA are Vandenberg SMR 10.4 miles south and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA cluster 19.4 miles north of the proposed Point Sal SMCA. These backbone MPAs are spaced 32.5 miles apart, which is within the recommended spacing interval of 31-62 miles. Additionally, although the proposed MPA exceeds the size threshold of 9 square miles, it does not meet the LOP criterion of Moderate-high or above required by the SAT Science Guidelines. The MPA as proposed would not serve as a backbone MPA and thus would not enhance MPA Network design as defined against Science Guidelines. Additional data are needed to determine if an MPA at this location with a High or Very High LOP would produce meaningful ecological benefits beyond what is achieved by the existing science-based design.

CDFW considered this proposed change in context of the other proposed actions in the 14 other 2023 Bin 2 MPA Petitions. While some adjacent proposals preserve regional protections, the petitions for the Vandenberg SMR propose decreased protections. The petitions for Vandenberg SMR propose adding an allowance for shore-based hook-and-line fishing, which would lower its LOP such that it would lose its status as a backbone MPA. In contrast, to the north, the proposal for Point Buchon SMR preserves its backbone status and the new Chitqawi SMCA introduces new protections but not a new backbone MPA as currently proposed because it is not at least 9 sq. mi.; to the south, the proposal for Point Conception SMR expands its boundaries. CFGC may need to consider the sequencing of their decision-making for the petitions in this region, particularly for this petition where there may be interplay with decisions for other petitions.

A Special Closure designation would be the most appropriate mechanism to address the concerns raised in the petition regarding birds and pinniped populations utilizing the area around Lion Rock at Point Sal. California MPA designations are not effective tools when the primary objective is to protect these species from human disturbance because MPAs do not limit access to the areas like Special Closures do. The CDFW Feasibility Guidelines state, a "Special Closures should only be proposed if other state and federal regulations are inadequate to provide protections to marine species. Proposed Special Closures should include information on the rationale behind the proposal, species involved, and specific information on why other existing state and federal protections (including the establishment of an MPA) are not adequate." (CDFW 2010) Although this designation is the most appropriate designation to offer additional protections for birds and/or pinnipeds, CDFW does not have site-specific data documenting that other state and federal protections are not adequate to protect birds and pinnipeds in this area.

The area also provides many opportunities for human connection with the ocean through non-consumptive activities such as swimming, surfing, beach combing, and wildlife viewing. Establishing an SMR or SMCA would not limit recreational access, but a special closure would. Understanding how people interact with and derive benefits from the ocean and how these benefits may be affected by MPAs is challenging (Hall-Arber et al. 2021, CDFW 2022, Travis et al. 2026). Social science research within the MPA Monitoring Program is a rapidly expanding field of MPA research, as well as a priority DMR Recommendation to invest in improving understanding of the human dimensions of MPAs and develop a human dimensions working group and research agenda (DMR Recommendation 12).

The request to add the proposed language regarding VSFB is not needed in Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, section 632 because: (1) Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, section 632, subd. (a) already includes provisions to accommodate "uses of the waters identified as marine protected areas, special closures, or the lands or waters adjacent to these designated areas by the Department of Defense, its allies or agents," including VSFB; (2) CDFW and VSFB have existing authorities to periodically restrict access to areas, so the language would be redundant; and (3) The directive for CDFW and VSFB to develop an MOU is non-regulatory and CDFW could work with VSFB to amend the existing MOU with VSFB that covers Vandenberg SMR if another MPA is established adjacent to the base.

The proposed Point Sal SMCA has the potential to adversely impact the commercial nearshore groundfish fishery, Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) fleet, and private boat anglers operating out of Morro Bay area ports. Spatial trends in average catch per angler between 2016 and 2024 from the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) indicate the area is heavily used by private boat anglers. Although a summary of potential socioeconomic impacts to fisheries is provided in Question 15, a

thorough analysis of socioeconomic and fiscal impacts was outside the scope of this petition process. CFGC staff may need to conduct additional local outreach to tribes and all interested parties, including, but not limited to, individuals from the sport and commercial fishing industries, aquaculture industries, coastal and ocean tourism and recreation industries, marine conservation organizations, local governments, marine scientists, and the public.

An MPA in this area was considered during the MLPA Initiative planning process and intentionally not adopted, in part due to socioeconomic considerations. These socioeconomic concerns are likely still relevant today, but a detailed socioeconomic analysis has not been conducted. Beyond the unknown socioeconomic and fiscal impacts, there are additional gaps in information, including data demonstrating the need for a place-based MPA (e.g., significance of the larval retention zone) or Special Closure.

Table 1. A comparison of the proposed new Point Sal MPA that would allow recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore (2023-28_AM2 Point Sal SMCA), and Potential Alternative designations/designs, including a Point Sal State Marine Cultural Preservation Area, a Point Sal SMR or an SMCA at least 9 sq. mi with at least a Moderate-high LOP, and a Special Closure around Lion Rock for birds and pinnipeds.

Considerations	2023-28MPA_AM2	Potential Alternatives		
	Proposed Point Sal SMCA	Point Sal SMCPA	Point Sal SMR/Mod-High LOP SMCA	Lion Rock Special Closure
Acknowledges the cultural importance of the area to NCTC	No	Yes[1]	No	No
Allows take by California Native American tribes, including take associated with any cultural or subsistence practices	Limited take[2]	Yes	No/ Limited Take[3]	No
Has the potential to preserve marine cultural heritage by prohibiting take of cultural marine resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Would enhance MPA Network connectivity	No	No	Unknown[4]	No
Meets SAT Science Guidelines for a backbone MPA	No	No	Yes[5]	No

[1] An SMCPA designation is a pathway to acknowledge the cultural importance of the area to NCTC but could also to acknowledge the cultural importance of the area to other California Native American tribes pending consultation.

[2] California Native American tribes would be limited to harvesting finfish by hook-and-line from shore

[3] The SMR would prohibit tribal take, including take associated with any cultural or subsistence practices, unless a federally-recognized tribe seeks, and CFGC approves, a tribal take exemption. An SMCA with a Moderate-high LOP would have limited take.

[4] A reevaluation of MPA Network-wide connectivity using up-to-date average ocean circulation is intended for inclusion in the next DMR to support future assessments of regional connectivity and MPA Network performance

[5] As a backbone MPA (>9 sq. mi. and at least Moderate-high LOP), the MPA would add 3 habitat replicates (Table 2), but these habitats are already well represented in this region.

Considerations	2023-28MPA_AM2	Potential Alternatives		
	Proposed Point Sal SMCA	Point Sal SMCPA	Point Sal SMR/Mod-High LOP SMCA	Lion Rock Special Closure
Meets CDFW Feasibility Guideline: MLPA Goals, Regional Objectives and Site-Specific Rationale	No[6]	NA	Yes	Yes
(a) Addresses a place-based ecological objective, and (b) There is site-specific data that supports an ecological need for establishing an MPA or Special Closure	No No	No NA	Yes No	Yes No
Direct benefits to birds or pinnipeds	No	No	No	Yes
Allows recreational fishing	Yes[7]	Yes[7]	No	No[8]
Allows commercial fishing	No	Yes	No	No
Allows recreational access (e.g., kayaking, motorized boats)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Anticipated socioeconomic impacts	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

[6] To ensure alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines and Feasibility Guidelines (CDFW 2010) and meet the stated goals 1 and 2 in the petition, the MPA would need to be redesigned as a State Marine Reserve (SMR) with a Very High LOP or a highly protected SMCA (at least a Moderate-high LOP).

[7] Recreational fishing could continue as is if an SMCPA were designated. The SMCA would allow recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore. All other shore-based take (e.g., geological, seaweed, and invertebrates such as crabs and mussels) and boat-based take would be prohibited.

[8] Recreational and commercial fishing and recreational access would be prohibited in the area within 300 or 1000 feet around Lion Rock, not the 9.27 sq mi area.

Given the considerations above and in the evaluation, CFGC could consider the following options:

1. **Support with Alternative Pathway**: Request CDFW engage with the NCTC, other interested tribes, and California State Parks to explore designating the area as a **State Marine Cultural Preservation Area** to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area, rather than establishing a new MPA.
2. **Grant with Alternative Pathway, Point Sal SMR or a SMCA with at least Moderate-high LOP:** Establish a new MPA at Point Sal and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2.
3. **Grant with Alternative Pathway, Special Closure Lion Rock:** Establish a new Special Closure around Lion Rock for birds and pinnipeds. This alternative could be considered on its own or as an add-on to Options (1), (2), and (4).
4. **Grant in Concept Point Sal SMCA:** Establish a new SMCA at Point Sal as proposed in 2023-28MPA_AM2 that allows recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore (Moderate-low LOP) and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2.
5. **Deny**: do not establish a new SMCA (or SMR or Special Closure) at Point Sal.

Finally, the petition included a request to "rename the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area with a Chumash place name after further consultation with other Chumash Tribes in the region." If CFGC grants a newly designated area, CDFW recommends CFGC work with NCTC and other tribes as appropriate to identify a name that aligns with CFGC's Naming Protected Area Policy, which states, "When identifying the name for, or an opportunity to rename, a protected area, the Commission and Department will invite tribes with ancestral ties to that area to engage in meaningful information-sharing about the cultural significance of the area, and to identify traditional or contemporary tribal names for the area. In selecting a name, the Commission will give significant weight to tribally-identified names, with particular emphasis on restoring tribal place names. In its selection, the Commission may consider combining the tribal place name with a currently used name that is understandable and locatable, as appropriate, to ensure accessibility and identification by the broader public while restoring tribal heritage recognition."

III. BIN 2 PETITION GROUPING: IDENTIFY TRIBALLY-LED PETITIONS

The 2023 MPA Petition Companion Document (Attachment 1) includes a summary of the process for identifying Tribally-led petitions, CDFW's outreach to all California Native American tribes[9] (tribes) throughout the petition process, and a summary of outreach and engagement with Tribally-led petitioners. Tribally-led petitions were evaluated with the CDFW 2023 MPA Bin 2 Petition Evaluation Framework.

WAS THE PETITION SUBMITTED BY A CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBE, REPRESENTATIVE DESIGNATED BY A TRIBE OR TRIBAL ORGANIZATION, OR HAVE A TRIBAL CO-SPONSOR?

Yes, this petition was submitted by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and co-sponsored by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (hereafter referred to as NCTC when referring to the tribe or as petitioners when referring to NCTC and NRDC).

IF YES, (a) DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE EXPLICITLY AIM TO ADVANCE TRIBAL CO-MANAGEMENT, SUBSISTENCE HARVESTING, STEWARDSHIP, AND/OR PROVIDE A TRIBAL BENEFIT THROUGH RECOGNIZING THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AN AREA?

Yes, the petition aims to provide a tribal benefit by recognizing the cultural significance of the area and advance tribal co-management and marine stewardship through the development of an agreement among CDFW, NCTC, and other interested tribes. The petitioners state that:

> *"Point Sal also holds cultural significance for the Chumash people, with evidence of their occupation as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago; Chumash artifacts are visible throughout Point Sal, and analyses of burial sites from the area demonstrate the rich cultural ties to the traditional stewards of this land. Furthermore, Point Sal is still of importance to the Chumash people who visit and use the area today. Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity, sense of place, and cultural and subsistence practices for many of the Indigenous people of Central California today. Cosponsored by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the Point Sal SMCA seeks to advance Tribal co-stewardship and management of a California MPA."*

[9] California Native American tribe is the preferred term to use per the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs when generally mentioning tribes of California, both federally and non-federally recognized.

(b) IS THE PROPOSED REGULATORY CHANGE EXPLICITLY LINKED TO A TRIBE OR TRIBES (I.E., TRIBAL EXEMPTION, TRIBAL TAKE ONLY MPA, OR NEW MPA FOR CO-MANAGEMENT)?

Yes, the petitioners propose a regulatory change to create a new SMCA at Point Sal and consult with tribes to identify a traditional tribal name for the new MPA to, "advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council." The petition includes a non-regulatory request to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement among CDFW, NCTC, and other interested tribes.

IV. PETITION EVALUATION

EVALUATION NARRATIVE AND OVERVIEW FOR 2023-28MPA_AM2

The petition proposes to: establish a new SMCA that is 9.27[10] sq miles around Point Sal in the Central Coast region that would prohibit all take except for the recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore; consult with tribes to identify a traditional tribal name for the new MPA; and include language to allow for take incidental to mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) which is 10.4 miles south of the proposed MPA, discretionally restrict public entry, and require CDFW to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commander of VSFB for the mutually beneficial management and administration of the Point Sal SMCA. The petition also includes a recommendation, "that the state consult with local Indigenous communities and Tribes to explore co-management options for the Point Sal SMCA before designation" and to work to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement among CDFW, NCTC, and other interested tribes.

The new SMCA is intended to:

> "(1) advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council,
>
> (2) protect this rich and productive ecosystem and biodiversity found within,
>
> (3) protect an important larval retention zone and enhance the connectivity dynamics within the region, and
>
> (4) enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network."

[10] The petition, 2023-28MPA_AM2, states that the proposed new Point Sal SMCA would be 9.18 sq. mi. Using the coordinates provided in the petition along with CDFW standard jurisdictional layers in ArcGIS, CDFW determined the area of the proposed new SMCA to be 9.27 sq. mi. The discrepancy is likely the result of using different layers for delineating the shoreline.

The petition originally proposed to establish a State Marine Reserve (SMR). The petition was amended March 14, 2025, to add an allowance for recreational take of finfish from shore using hook-and-line, with a corresponding change to the proposed designation from SMR to SMCA (2023-28MPA_AM1). In November 2025, the petitioners submitted a letter to CFGC indicating NCTC was formally cosponsoring the petition and requested amendments to the petition to change the boundary and add language regarding VSFB. The CFGC Tribal Committee and CFGC accepted the petition as a Tribally-led petition at the December 2025 meeting; however, the additional amendments were not accepted or referred to CDFW at that time.

At the April 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting, the petitioners requested CFGC reconsider the November 2025 amendments to add language related to VSFB (see VSFB section below) and move the southern boundary approximately one mile north to "avoid conflicts with existing mission-critical operations of [VSFB]." CFGC accepted and referred the November 2025 amendments to CDFW for evaluation in April 2026 (2023-28MPA_AM2). This is an evaluation of the petition as amended in April 2026, including:

- The non-regulatory request to develop a Tribal co-management agreement with NCTC and other tribes, and
- The regulatory request to establish a new 9.27 sq. mi. SMCA at Point Sal that allows for the recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore with the following boundaries:
  - 34.895212665° N lat. 120.731972573° W long. (southwest corner)
  - 34.929894739° N lat. 120.727488272° W long. (northwest corner)
  - 34.930008197° N lat. 120.666597401° W long. (northeast corner)
  - 34.895212665° N lat. 120.642637239° W long. (southeast corner)

Tribal Co-management and Cultural Considerations

The petition highlights the cultural significance of the Point Sal area and its importance to the tribal communities who have stewarded the area since time immemorial. Evidence of this presence throughout history is so abundant that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages a 77-acre landside portion of this area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern to protect these important cultural resources. CDFW recognizes and respects NCTC's longstanding connections with the area. Consistent with DMR priority recommendations for improving tribal coordination and strengthening tribal engagement in MPA governance, CDFW is committed to advancing collaborative stewardship and co-management opportunities with NCTC and other interested tribes in California.

Successful co-management efforts typically share several components, such as clearly defined governance structures, shared management objectives, long-term trust building, and the integration of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems (Armitage et al. 2009, Berkes 2009, Ban et al. 2018, Warrior et al. 2022). In practice, this involves shared responsibility for management activities, such as monitoring, enforcement, and outreach, established through agreements developed collaboratively with tribes on a direct government-to-government basis (Berkes 2009, Ban et al. 2018, Artelle et al. 2019, Murray 2023).

Consistent with this broader understanding, CFGC defines co-management as a collaborative effort established through an agreement in which two or more sovereigns mutually negotiate, define, and allocate amongst themselves the sharing of management functions and responsibilities for a given territory, area, or set of natural resources. Importantly, these frameworks do not necessarily require regulatory or legislative changes; depending on the nature of the activities, they may be established through informal partnerships or non-regulatory formal agreements (e.g., MOU).

Co-sponsorship of the petition by NCTC was formally accepted by CFGC in December 2025. As stated in the petition, "[as] part of NCTC's ongoing leadership in Chumash stewardship of California's marine resources, we are committed to garnering strong protections for the sacred and culturally important waters of Point Sal." The petitioners also "request that upon designation of this SMCA, CDFW work to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement with NCTC and other interested [t]ribes." The petition identifies several desired outcomes of co-stewardship, including incorporation of indigenous knowledge into MPA management, meaningful tribal participation in stewardship activities, support for tribal engagement, and facilitation of cultural access and activities within the MPA.

CDFW shares the petitioners' goals of advancing tribal stewardship and co-management and is committed to continuing to work with tribes towards collaborative, government-to-government co-management agreements. As this is a non-regulatory request, CDFW may pursue these agreements with tribes independently of the CFGC petition process, which has the benefit of greater flexibility that provides enhanced opportunities for tribal engagement, partnership-building, and integration of traditional ecological knowledge into durable co-management structures, likely on timelines faster than could be achieved through the CFGC's regulatory program. The non-regulatory request to advance co-management is aligned with the state's commitments to strengthening and sustaining effective government to government relationships between the state and tribes (Governor Brown's Executive Order B-10-11, Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-15-19, the 2020 Ancestral Lands Policy, and the California Natural Resources Agency Tribal Stewardship Policy) and would advance the following

DMR Recommendations: (1) Improve state agencies' tribal engagement and relationship building efforts, (2) Create a clear pathway to tribal MPA management, and (24) Work with CFGC and partners to better incorporate marine cultural heritage into the design of the MPA Network, which may lead to advancements in (3) Building tribal capacity to participate in MPA management activities (CDFW 2022). These opportunities may be initiated and developed through non-regulatory frameworks and agreements outside of the CFGC petition process and could likely occur on a faster timeline than adoption of new MPAs through CFGC's regulatory process.

State Marine Cultural Preservation Areas

The petition highlights the historical and cultural importance of the Point Sal area, stating that, "Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity and sense of place, and cultural and subsistence practices for many of the Indigenous people of Central California today." These are important considerations that warrant continued research and engagement. Consideration of marine cultural heritage is also consistent with broader state efforts to better represent the cultural and historical significance of coastal areas. DMR Recommendation 24 highlights the importance of incorporating marine cultural heritage into MPA Network design and management, reflecting the recognition that the cultural significance of the coast could be better represented in the MPA Network. Similarly, California State Parks seeks to preserve examples of the state's diverse cultural heritage, particularly along underrepresented themes such as settlement and subsistence patterns associated with coastal prehistoric villages and tribal maritime exploration[11].

Given the petition's emphasis on cultural recognition and preservation, an alternative designation that may warrant consideration is a State Marine Cultural Preservation Area (SMCPA). An SMCPA is one of 6 Marine Managed Areas defined and established in the Marine Managed Areas Improvement Act (MMAIA, Pub. Resources Code, §§ 36600-36900). In contrast to an MPA, an SMCPA is specifically intended to preserve "cultural objects or sites of historical, archaeological, or scientific interest in marine areas," which could serve as a complement to the existing landside BLM protection. SMCPAs are designated by the California State Park and Recreation Commission and either managed by California State Parks or jointly managed with CDFW if there is overlap with an MPA[12].

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[11] California State Parks Significant Cultural Resource Properties

[12] Per the MMAIA (Pub. Resources Code § 36700), an area can be designated under more than one classification. Therefore, a defined geographic area could be designated as a standalone SMCPA or may be co-designated with an MPA classification (e.g., SMR, SMP, or SMCA).

This designation may provide an effective mechanism for recognizing and preserving the cultural significance of the area while continuing to explore opportunities for tribal co-management. SMCPAs prohibit the damage, take, or possession of cultural resources, and these protections apply to the cultural resources of any tribe, regardless of federal recognition status.

Importantly, SMCPA designation does not restrict consumptive uses, so it could be a more inclusive approach to highlighting the cultural importance of this area while maintaining existing fishing access. In contrast, implementation of the proposed Point Sal SMCA would limit access to marine resources that are currently available for recreational, traditional, ceremonial, or subsistence purposes that involve take. The petitioners identified supporting cultural access and activities within the MPA as a desired co-stewardship objective. However, except for recreational take of finfish from shore using hook-and-line, the proposed regulations would prohibit all take for all users regardless of tribal status or affiliation. This includes prohibiting shore-based recreational take of other species (e.g., seaweed and invertebrates such as crab and mussels), as well as boat fishing. Even if the proposed SMCA design were modified to provide additional take allowances to accommodate NCTC and other non-federally recognized tribes, the proposal would further diverge from the MPA's ability to meet the ecological goals stated in the petition (MLPA Goals 1 and 2). Designing the MPA to meet ecological objectives would require an SMCA design with at least a Moderate-high LOP or an SMR, but these designations would further limit tribal take, including take associated with any cultural or subsistence practices, unless a federally-recognized tribe seeks, and CFGC approves, a tribal take exemption. Current legislative and regulatory frameworks provide pathways for tribal take exemptions for federally recognized tribes (25 C.F.R. § 83, Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14 § 632, subd. (a)(11)). No such pathway exists for non-federally recognized tribes. Designation of an SMCPA, on the other hand, could recognize and protect the cultural significance of the area and complement BLM landside protection while maintaining existing fishing access. Such a designation could also support continued exploration of co-management opportunities and contribute to MPA Network achievement of Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Goals 3-6.

Local Ecological Significance

Consistent with the MLPA, California's existing system of MPAs was redesigned to increase its coherence and effectiveness for protecting the state's marine life, habitats, and ecosystems. Although the core MPA Network is designed as an interconnected series of backbone MPAs, there are also some MPAs that were established to address place-based needs, such as local "ecologically important areas and areas of key human interest" that may still contribute to the overall MPA Network (CDFW 2008). For example, Gerstle Cove SMR (0.01 sq. mi.) and Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve (0.25 sq. mi.)

were established to protect locally significant rocky intertidal habitats without serving as MPA backbones. Similarly, Matlahuayl SMR (1.04 sq. mi.) was retained in the MPA Network to encompass an ecologically important area that has been protected since 1929. Given that "individual MPAs may serve varied primary purposes while collectively achieving the overall goals and guidelines" of the MLPA (Fish & G. Code, § 2857, subd. (c)), establishment of a new MPA could be appropriate where there is compelling rationale for localized protection or evidence that the area encompasses unique marine resources or processes that are not adequately represented in the existing MPA Network (Goal 4).

The ecological significance of Point Sal is currently recognized by several marine and terrestrial designations. The proposed new Point Sal SMCA would be within the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. National Marine Sanctuaries are areas designated to protect nationally significant natural, cultural, and historical resources. BLM manages the Point Sal promontory (headland) as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern due to its fragile ecosystems, wildlife, and cultural resources[13]. The Santa Barbara County Parks Department manages the 130 acres of Point Sal land conserved by The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, including trails, wetlands, and coastal habitats[14]. Point Sal State Beach, a California State Park, encompasses about 80 acres, including a little over one and a half miles of shoreline, onshore of the proposed Point Sal SMCA[15]. This location presents a potential opportunity to have a land and sea connection with onshore and offshore ecological protected areas.

Several characteristics contribute to the ecological significance of the Point Sal area. It occurs near a marine biogeographic transition zone associated with Point Conception, where cold-temperate and warm-temperate species of the northeastern Pacific overlap (Cudaback et al. 2005, Pitz et al. 2020, Kumar et al. 2021, Miller 2023). Species and communities that are characteristic of both northern and southern California co-occur in this region, contributing to high biodiversity and ecological complexity. The diverse mosaic of habitats found in the area include rocky intertidal, shallow and deep rocky reef, and extensive sandy bottom in both the shallow and deeper subtidal. This habitat diversity supports a broad range of species, including rockfish and invertebrates associated with rocky reef, and demersal species occupying sandy substrates (NCCOS 2007, NOAA 2008, Raimondi et al. 1999). Offshore rocks, including Lion Rock, provide important haul-out habitat for pinnipeds and roosting or breeding habitat for seabirds, while surrounding waters are used by a variety of marine mammals for foraging and migration (Mason et al. 2007, Capitolo et al. 2011, Robinette and Acosta 2011, Capitolo et al.

[13] https://www.blm.gov/visit/point-sal
[14] https://www.sblandtrust.org/land/point-sal-santa-maria-area/
[15] Point Sal State Beach

2012, Robinette et al. 2012, Robinette et al. 2013, Santora and Sydeman 2015, CDFW OSPR 2018, NMFS 2024, USSF 2025).

The petition identified localized concerns regarding disturbance to pinnipeds and seabirds using Lion Rock, which is located within the proposed SMCA boundaries. MPA designation affects take of living, geological, or cultural resources but does not limit public access, boating, or anchoring. Given that marine mammals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and take of seabirds is generally not permitted, MPA designation is unlikely to provide additional protection to these species. If disturbance to these populations is a primary concern, a Special Closure designation, which restricts access to the waters in the immediate vicinity of Lion Rock, would be a more appropriate management approach. CFGC can designate a Special Closure to prohibit access or restrict boating activities in waters adjacent to seabird rookeries or marine mammal haul-out sites. The Feasibility Guidelines state, a "Special Closures should only be proposed if other state and federal regulations are inadequate to provide protections to marine species. Proposed Special Closures should include information on the rationale behind the proposal, species involved, and specific information on why other existing state and federal protections (including the establishment of an MPA) are not adequate." (CDFW 2010). CDFW does not have site-specific data documenting that other state and federal protections are not adequate to protect birds and pinnipeds in this area but wanted to identify this designation as the appropriate designation to offer additional protections for birds and/or pinnipeds. CFGC has established 14 Special Closures for relatively small, discrete marine areas to achieve the goals of the MLPA (CDFW 2016).

The waters in this area exhibit particularly complex oceanographic dynamics (Cudaback et al. 2005, Kumar et al. 2021). Local circulation and retention patterns are influenced by the promontory, which in turn affects the transport of larvae and nutrients and contributes to broader regional connectivity patterns (Wing et al. 1995, Graham and Largier 1997, Mace and Morgan 2006). Studies of seabird foraging at Point Sal suggest the headland may concentrate juvenile fish in the lee relative to adjacent open-coast areas (Ford et al. 2004, NCCOS 2005, Robinette et al. 2019), indicating that local conditions contribute to high productivity supporting a diverse food web that includes marine mammals and seabirds.

Among the biodiversity in the Point Sal region are several threatened or endangered marine species known to visit seasonally and/or have critical habitat in the area. These include blue whale, *Balaenoptera musculus*; humpback whale, *Megaptera novaeangliae;* southern sea otter, *Enhydra lutris*; leatherback sea turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea;* and black abalone, *Haliotis cracherodii* (CDFW OSPR 2018). Both blue and humpback whales are listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), while the southern sea otter is listed as threatened under the ESA. The leatherback sea turtle and

black abalone are both listed as endangered under the federal ESA and the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). California least tern (*Sternula antillarum browni*) are protected as an endangered species under ESA and CESA, while Western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) is listed as threatened under ESA. By providing seasonal sanctuary and safeguarding critical habitat for these species, designating a new highly protected MPA at Point Sal would advance Goal 2 of the MLPA, which explicitly aims to "help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted." During the South Coast planning process, the Science Advisory Team (SAT) provided the following guidance, “any protection given to [highly mobile forage species such as anchovies, squid, and krill] will ultimately translate into added marine bird and mammal protection” (MLPAI 2009). Thus, an argument could be made that MPA protection of important forage species in this location could offer indirect benefits to these populations by protecting forage species, particularly during breeding and/or nesting seasons when animals are foraging close to shore (Micheli et al. 2005, Villamoor and Becerro 2012, Eger and Baum 2020).

Portions of the biogeographic transition zone surrounding Point Sal are protected in the 32.9-sq. mi. Vandenberg SMR and the 22.5-sq. mi. Point Conception SMR, located 10.4 and 33.2 miles south, respectively, from the proposed Point Sal SMCA. Additionally, VSFB and Vandenberg SMR may offer the same land and sea connection with onshore and offshore ecological protected areas, as the VSFB restricts terrestrial access, although the nature and extent of the impacts of military activities on these protected areas is unknown. Several ecological processes and features discussed in the petition, including coastal upwelling, krill hotspots, and marine mammal foraging and migration areas, occur at regional scales that extend far beyond the proposed SMCA’s boundaries. Lastly, while there is a larval retention zone in the area, the significance and magnitude of the potential larval contributions derived from protecting this area are unknown.

Section II of Feasibility Guidelines (MLPA Goals, Regional Objectives and Site-Specific Rationale; CDFW 2010) state that the proposed goals and regional objectives should be consistent with SAT Scientific Guidelines and that the objectives identified for each MPA should be consistent with the design and the allowed take. Ultimately, the goals described in the petition, including to “protect this rich and productive ecosystem and biodiversity found within” and “protect an important larval retention zone and enhance the connectivity dynamics within the region,” are ecological objectives associated with higher levels of protection (i.e., MLPA Goals 1 and 2). A Moderate-low SMCA would not contribute to habitat replication within the MPA Network and relative to an SMR, has a lower probability of enhancing MPA Network connectivity, as described in the SAT Science Guidelines established during the MLPA Initiative planning process. Consequently, if CFGC determines that establishment of an additional MPA at Point Sal is warranted to achieve

these ecological objectives, a designation providing at least a Moderate-high Level of Protection (LOP) would more closely align with those objectives.

Habitat Protection and Network Design

The Point Sal area is ecologically valuable and there are benefits to siting MPAs near terrestrial protected areas. However, the available information does not demonstrate how designation of a new partial take SMCA at this location would meaningfully improve the structure or function of the existing MPA Network or achieve the site-specific ecological goals sought by the petitioner. As noted above, three of the four goals of the proposed MPA are to protect the productive ecosystem and rich biodiversity found locally, as well as to protect the larval retention zone and support the broader connectivity dynamics region wide. These objectives are consistent with MLPA Goals 1, 2, and 6, but the proposed design conflicts with meeting those stated objectives. First, as noted above, according to the SAT Science Guidelines, MLPA Goals 1 and 2 should not be attributed to an MPA having an assigned LOP below Moderate-high. Second, MLPA Goal 6 is to ensure that MPAs are designed, to the extent possible, as a component of a statewide network. While the proposed MPA would include a range of habitat types, these habitats are not currently underrepresented within the existing MPA Network, and the petition does not demonstrate that additional protection at this location would address a specific deficiency in current MPA Network design.

The existing MPA Network meets the SAT Science Guidelines in this portion of the coast. MPAs that meet the minimum size threshold and one of the three highest LOPs (i.e., Very High, High, or Moderate-high) are referred to as backbone MPAs because they are considered to provide substantial ecological benefits to the connected MPA Network. Although the proposed Point Sal SMCA exceeds the minimum size threshold at 9.27 square miles, the proposed take allowance for recreational finfish by hook-and-line from shore corresponds to a Moderate-low LOP (see response to Question 13 for more information).

The Moderate-low LOP applies regardless of current levels of use or access. During the MLPA Initiative planning process, the SAT took a standardized and precautionary approach to applying LOPs across the state, including considering a maximum plausible intensity for any given proposed activity within MPAs. Point Sal State Beach is currently only accessible via the 12-mile round trip Point Sal Trail because the road has been closed since 2008, making access challenging. However, the petition states, “In addition to the designation of a new Point Sal SMCA, we urge the state to redouble its efforts to provide access to Point Sal State Beach by reopening Point Sal Road.” Given the LOP is based on types of allowed activities rather than current or expected intensity of those uses, the proposed new SMCA would have a Moderate-low LOP to ensure consistency with the precautionary approach reflected in the SAT Science Guidelines. Thus, despite

the area's current remoteness and access challenges, it would be inconsistent to presume the proposed SMCA would function with a higher LOP or offer the same protection as an SMR. To achieve the petitioner's stated ecological and protection goals, the proposed MPA would need to be established as an SMR with a Very High LOP or as a highly protected SMCA (at least Moderate-high LOP). Otherwise, the MPA as proposed would not qualify as a backbone MPA and thus would not improve alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines or contribute toward MLPA Goals 1 and 2. Inconsistent application of the precautionary approach used to develop SAT Science Guidelines risks undermining the scientific foundation of the statewide MPA Network.

The petition indicates that the proposed MPA would protect kelp beds within the proposed boundaries; however, available CDFW aerial survey data and satellite imagery do not indicate persistent kelp canopy in the proposed location. According to the petitioners, the proposed action is also intended to contribute to habitat replication for hard and soft bottom habitats in the 0-30 m and 30-100 m depth zones. To contribute to habitat replication, an MPA must be a backbone MPA and contain enough of a specific habitat to capture 90% of the biodiversity associated with that habitat. This minimum amount varies by habitat and is determined from biological surveys. The proposed Point Sal SMCA does not meet the LOP criteria to be a backbone MPA and consequently would not contribute to replication of any habitats in the MPA Network (Table 2). If the MPA was proposed with at least a Moderate-high LOP, it would meet the LOP criteria to be a backbone MPA and would add habitat replication for rocky intertidal, beach, and nearshore soft bottom habitat. However, these three habitats are well represented and spaced in the existing MPA Network. The closest replicates of all three habitats are found in the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA cluster 19.4 miles north and Vandenberg SMR 10.4 miles south of the proposed new Point Sal SMCA. These existing backbone MPAs are spaced 32.5 miles apart, well within the recommended maximum distance range of 31-62 miles. Thus, it is unclear whether the proposed Moderate-low SMCA at Point Sal would provide any additional ecological benefits beyond those achieved through the existing science-based design.

The petition also suggests that the proposed MPA would enhance larval retention and connectivity. Analyses of the MPA Network have found that the existing MPA Network as designed is functioning effectively, with existing MPAs shown to be both demographically and environmentally connected (CDFW 2022, Yeager et al. 2023). For example, Yeager et al. (2023) state their results suggest, "there is high sub-network connectivity in the different habitats in the system (i.e., high MPA-to-MPA environmental connectivity) and that [California] MPAs were generally placed in locations favored to receive high levels of propagule replenishment based on environmental transport alone." A reevaluation of MPA Network-wide connectivity using up-to-date average ocean circulation is intended for inclusion in the next DMR to support future assessments of regional connectivity and

MPA Network performance, but currently, this is a data gap. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of MPA Network connectivity (DMR Recommendation 23), site specific data gaps in nearshore habitat mapping and species data in specific locations would need to be filled and incorporated into existing connectivity modeling efforts.

Future Stressors and Climate Resilience

The petition identifies mitigation of climate change and other future stressors as primary rationale for establishing a new partial take MPA at Point Sal, including a stated objective to enhance the climate resilience of the broader MPA Network. While the petition cites climate-smart MPA design principles (Arafeh-Dalmau et al. 2023) and identifies ways in which the proposed SMCA is theoretically consistent with this guidance, it does not provide site-specific analyses to demonstrate the extent to which MPA designation at Point Sal would confer resilience based on this guidance at either the scale of the individual MPA or the MPA Network. In addition, much of the literature cited in support of climate resilience pertains to fully protected reserves, not partial take MPAs such as the proposed Point Sal SMCA (Barnett et al. 2015, Jacquemont et al. 2022).

While there are promising results in the scientific literature that MPAs may act as climate refugia for certain species and ecosystems and/or promote recovery following a climate-driven disturbance (Micheli et al. 2012, Carr et al. 2017, Roberts et al. 2017, Bates et al. 2019, CDFW 2022, Jacquemont et al. 2022, Raimondi and Smith 2022, Ziegler et al. 2023, Benedetti-Cecchi et al. 2024, Kumagai et al. 2024, Olguín-Jacobson et al. 2025, Ortiz-Villa et al. 2025), the current state of knowledge indicates that MPAs do not consistently or predictably confer resilience to climate change (Coleman et al. 2017, Bruno et al. 2018, Freedman et al. 2020, Kyprioti et al. 2021, Smith et al. 2023, Filbee-Dexter et al. 2024, Ortiz-Villa et al. 2025). The DMR showed that habitats and species both inside and outside MPAs experienced dramatic changes following the 2014-2016 marine heatwave. However, some habitats, such as rocky intertidal and kelp forests, were more stable and showed some resiliency to the effects of the heatwave, and some of this stability could be attributed to higher connectivity (CDFW 2022, Carr et al. 2022, Raimondi et al. 2022). Yet these results were variable, and highly dependent on bioregion and shifts in oceanographic conditions pre- and post-heatwave (CDFW 2022, Carr et al. 2022, Caselle et al. 2023, Hamilton et al. 2023).

Therefore, while MPAs may indirectly support climate resilience under certain conditions, an MPA explicitly intended to serve this function should be supported by evidence demonstrating how it would contribute to resilience at the site and MPA Network scales. Without this information, it is difficult to evaluate whether the proposed action would achieve the function the petitioners envision. Further exploration of climate change resiliency and the role of MPA design will be guided by the DMR recommendations

focused on MPA Network performance (CDFW 2022) and the recommendations put forth in the "Climate Resilience and California's Marine Protected Area Network" report (Hofmann et al. 2021).

Coastal development and other future stressors are also identified as considerations supporting establishment of the proposed SMCA. While an SMCA designation would prohibit take incidental to new construction and therefore would limit development within the footprint of the MPA itself, this would have no bearing on the development of neighboring areas. Neither coastal nor offshore (past the 3 nautical mile state waters boundary, the maximum extent of any state MPA) development is regulated by state MPAs. Existing MPAs are sited adjacent to areas that have experienced or are likely to experience coastal and offshore development, illustrating that MPA designation does not in itself regulate these activities beyond MPA boundaries. As a result, the relationship between the proposed designation and the mitigation of these stressors is unclear.

Equity and Access

The proposed action is framed in the petition as an opportunity to enhance equitable access to marine resources for nearby disadvantaged communities, particularly when combined with broader efforts to improve access and connection to nature. While MPAs may enhance numerous non-consumptive recreational opportunities, the petition does not convey the mechanism by which designation of a new MPA at this location would improve access or result in more equitable access for disadvantaged communities to marine resources.

The area provides many opportunities for human connection with the ocean through non-consumptive activities such as swimming, surfing, beach combing, and wildlife viewing. Understanding how people interact with and derive benefits from the ocean and how these benefits may be affected by MPAs is challenging (Hall-Arber et. al. 2021, CDFW 2022, Travis et al. 2026). Social science research within the MPA Monitoring Program is a rapidly expanding field of MPA research, as well as a priority DMR Recommendation to invest in improving understanding of the human dimensions of MPAs and develop a human dimensions working group and research agenda (DMR Recommendation 12).

Physical access to Point Sal has historically been, and continues to be, limited due to its remote location, hazardous nearshore conditions, and treacherous cliffs. The primary access route is via the approximately 12-mile round trip Point Sal Trail, which presents a significant barrier to visitation for many users. Offshore, boating access is often dependent on weather and ocean conditions. Beyond this, there are frequently additional barriers for people from disadvantaged communities who want to access the coast, particularly from shore or boat (Christensen and King 2017, USFWS 2024). It is unclear how MPA designation in this area would increase access for disadvantaged

communities. The underlying connection appears to be that increased regulatory protection would make the ocean healthier and more productive, which would then provide benefits to nearby marginalized or disadvantaged communities, such as by enhancing shore-based recreational activities. However, this relationship is not clearly supported in the petition or in the scientific literature for the marine environment in California. MPA designation alone does not increase physical access, reduce barriers to participation, or directly address the socioeconomic factors that influence equitable access to coastal resources. The petition also does not address the extent to which nearby communities already utilize the area or the potential consequences to those same communities of restricting many of the uses currently allowed under existing regulations.

Impacts to Fisheries and Socioeconomic Impacts

Consistent with directives in the Fish and Game Code and 2016 Master Plan for MPAs (Fish & G. Code, §§ 2853 & 2855, CDFW 2016), decisions regarding the siting of new MPAs and major modifications of existing MPAs must consider relevant information including, but not limited to, the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of various alternatives. Given the scope and timeline of this analysis, and data availability, CDFW was able to conduct a preliminary assessment but did not conduct an in-depth analysis of the economic or fiscal impacts for the proposed new MPA. The proposed Point Sal SMCA has the potential to adversely impact the commercial nearshore groundfish[16] fishery, Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV)[17] fleet, and private boat anglers operating out of Port San Luis in Avila Beach and Morro Bay.

The proposed SMCA overlaps with Commercial Fishing Blocks (fishing blocks) 631 and 632. In the years since the MPA Network was fully implemented (2013-2025), these two blocks yielded approximately $191,000 and $3.2 million worth of commercial nearshore groundfish caught by all allowed gear types (Figure 1; for more details on all commercial fishery value data, see the CDFW Marine Fisheries Data Explorer). The combined value of approximately $3.4 million makes up 22% of commercial nearshore groundfish landings

[16] For a list of all nearshore groundfish, see the California Nearshore Fishery Management Plan (CDFW 2002). Representative nearshore groundfish from the surrounding area of the proposed new MPA include cabezon, *Scorpaenichthys marmoratus;* California scorpionfish, *Scorpaena guttata;* California sheephead, *Bodianus pulcher;* black rockfish, *Sebastes melanops;* black-and-yellow rockfish, *S. chrysomelas;* blue rockfish, *S. mystinus;* brown rockfish, *S. auriculatus,* calico rockfish, *S. dalli;* China rockfish, *S. nebulosus;* copper rockfish, *S. caurinus;* gopher rockfish, *S. carnatus;* grass rockfish, *S. rastrelliger;* kelp rockfish, *S. atrovirens;* olive rockfish, *S. serranoides;* quillback rockfish, *S. maliger;* treefish, *S. serriceps;* kelp greenling, *Hexagrammos decagrammus;* rock greenling, *H. lagocephalus; and* monkeyface prickleback, *Cebidichthys violaceus*.

[17] The CPFV fleet takes paying passengers to recreationally fish at offshore coastal locations.

for the nearby ports of Morro Bay and Port San Luis combined. Consequently, establishing a new MPA at Point Sal has the potential to have adverse impacts on the commercial nearshore groundfish fishery due to the potential loss of fishing grounds within the proposed SMCA boundaries. For all commercial landings in the area, Morro Bay Harbor alone accounted for over half of the landing records (60.3%).

Furthermore, while the area is not readily accessible for shore-based anglers due to a long hike to the site, CPFVs and private boaters operating out of Morro Bay area ports (Port San Luis, Morro Bay Harbor, and San Simeon) frequent the area, especially during periods of rough weather when other fishing options are not available. Since the MPA Network was fully implemented in 2012 (between 2013 and 2025), there were a total of 702 CPFV trips to blocks 631 and 632. During this period, there was an average 12.4 (± 10.7 SD) CPFV trips per year to block 631, and an average 49.2 (± 21 SD) CPFV trips per year to block 632 (Figure 2). These two blocks account for 12.8% of all CPFV trips out of Morro Bay area ports during that time frame. Thus, restricting boat-based fishing access within the proposed new Point Sal SMCA has the potential to have adverse economic impacts on the CPFV fleet (see response to Question 15 for additional details). Spatial trends in average catch per angler between 2016 and 2024 from the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS)[18] also indicate the area is heavily used by private boaters (Figure 3).

Additionally, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, operates a fisheries observer program on CPFVs based out of Port San Luis; this program collects data to support federal stock assessments for rockfishes (*Sebastes* spp.). Prohibiting boat-based fishing in this area has high potential to impact the quality of those assessments. For more detailed information, see response to Question 15.

The addition of a new MPA in this area would likely result in socioeconomic impacts, including to fisheries and the surrounding communities, although the full extent of these impacts is unknown (see Question 5 in Attachment 1). A thorough analysis of socioeconomic and fiscal impacts was outside the scope of the 2023 MPA petition process.

[18] CRFS conducts angler-intercept surveys of catch, effort, and location across multiple fishing modes. For the private/rental boat fishing mode, angler-intercept surveys are conducted at launch ramps, boat hoists, and boat rental locations where the public (from a subset of fishing trips) is intercepted to collect information on fish caught and released, biological data on kept catch, and approximate fishing location(s). Fishing locations are at the level of micro fishing blocks (approximately 1 x 1 square miles). Thus, spatial CRFS catch-per-angler data reflects the distribution of fish caught and kept per angler on this surveyed subset of trips.

Historical Context: MLPA Initiative Planning Process

An MPA at Point Sal was considered during the MLPA Initiative planning process, but it was deliberately not included in the final adopted MPA Network. Package 3, one of three MPA arrays developed internally by the Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG), and Package AC, developed externally[19] by NRDC (co-sponsors of the petition) and Point Blue Conservation Science, both proposed SMRs at Point Sal with footprints similar to the SMCA proposed in this petition. The other two CCRSG array packages did not include an MPA near Point Sal. Each of the groups responsible for development of MPA packages noted difficulties in determining the extent to protect the area's three main headlands (i.e., Point Sal, Purisima Point, and Point Arguello) while minimizing socioeconomic impacts (MLPAI 2006). For example, in their second revision, the proponents of Package 2 included an MPA at Purisima Point (Vandenberg SMR) but not at Point Sal or Point Arguello, stating that they chose to leave "several major headland areas outside of MPA protection to facilitate scientific comparison and to minimize socioeconomic impacts." As part of the rationale for including an MPA at Purisima Point, the group said that the "proposed SMR is designed to leave the area around Point Sal (which is more easily accessible from port and therefore more heavily fished) open to fishing activities."

The developers of Package 3, which was billed as a "hybrid" array that united myriad, sometimes opposing, perspectives, originally included an MPA at Purisima Point. In their second revision, they stated, "In response to the feedback from the SAT, the group . . . exchanged a proposed SMR at Purisima Point for an SMR at Point Sal to address spacing concerns." Following several iterations of refinement and direction from the Blue Ribbon Task Force, a modified proposal, Package 3R, was jointly developed by MLPA Initiative staff, proponents of the original Package 3, and SAT members. This array was ultimately recommended as the preferred alternative, and included an SMR at Purisima Point, but not at Point Sal.

An MPA in this area was considered multiple times throughout the rigorous, science-based, stakeholder-driven MLPA planning process and intentionally not adopted at that time. The socioeconomic considerations that informed this outcome likely remain relevant (see Impacts to Fisheries and Socioeconomic Impacts above and response to Question 15 for more information on potential consumptive impacts) and new information warranting revisiting this assessment has not been presented.

[19] During the Central Coast region planning process, the SAT and MLPA Initiative staff evaluated externally generated proposals, in addition to arrays proposed by the CCRSG.

In addition to socioeconomic impact considerations, the ultimate decision to not adopt an MPA at Point Sal was also related to monitoring purposes. Point Sal was intended to function as an unprotected reference site for comparative monitoring in conjunction with Vandenberg SMR, just to the south (MLPAI 2006). While none of the core MPA long-term monitoring occurs at Point Sal, the site is an important monitoring area outside of MPAs for fisheries stock assessments. Establishing a new MPA at this site could affect those surveys (See Question 15 for more information).

Point Sal State Beach

As noted above, the proposed MPA is adjacent to Point Sal State Beach, which is managed by California State Parks, and other lands owned or managed by Santa Barbara County, BLM, and VSFB. The MMAIA recognized the benefits of protecting the land-sea connection by siting MPAs near terrestrial protected areas, stating that, "To maximize the benefits that can be gained from having connected protected areas, whenever an MMA is adjacent to a terrestrial protected area, the managing agencies shall coordinate their activities to the greatest extent possible to achieve the objectives of both areas" (Pub. Resources Code, § 36601, subd. (c)). Similarly, according to "State Parks Guidelines for Creating Marine Managed Areas" (CSP 2010),

> *"When an MPA is proposed offshore of an existing terrestrial California State Park System unit, the terrestrial park's general plan[20] and existing public use patterns should be a guiding element for the designation and shoreline boundaries of the MPA."*

Accordingly, MPA designation would require resolution of conflicts with current State Parks management plans for these established terrestrial areas.

Point Sal State Beach is currently only accessible via the Point Sal Trail because Point Sal Road has been closed since 2008. As noted above, the petition recommends that the state work to reopen the road to provide beach access. However, encouraging increased visitation may not align with the General Plan for the State Beach, which identifies a number of logistical planning issues related to increasing access (e.g., safety and erosion, garbage receptacles and management, and restroom facilities). For instance, the Santa Barbara/Ventura Coastal State Park System General Plan for Point Sal State Beach discusses "Allowable Use Intensity", stating,

> *"Due to the serious problems with slope stability and erosion, use intensity at Point Sal State Beach shall be kept at a low level by providing only minimal*

[20] California State Parks General Plans and Management Plans

facilities necessary for public health and safety. Erosion of lands above the state beach property will probably always be a significant constraint to recreational use in the area, due to the steep nature of bluff and hillside slopes and associated soil characteristics."

The proposed regulations for the Point Sal SMCA are another possible area of misalignment with the current management of the State Beach. In 1962, the then State Park Commission designated the park unit as a State Beach as defined in Pub. Resources Code, section 5019.56. State Beaches are defined as "consisting of areas with frontage on the ocean, or bays designed to provide swimming, boating, fishing, and other beach-oriented recreational activities." The Point Sal SMCA as proposed would allow recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore, which aligns with the intent of the State Beach designation. However, other shore-based, recreational take of other resources (e.g., seaweed, crab, and mussels) would no longer be allowed. This limitation, including any further limitations to recreational harvest (i.e., establishment of an SMR or highly protected SMCA) would need to be considered in consultation with California State Parks.

The proposed change may also affect existing regulations, permits, leases, or management activities of other agencies, including Santa Barbara County, BLM, and VSFB. For additional details about VSFB, see the evaluation narrative below.

Vandenberg Space Force Base

The petitioners indicated that meetings with personnel from VSFB informed the submission of the November 2025 amended petition, which included moving the southern boundary approximately one mile north to "avoid conflicts with existing mission-critical operations of Vandenberg Space Force Base" and proposed including the following language in Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, section 632 for the new proposed SMCA:

1. *"Take incidental to base operations and commercial space launch operations identified by the Vandenberg Space Force Base Commander as mission critical is allowed.*
2. *"Public entry may be restricted at the discretion of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to protect wildlife, aquatic life, or habitat, or by the Commander of Vandenberg Space Force Base to protect and provide safety for base operations.*
3. *"The Department shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commander of Vandenberg Space Force Base for the mutually beneficial management and administration of the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area. The MOU shall include, but not be limited to, the*

> *identification of Vandenberg Space Force Base's national defense mission activities that are unrestricted by the subject regulations and details on management and administrative roles and responsibilities."*

The request to add the proposed language regarding VSFB is not needed in Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, section 632 because: (1) Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, section 632, subd. (a) already includes provisions to accommodate "uses of the waters identified as marine protected areas, special closures, or the lands or waters adjacent to these designated areas by the Department of Defense, its allies or agents," including VSFB; (2) CDFW and VSFB have existing authorities to periodically restrict access to areas, so the language would be redundant; and (3) The directive for CDFW and VSFB to develop an MOU is non-regulatory and CDFW could work with VSFB to amend the existing MOU with VSFB that covers Vandenberg SMR if another MPA is established adjacent to the base.

Further, CDFW and VSFB currently have a valid MOU for Vandenberg SMR for the purpose of voluntary cooperation in clarifying the goals and objectives in the management and administration for Vandenberg SMR; protecting coastal and marine resources; and preserving essential military training, operational capabilities, and other mission critical activities. CDFW could work with VSFB to amend the existing MOU with VSFB that covers Vandenberg SMR if another MPA were established adjacent to the base.

Identified Information Gaps

Consistent with directives in the Fish and Game Code and 2016 Master Plan for MPAs (Fish & G. Code, §§2853 and 2855, CDFW 2016), decisions regarding the siting of new MPAs and major modifications of existing MPAs must consider relevant information including, but not limited to, the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of various alternatives. Given the scope and timeline of this analysis, as well as data availability, CDFW did not provide a supplemental analysis of the economic or fiscal impacts for the proposed new MPA (see Question 5 in Attachment 1), and this remains unresolved.

Potential effects of the proposed action on equity and access to marine resources for marginalized communities remain unknown. See response to Question 5 in the Companion Document for more information.

Several other important pieces of information are needed to provide an informed recommendation. As a baseline principle, any change to the MPA Network, including any proposed new MPAs, must be evaluated within the context of the entire MPA Network to determine how it benefits or complements existing regional protections.

First, CDFW considered this proposed change in context of the other proposed actions in the 14 other 2023 Bin 2 petitions. While some adjacent proposals preserve regional protections, the petitions for the Vandenberg SMR have the most critical bearing on Point Sal because they are the only proposals in proximity to Point Sal that pose a net reduction in regional conservation. For example, to the north, the proposal for Point Buchon SMR preserves its backbone status and the new Chitqawi SMCA introduces no new backbone MPA; to the south, the proposal for Point Conception SMR expands its boundaries. In contrast, the petitions for Vandenberg SMR propose adding an allowance for shore-based hook-and-line fishing, which would lower its LOP such that it would lose its status as a backbone MPA. This has bearing on the assessment at Point Sal because the ecological contribution of any individual MPA depends in part on its relationship to surrounding MPAs; changes elsewhere in the MPA Network may influence how the effects of designating the proposed Point Sal SMCA are interpreted. This uncertainty highlights the challenges associated with evaluating individual MPA modifications in isolation, as changes to a single site can have implications for broader MPA Network performance. Second, while localized data shows that Point Sal is an important larval retention zone, a comprehensive evaluation of connectivity across the entire MPA Network is still forthcoming. The potential contributions to larval transport and connectivity of an SMCA at Point Sal are highlighted in the petition. While localized data suggest that Point Sal is an important larval retention zone, a reevaluation of MPA Network-wide connectivity using up-to-date average ocean circulation is intended for inclusion in the next DMR to support future assessments of regional connectivity and MPA Network performance, but currently, this is a data gap. Such an analysis, including one that incorporates the myriad of proposed changes from petitioners, was outside the scope of the petition process. This data gap is particularly relevant given the proximity of the proposed Point Sal SMCA to Vandenberg SMR, which is affected by petition 2023-18MPA and 2022-002 and currently functions as a vital regional backbone supporting connectivity for six key habitats in the region.

Ultimately, the data gaps and complexity associated with this location have precluded CDFW from providing CFGC a single recommendation for the regulatory request to establish a new MPA at Point Sal. In lieu of a recommendation, CDFW has compiled the information in the evaluation framework and provides the following options for CFGC to consider.

RECOMMENDATION FOR 2023-28MPA_AM2

Given these considerations, and the information in the evaluation below:

Support with an Alternative Pathway the non-regulatory request to advance co-management.

At the April 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting, the tribe confirmed the intent is to pursue co-management with CDFW through non-regulatory means. CDFW may enter into tribal co-management agreements with tribes at any time and these do not require action from CFGC or consideration through CFGC's petition process or rulemaking.

The non-regulatory request to advance co-management is aligned with the state's commitments to strengthening and sustaining effective government to government relationships between the state and tribes (Governor Brown's Executive Order B-10-11, Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-15-19, the 2020 Ancestral Lands Policy, and the California Natural Resources Agency Tribal Stewardship Policy) and would advance the following DMR Recommendations: (1) Improve state agencies' tribal engagement and relationship building efforts, (2) Create a clear pathway to tribal MPA management, and (24) Work with CFGC and partners to better incorporate marine cultural heritage into the design of the MPA Network, which may lead to advancements in (3) Building tribal capacity to participate in MPA management activities (CDFW 2022).

Recognizing the deep cultural and historical ties of California Native American tribes to their ancestral lands and waters, and consistent with these priority recommendations from the DMR, CDFW is committed to exploring opportunities for co-management and co-stewardship of California's MPAs as well as within areas outside MPA boundaries with NCTC and other interested tribes. These opportunities may be initiated and developed through non-regulatory frameworks and agreements outside of the CFGC petition process and could likely occur on a faster timeline than through the adoption of new MPAs through the CFGC's regulatory process.

Regarding the regulatory request in 2023-28MPA_AM2 to establish a new SMCA around Point Sal that allows recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore,

CDFW was tasked with evaluating the 2023 Bin 2 MPA petitions using guidance from the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), Master Plan, DMR recommendations, and the approved evaluation framework. CDFW thoroughly evaluated this petition within the framework adopted by CFGC and presents the available information here. An MPA was considered at Point Sal during the MLPA Planning Process but was not selected, in part due to socioeconomic considerations. As proposed, the Point Sal MPA would not enhance MPA Network design beyond what the current MPA Network offers because of the Moderate-low Level of Protection (LOP). However, there are alternative designations that can be used to recognize the cultural significance of the location or that would offer greater ecological protections than the proposed SMCA, consistent with Science Advisory Team (SAT) Science Guidelines established during the MLPA Initiative planning process (i.e., SMR, Special Closure). The various designations (i.e., SMCA as proposed, SMCPA, MPA with

at least a Moderate-high LOP, and Special Closure) meet different objectives and there are tradeoffs among the alternatives that CFGC will need to consider (e.g., robust ecological protections would limit tribal take and recreational and commercial fishing) (See Table 1).

Given the considerations above and in the Evaluation Framework, CFGC could consider the following options:

1. **Support with Alternative Pathway**: Request CDFW engage with the NCTC, other interested tribes, and California State Parks to explore designating the area as a **State Marine Cultural Preservation Area** to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area, rather than establishing a new MPA.
2. **Grant with Alternative Pathway, Point Sal SMR or a SMCA with at least Moderate-high LOP:** Establish a new MPA at Point Sal and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2.
3. **Grant with Alternative Pathway, Special Closure Lion Rock:** Establish a new Special Closure around Lion Rock for birds and pinnipeds. This alternative could be considered on its own or as an add-on to Options (1), (2), and (4).
4. **Grant in Concept Point Sal SMCA:** Establish a new SMCA at Point Sal as proposed in 2023-28MPA_AM2 that allows recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore (Moderate-low LOP) and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2.
5. **Deny**: do not establish a new SMCA (or SMR or Special Closure) at Point Sal.

Finally, the petition included a request to "rename the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area with a Chumash place name after further consultation with other Chumash Tribes in the region." If CFGC grants a newly designated area, CDFW recommends CFGC work with NCTC and other tribes as appropriate to identify a name that aligns with CFGC's Naming Protected Area Policy, which states, "When identifying the name for, or an opportunity to rename, a protected area, the Commission and Department will invite tribes with ancestral ties to that area to engage in meaningful information-sharing about the cultural significance of the area, and to identify traditional or contemporary tribal names for the area. In selecting a name, the Commission will give significant weight to tribally-identified names, with particular emphasis on restoring tribal place names. In its selection, the Commission may consider combining the tribal place name with a currently used name that is understandable and locatable, as appropriate, to ensure accessibility and identification by the broader public while restoring tribal heritage recognition."

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

2023-28MPA_AM2: Designate a New SMCA Near Point Sal with an Allowance for Recreational Take of Finfish by Hook-and-Line From Shore

Responses to the Evaluation Questions below only pertain to the proposed regulatory request in the petition to create a new SMCA around Point Sal that allows recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore.

QUESTION 1: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE SUPPORT THE MPA NETWORK IN MEETING ONE OR MORE OF THE MLPA GOALS AND ALIGN WITH MPA MASTER PLAN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES?

No. The MLPA Goals and Master Plan objectives are inextricably linked and act as the foundational tools that CDFW utilizes for effective adaptive management of the MPA Network. Individual MPAs in the Network were not necessarily designed to address all six Goals of the MLPA but instead act as an important component of a functioning Network that was designed to holistically address the MLPA Goals. As such, CDFW has evaluated this action within the broader adaptive management framework and how the proposed action may or may not align with the MLPA Goals/Master Plan objectives and advance MPA Network management. See Question 1 of Attachment 1 for the MLPA Goals and Master Plan Objectives.

The petitioners have proposed a new SMCA near Point Sal with an allowance for recreational take of finfish from shore by hook-and-line. These regulations would result in a Moderate-low LOP for the proposed MPA (see response to Question 9 for more details). The petitioner notes that the proposed MPA would align with MLPA Goals 1, 2, 3, and 6, related to preserving natural diversity and marine natural heritage, protecting marine populations and habitats, improving recreational opportunities, and managing MPAs as a cohesive MPA Network. However, as proposed, the Point Sal SMCA is unlikely to benefit the MPA Network or address a current or emerging MPA management challenge that has emerged since the DMR.

Section II of Feasibility Guidelines (MLPA Goals, Regional Objectives and Site-Specific Rationale; CDFW 2010) state that the proposed goals and regional objectives should be consistent with SAT Scientific Guidelines and that the objectives identified for each MPA should be consistent with the design and the allowed take. Broadly, the minimal LOP is incompatible with the achievement of ecological goals, such as the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem function (Goal 1) or the conservation of marine life populations (Goal 2), because it would prevent the proposed SMCA from functioning as a

backbone MPA. It would also preclude contribution to MPA Network design goals, such as habitat replication (Goal 4) or MPA Network connectivity (Goal 6). Therefore, the stated objectives are not aligned with the proposed design or with SAT Science Guidelines (Goal 5).

Consistent with the MLPA, California's prior system of MPAs was redesigned to increase its coherence and effectiveness for protecting the state's marine life, habitats, and ecosystems. Although the MPA Network is designed as an interconnected series of MPAs, there are also some MPAs that were established to address place-based needs while still contributing to other goals of the overall system. For example, Gerstle Cove SMR (0.01 sq. mi.) and Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve (0.25 sq. mi.) were established to protect locally significant rocky intertidal habitats without serving as MPA backbones. Similarly, Matlahuayl SMR (1.04 sq. mi.) was retained in the MPA Network to encompass an ecologically important area that has been protected since 1929. Therefore, a new MPA at Point Sal could be established if there is significant rationale for localized protection or evidence that the area encompasses unique marine resources or processes that are not well represented in the existing MPA Network (Goal 4) and the allowed uses are consistent with the intended protections. However, there are data gaps (see Question 5), and it is unclear whether the area warrants localized protection, or whether the area encompasses unique marine resources or processes that are not well represented in the existing MPA Network. If there is rationale for localized protection, the LOP of the MPA would need to be at least Moderate-high to offer that protection.

However, potential ecological gains must be weighed against other MLPA Goals. The MPA Network was intentionally designed to balance conservation benefits with the needs of coastal communities and diverse ocean users, including fisheries (Goal 3). A stated goal of establishing the proposed SMCA is to enhance shore-based recreation and improve access to marine resources and fishing opportunities for nearby disadvantaged communities. This is aligned with Goal 3, however, the rationale underpinning the petition's stated relationship between MPA designation and improvements in recreational opportunities, access, or equity is not clearly demonstrated. While the petition suggests that additional MPAs can promote equitable access when paired with initiatives to increase ocean connections, it is unclear what distinct role the MPA itself would play beyond what these initiatives could achieve independently. The petition also notes that the SMCA would expand access to marine resources and fishing opportunities due to the proximity of a popular shore fishing site north of the proposed boundary; however, the site is already open to fishing and recreating and so the rationale for how MPA establishment would decrease barriers and increase accessibility is not evident.

The SMCA as proposed could be managed and enforced as part of the MPA Network, but the stated objectives do not align with SAT Science Guidelines (Goal 5). As

recommended in studies cited in the petition, the ecological and climate resilience outcomes envisioned by the petitioner would be more effectively achieved through fully or highly protected reserves rather than minimally protected areas (Barnett et al. 2015, Jacquemont et al. 2022).

Lastly, the MLPA Initiative planning process set a clear precedent for creating and managing California's MPAs as a cohesive MPA Network through a long-term, robust, science-based, stakeholder-driven process (Goal 6). In line with this foundation, the MPA Network should continue to be evaluated as an integrated system, as piecemeal modifications can have consequences that extend beyond the boundaries of a single MPA. CDFW considered this proposed change in context of the other proposed actions in the 14 other 2023 Bin 2 petitions. While some adjacent proposals preserve regional protections, the petitions for the Vandenberg SMR have the most critical bearing on Point Sal because they are the only proposals in proximity to Point Sal that pose a net reduction in regional conservation. The petitions for Vandenberg SMR propose adding an allowance for shore-based hook-and-line fishing, which would lower its LOP such that it would lose its status as a backbone MPA. In contrast, to the north, the proposal for Point Buchon SMR preserves its backbone status and the new Chitqawi SMCA introduces no new backbone MPA; to the south, the proposal for Point Conception SMR expands its boundaries.

QUESTION 2A: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE ADVANCE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE DECADAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW?

Yes. The establishment of the MPA alone does not advance DMR recommendations; however, the additional requests to co-manage the area with NCTC and other interested tribes is a pathway to advance adaptive management Recommendations 1, 2, and 24 from the DMR (CDFW 2022): (1) Improve state agencies tribal engagement and relationship building efforts; (2) Create a clear pathway to tribal MPA management; and (24) Work with CFGC and partners to better incorporate marine cultural heritage into the design of the MPA Network, which may lead to advancements on Recommendation (3) Build tribal capacity to participate in MPA management activities.

The petition states that, "Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity, sense of place, and cultural and subsistence practices for many of the Indigenous people of Central California today." However, the Point Sal SMCA as proposed would limit NCTC's and other tribes' ability to continue subsistence practices and cultural harvest other than hook-and-line fishing for finfish from shore, including shore-based recreational take of other species (e.g., seaweed and invertebrates such as crabs and

mussels), and all offshore and boat-based fishing. Designating the area as a SMCPA is an alternative pathway that could be explored to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area without limiting subsistence practices. Additionally, CDFW could work with NCTC to advance these DMR recommendations, including developing a co-management agreement for this area. See Question 2a of Attachment 1 for the DMR and adaptive management Recommendations.

QUESTION 2B: IF NOT, DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE ADDRESS A CURRENT OR EMERGING MPA MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE?

Not applicable, as the proposed change advances adaptive management recommendations.

QUESTION 3: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT EXISTING CFGC NON-MPA REGULATIONS, PERMITS, OR LEASES (E.G., KELP LEASES, AQUACULTURE LEASES, EXPERIMENTAL FISHING PERMITS)?

Yes. The proposed expansion overlaps with Administrative Kelp Bed 202, which is leasable, and Administrative Kelp Bed 203, which is closed. Kelp can be commercially harvested within leasable kelp beds until a lease is obtained for the bed, at which time the bed can only be harvested by the lease holder. Closed kelp beds prohibit all commercial kelp harvesting. Commercial kelp harvest has not been reported in these beds.

The proposed change also has the potential to impact three existing Experimental Fishing Permits (EFPs): EFPT2-002 (Dungeness crab/rock crab), and EFPT2-004 (Dungeness crab).

QUESTION 4: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT EXISTING REGULATIONS, PERMITS, LEASES, OR MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES OF ANY OTHER AGENCY OR ENTITY?

Yes. The proposed Point Sal MPA would be inside the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, which is federally administered by the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration. Implementation of the proposed change would require consultation and coordination with federal authorities and may interact with their management activities.

There is an ongoing data gathering effort in this area that supports federal rockfish stock assessments by providing an index of relative abundance, and length and age composition data (see response to Question 15 related to potential impacts to non-consumptive activities). Federal stock assessments that include data collected from within the boundaries of the proposed Point Sal SMCA include the 2015 Bocaccio

assessment (He et al. 2015), the 2015 China Rockfish assessment (Dick et al. 2016), the 2017 Bocaccio assessment (He and Field 2018), and the 2019 combined Gopher and Black-and-Yellow Rockfish assessment (Monk and He 2019). Such assessments are in turn used by the Pacific Fishery Management Council to manage fish stocks by setting legal catch limits and shares. Implementing the proposed Point Sal SMCA would require a Scientific Collecting Permit to conduct hook-and-line fishing in the SMCA to continue to collect data for this purpose, which could diminish the numbers of fish permitted for take. The new MPA is likely to reduce the availability of fishery-dependent data from this area, which has potential to confound assessment results for some species into the future. It is unclear how the proposed change would affect National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration management activities related to federal groundfish.

The Point Sal SMCA, as proposed, would limit NCTC's and other tribes' ability to continue boat-based subsistence practices and other shore-based fishing or cultural harvest of invertebrates and algae. It is unclear how the proposed change may affect other tribal management and monitoring activities.

The proposed MPA is adjacent to terrestrial protected areas, including Point Sal State Beach, which is managed by California State Parks, and other lands owned or managed by Santa Barbara County, BLM, and VSFB. The proposed change may have the potential to affect existing regulations, permits, leases, or management activities of Santa Barbara County, BLM, and VSFB. For additional details about VSFB, see the evaluation narrative above.

With respect to Point Sal State Beach, coordination with California State Parks would be required to ensure alignment with their management activities. According to "State Parks Guidelines for Creating Marine Managed Areas" (CSP 2010),

> *"When an MPA is proposed offshore of an existing terrestrial California State Park System unit, the terrestrial park's general plan (http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21299) and existing public use patterns should be a guiding element for the designation and shoreline boundaries of the MPA."*

Several aspects of the petition would require resolution of conflicts with current State Parks management plans for these established terrestrial areas. For example, Point Sal State Beach is currently only accessible via the Point Sal Trail because the road has been closed since 2008. The petition states, "In addition to the designation of a new Point Sal SMCA, we urge the state to redouble its efforts to provide access to Point Sal State Beach by reopening Point Sal Road."

However, increased access may not be aligned with California State Parks' management plan for the area. The Santa Barbara/Ventura Coastal State Park System General Plan for Point Sal State Beach discusses "Allowable Use Intensity", stating,

> *"Due to the serious problems with slope stability and erosion, use intensity at Point Sal State Beach shall be kept at a low level by providing only minimal facilities necessary for public health and safety. Erosion of lands above the state beach property will probably always be a significant constraint to recreational use in the area, due to the steep nature of bluff and hillside slopes and associated soil characteristics*."

Additionally, in 1962, the then State Park Commission designated the park unit as a State Beach as defined in Pub. Resources Code, section 5019.56. State Beaches are defined as "consisting of areas with frontage on the ocean, or bays designed to provide swimming, boating, fishing, and other beach-oriented recreational activities." As proposed, the Point Sal SMCA would align with existing shore-based finfish fishing by hook-and-line[21], but would limit other types of shore-based recreational take (e.g., seaweed and invertebrates such as crab and mussels), and recreational boat fishing. These additional limitations to recreational harvest would need to be considered in consultation with California State Parks. The proposed change would also require CDFW and California State Parks to coordinate on enforcement, updates to signage, and outreach efforts.

The proposed new MPA has the potential to interact with the regulations and permitting activities of the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards related to point source (e.g., wastewater treatment facilities) and non-point source discharges (e.g., stormwater runoff). The State Water Resources Control Board in collaboration with Regional Water Quality Control Boards can designate State Quality Protection Areas (SWQPAs) to prevent the undesirable alteration of natural water quality within MPAs. The State Water Resources Control Board's Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California (California Ocean Plan) was amended in 2012 to include the process for designating SWQPAs and Implementation Provisions for Marine Managed Areas (Chapter III.E., State Water Board 2019). This was done with the intention to align these SWQPAs with the MPA Network. The provisions are implemented by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, including through Waste Discharge Requirements, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits, and municipal separate storm sewer system permits. If the State Water Resources Control Board designates the new MPA as part of the existing SWQPAs, this would have implications for the Water Boards' workload and for permittees that would need to come into compliance with new permit requirements. The scope and

[21] Other MPA designations that would prohibit shore-based recreational fishing (i.e., an SMR or highly protected SMCA) would need to be considered in consultation with California State Parks.

magnitude of the State Water Resources Control Board's workload and the cost of compliance for permittees is unknown.

This list may not be exhaustive. The proposed change may have the potential to affect existing regulations, permits, leases, or management activities of Tribal governments, other agencies, and entities not identified here.

QUESTION 5: ARE THERE SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION GAPS THAT NEED TO BE FILLED TO INFORM THE EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE?

Yes. When evaluating this petition, CDFW reviewed the information in the petition, as well as information including, but not limited to:

- MLPA planning documents and related information (e.g., MLPA Goals and MPA Master Plan adaptive management objectives),
- Current research on MPA connectivity and climate resilience,
- State efforts to improve relationships with California Native American tribes,
- Literature and agency documents on local ecological significance,
- California State Parks Management Plans
- Habitat data in a Geographic Information System, and
- Commercial and recreational fishing data, such as that available through the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer tool.

CDFW has identified information gaps that limit the ability to fully evaluate the proposed change, primarily:

- Tribal concerns and interests of all affected tribes related to the establishment of a new MPA at this location.
- Effect of the proposed action on equity and access to marine resources for marginalized communities. Broadly, there are information gaps related to assessing issues regarding equity and access for traditionally underserved communities with the existing MPA Network as well as the proposed changes in the 2023 MPA petitions.
- Site specific data demonstrating how a partial take MPA would enhance productivity of the larval retention zone beyond current conditions or the potential added local value or value to the MPA Network through establishing a place-based MPA.
- Evaluation of connectivity across the entire MPA Network.
    - The potential contributions to larval transport and connectivity of an SMCA at Point Sal are highlighted in the petition. While localized data suggest that Point Sal is an important larval retention zone, a reevaluation of MPA

Network-wide connectivity using up-to-date average ocean circulation is intended for inclusion in the next DMR to support future assessments of regional connectivity and MPA Network performance, but currently, this is a data gap. This data gap is particularly relevant given the proximity of the proposed Point Sal SMCA to Vandenberg SMR, which is affected by petitions 2023-18MPAand 2022-002 and currently functions as a vital regional backbone supporting connectivity for 6 key habitats in the region.

- Site specific data that demonstrates the need to protect the area in a Special Closure for birds or pinnipeds beyond what existing protections offer (e.g., Marine Mammal Protection Act; California least tern have protections as an endangered species under both ESA and CESA.
- More research is needed to determine the factors that contribute to resilience across different species, habitats, and regions and how to best support these benefits. This is DMR Prioritized Recommendation (25), Develop and implement climate change research and monitoring priorities and metrics for California's MPA Network.
- The outcomes of petitions 2023-18MPA and 2022-002 are pending and could result in MPA Network-scale implications that have bearing on the assessment of a new MPA in Point Sal.
    - While some adjacent proposals preserve regional protections, the petitions for the Vandenberg SMR have the most critical bearing on Point Sal because they are the only proposals in proximity to Point Sal that pose a net reduction in regional conservation. The petitions for Vandenberg SMR propose adding an allowance for shore-based hook-and-line fishing, which would lower its LOP such that it would lose its status as a backbone MPA. In contrast, to the north, the proposal for Point Buchon SMR preserves its backbone status and the new Chitqawi SMCA introduces no new backbone MPA; to the south, the proposal for Point Conception SMR expands its boundaries.
    - Located just 10.42 miles south of the proposed Point Sal SMR boundary, Vandenberg SMR is currently California's largest mainland MPA and serves as a vital regional backbone by protecting critical habitats including kelp, beach, rocky intertidal, hard substrate (0-30 m depth), and soft substrate (0-30 and 30-100 m depths). Petitions 2023-18MPA and 2022-002 propose adding an allowance for shore-based hook-and-line fishing, which would reduce the SMR's LOP and alter its contribution to habitat replication and connectivity in the region. The ecological contribution of an individual MPA depends in part on its relationship with surrounding MPAs. Consequently, this pending decision introduces uncertainty regarding future MPA Network performance and therefore limits the ability to fully evaluate MPA Network-

scale implications of the proposed Point Sal SMCA. This uncertainty highlights the challenges associated with evaluating individual MPA modifications in isolation, as changes to a single site can have implications for broader MPA Network function and performance.

- A comprehensive analysis of how MPAs affect the benefits that non-consumptive users may derive from the ocean.
- A comprehensive analysis of socioeconomic impacts, including commercial and recreational fisheries when making decisions regarding the siting of new MPAs.

See Question 5 of Attachment 1 for significant information gaps.

QUESTION 6: ARE THERE SIGNIFICANT MANAGEMENT GAPS THAT NEED TO BE FILLED TO INFORM THE EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE?

Yes. DMR Recommendation 4 states that CDFW and CFGC should "apply what is learned from the first DMR to support proposed changes to the MPA Network," and that "current and future proposed changes to Network design, individual MPAs, and current MPA Management Program priorities and policies [should be] consistent with the findings of this Review."

When the DMR results were released in 2022, they did not indicate that large scale changes, such as the addition of new MPAs, were necessary to improve MPA Network performance. The recommendation at that time was that more time is needed for the benefits of the MPA Network to be fully realized. Results from the DMR did not indicate a deficiency in MPA Network connectivity that would warrant the establishment of a new MPA at Point Sal. Rather, several of the DMR Prioritized Recommendations are aimed at filling critical knowledge gaps in our understanding of the MPA Network functioning as a social-ecological system. Prior to implementing large-scale changes, critical knowledge gaps, including better integration of fisheries and MPA management, need to be filled, along with continued climate change monitoring and human dimensions considerations. Furthermore, the directives in Fish & G. Code, section 2853(c)(5) require a process for the establishment, modification, or abolishment of existing or new MPAs that should involve interested parties and be consistent with the Master Plan objectives that align with Fish & G. Code, section 2853(c)(5). These objectives require CDFW to consider factors such as socioeconomic impacts, results of monitoring and evaluation, and methods for robust public participation in the design of the MPA Network. CFGC's petition process does not offer the level of robust engagement and in-depth analysis required by the MLPA and Master Plan for siting new MPAs.

With respect to tribal co-management of California's MPAs, several of the DMR Prioritized Recommendations (CDFW 2022) are directly related to advancing tribal coordination,

including recommendations 1, 2, and 24: (1) Improve state agencies tribal engagement and relationship building efforts; (2) Create a clear pathway to tribal MPA management; and (24) Work with CFGC and partners to better incorporate marine cultural heritage into the design of the MPA Network, which may lead to advancements for recommendation (3) Build tribal capacity to participate in MPA management activities.

CDFW has been unable to make substantial progress on other DMR Recommendations due to the time and resources dedicated to the MPA petition process. As a result, CDFW still needs to work with tribes to develop a pathway to tribal MPA management and to improve tribal capacity to engage in MPA management activities and co-stewardship agreements. Tribes and the State already use a variety of approaches to establish such frameworks, including formal co-stewardship agreements, co-management agreements, and memoranda of understanding. Accordingly, CDFW is committed to continuing to work collaboratively with tribes through these and other such partnerships. See 'Tribal Co-Management' in the Evaluation Narrative and Overview for more information.

DMR Recommendation 24 (MPA Network Design) focuses specifically on working with CFGC and partners to better incorporate marine cultural heritage into the design of the MPA Network. It includes two sub-recommendations:

(a) Develop a process to incorporate SMCPAs (MMAIA § 36700(6)(d)) into existing MPAs and new locations across the Network, and
(b) Define metrics for identifying culturally important objects and sites to recommend for potential protection.

One potential pathway for implementation at this location is designation of a State Marine Cultural Preservation Area (SMCPA) by California State Parks, as identified in MMAIA § 36700(6)(d). This could help advance DMR Recommendation 24. However, it represents a current management gap, as no SMCPAs exist in the MPA Network, and their designation would require coordination with California State Parks and action by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

DMR Recommendation 8 related to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, would "Evaluate the accessibility of MPAs to various community groups," This work has not yet been completed, but could help assess how the proposed new MPA might affect communities of concern.

QUESTION 7A: WAS THE PROPOSED CHANGE CONSIDERED DURING THE MLPA INITIATIVE PLANNING PROCESS OR THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF MPAS AROUND THE NORTHERN CHANNEL ISLANDS?

Yes. An MPA at Point Sal was considered during the MLPA Initiative planning process, but not with the take allowances proposed in the petition (MLPAI 2006).

An MPA at Point Sal was considered during the MLPA Initiative planning process, but it was deliberately not included in the final adopted MPA Network. Package 3, one of three MPA arrays developed internally by the Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group CCRSG, and Package AC, developed externally[22] by NRDC (co-sponsors of the petition) and Point Blue Conservation Science, both proposed SMRs at Point Sal with footprints similar to the SMCA proposed in this petition. The other two CCRSG array packages did not include an MPA near Point Sal. Each of the groups responsible for development of MPA packages noted difficulties in determining the extent to protect the area's three main headlands (i.e., Point Sal, Purisima Point, and Point Arguello) while minimizing socioeconomic impacts (MLPAI 2006). For example, in their second revision, the proponents of Package 2 included an MPA at Purisima Point (Vandenberg SMR) but not at Point Sal or Point Arguello, stating that they chose to leave "several major headland areas outside of MPA protection to facilitate scientific comparison and to minimize socioeconomic impacts." As part of the rationale for including an MPA at Purisima Point, the group said that the "proposed SMR is designed to leave the area around Point Sal (which is more easily accessible from port and therefore more heavily fished) open to fishing activities."

The developers of Package 3, which was billed as a "hybrid" array that united myriad, sometimes opposing, perspectives, originally included an MPA at Purisima Point. In their second revision, they stated, "In response to the feedback from the SAT, the group . . . exchanged a proposed SMR at Purisima Point for an SMR at Point Sal to address spacing concerns." Following several iterations of refinement and direction from the Blue Ribbon Task Force, a modified proposal, Package 3R, was jointly developed by MLPA Initiative staff, proponents of the original Package 3, and SAT members. This array was ultimately recommended as the preferred alternative, and included an SMR at Purisima Point, but not at Point Sal.

An MPA in this area was considered multiple times throughout the rigorous, science-based, stakeholder-driven MLPA planning process and intentionally not adopted at that time. The socioeconomic considerations that informed this outcome likely remain

[22] During the Central Coast region planning process, the SAT and MLPA Initiative staff evaluated externally generated proposals, in addition to arrays proposed by the CCRSG.

relevant (see Impacts to Fisheries and Socioeconomic Impacts above and response to Question 15 for more information on potential consumptive impacts) and new information warranting revisiting this assessment has not been presented.

Monitoring of the MPA Network was an additional consideration. Point Sal was intended to function as an unprotected reference site for Vandenberg SMR, 10 miles south (MLPAI 2006). Although the Point Sal area does not currently serve as a reference site for MPA monitoring of key habitats, other important monitoring efforts do occur here (see Question 15 for more information).

QUESTION 7B: IS THERE NEW INFORMATION AVAILABLE, CHANGING CONDITIONS SINCE THE MLPA IMPLEMENTATION PHASE, AND/OR INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THE DMR THAT WARRANTS REEVALUATION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE?

No. The petition identifies several factors as new information warranting reconsideration of the proposed MPA, including changing ocean conditions associated with climate change, the lack of government-to-government consultation with tribes during the original MLPA Initiative planning process, continued development and industrialization of coastal resources since the implementation phase, and new scientific literature highlighting the conservation value of the area. While these issues are important, none provides a sufficient basis for reevaluating the proposed change.

Tribal partnerships and engagement since the MLPA Initiative planning process have evolved through mechanisms such as Executive Orders and specific regulatory changes. For example, Executive Order B-10-11 (2011) and the CDFW Tribal Communication and Consultation Policy (2014) helped to bridge the gap in the MLPA. More recently, Executive Order N-15-19 (2019), the 2020 Ancestral Lands Policy, and the California Natural Resources Agency Tribal Stewardship Policy have continued to shape state policy by prioritizing cultural access and preservation and further incorporating sovereign recognition, among many other objectives. An alternative path to fulfill tribal engagement and the non-regulatory request for co-management is to explore opportunities for co-management in the Point Sal area without establishing a new MPA. Additionally, an alternative to designating a new MPA would be for CDFW to work with the California Native American tribes that have cultural ties to the area and California State Parks to explore designating a SMCPA to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area without limiting fishing access to the public and other tribes that have a historical connection to the area, which would better align with Goal 3. This is consistent with DMR Prioritized Recommendation (24) Work with CFGC and partners to better incorporate marine cultural heritage into the design of the MPA Network.

With respect to climate change, the establishment of a single new MPA, particularly one not specifically designed to address climate resilience, is unlikely to meaningfully influence the overall resilience or functionality of the broader MPA Network (see response to Question 9 for MPA design and SAT Science Guidelines). Although climate change was not explicitly incorporated into the original MLPA Initiative planning process, the ecological principles underlying MPA Network design, such as larval connectivity and habitat replication, support both ecological and climate resilience. Indeed, MPAs in California have been shown to support larger, older, and more abundant marine populations that are more resilient to disturbances (CDFW 2022). Still, the extent to which these ecological benefits translate into improved resistance or adaptation to climate-driven impacts remains uncertain, and the magnitude of any such benefit is likely highly spatiotemporally variable. For example, while there is promising research showing that MPAs, including some within the existing MPA Network, may confer some resilience to climate disturbances (Micheli et al. 2012, Carr et al. 2017, Roberts et al. 2017, Bates et al. 2019, CDFW 2022, Jacquemont et al. 2022, Raimondi and Smith 2022, Ziegler et al. 2023, Benedetti-Cecchi et al. 2024, Kumagai et al. 2024, Olguín-Jacobson et al. 2025, Ortiz-Villa et al. 2025), these benefits are not predictably consistent (Coleman et al. 2017, Bruno et al. 2018, Freedman et al. 2020, Kyprioti et al. 2021, Smith et al. 2023, Filbee-Dexter et al. 2024, Ortiz-Villa et al. 2025). Thus, adding an additional MPA in this area is not likely to further promote climate resiliency beyond what the current MPA Network is currently providing (See Companion Document, Attachment 1 for more information on Climate Resiliency and MPAs). More research is needed to determine the factors that contribute to resilience across different species, habitats, and regions and how to best support these benefits. Further exploration of climate change resiliency and the role of MPA design will be guided by the DMR Recommendations focused on MPA Network performance (CDFW 2022) and the recommendations put forth in the "Climate Resilience and California's Marine Protected Area Network" report (Hofmann et al. 2021).

The threat of increased coastal development and marine industrialization are also mentioned as reasons to buffer the MPA Network. However, the existence of an MPA will not necessarily impede future coastal or marine development in this area.

Lastly, the conservation value of the area is not in question; this area was discussed at length during the Central Coast region planning process (2004 – 2007), primarily due to its conservation value. What is not apparent is the benefit to the MPA Network of adding the proposed partial take MPA beyond what is afforded by the existing protections. Research highlighted in the petition indicates

this area may be an important larval retention zone. However, the area will continue functioning as an important larval retention zone regardless of whether it is within an MPA or not. The results from the DMR do not indicate a deficiency in MPA Network connectivity that would warrant the establishment of a new MPA. Moreover, the proposed regulations would prevent this MPA from acting as a backbone MPA; therefore, it is not expected to contribute to ecological objectives of the MPA Network.

QUESTION 8: IF THE PROPOSED CHANGE AFFECTS AN EXISTING MPA, DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE ALIGN WITH THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF THE MPA IDENTIFIED DURING THE MLPA INITIATIVE PLANNING PROCESS OR THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF MPAS AROUND THE NORTHERN CHANNEL ISLANDS?

Not applicable. The proposed change does not affect an existing MPA.

QUESTION 9: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE IMPROVE INDIVIDUAL MPA OR MPA NETWORK DESIGN SO THAT IT BETTER ALIGNS WITH OR MEETS THE MPA SCIENCE GUIDELINES?

No. The MLPA requires that the design of individual MPAs and the statewide MPA Network be based on the best readily available science and that MPAs be of adequate size, number, protection level, and location to meet MLPA Goals. The SAT Science Guidelines, as outlined in the Master Plan, were created specifically to provide this scientific foundation and serve as the starting point for evaluating alternative MPA proposals. Alignment with these guidelines depends on LOP, which is determined by allowed take, and spatial configuration. More specifically, these guidelines require that an MPA must be at least 9 sq. mi. and meet one of the three highest LOPs (i.e., Very High, High, or Moderate-high) to contribute to ecological goals such as habitat replication and representation.

The proposed new MPA would be 9.27 sq. mi. with a Moderate-low LOP, when using the LOP assignments developed by the South Coast Region SAT[23] (Table 2). Although the proposed MPA exceeds the minimum size threshold of 9 sq. mi., it does not meet the LOP criterion of Moderate-high or above required by the SAT Science Guidelines, so the MPA as proposed would not serve as a backbone MPA. Therefore, implementation of the proposed change would not improve the design of the MPA Network or enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines. Additional data are needed to determine if an

[23] The proposed Point Sal SMCA is located in the Central Coast Study Region. However, the LOP assigned to this form of take by the SAT in the South Coast Study Region is used here, because the SAT in the Central Coast Study Region did not consider allowances for take of unspecified finfish by hook-and-line from shore and because Point Sal is located at the southern end of the Central Coast Study Region near the South Coast Study Region.

MPA at this location with a Moderate-high LOP would produce meaningful ecological benefits beyond what is already achieved by the existing science-based design.

Information included in the petition highlights the ecological significance and diverse habitats in this area and suggests that the proposed MPA would add replicates of key habitats to the MPA Network. However, contribution to habitat replication requires both backbone status and sufficient area of a specific habitat to capture 90% of the biodiversity associated with that habitat, as determined from biological surveys. Although the proposed MPA would contain the minimum amounts required of rocky intertidal, beach, and nearshore soft bottom habitat to contribute to representation of these habitats, it would not contribute to replication of these habitats in the MPA Network because of the Moderate-low LOP. If the MPA was proposed as an SMR or a highly protected SMCA (at least a Moderate-high LOP), it would meet the LOP criteria to be a backbone MPA and would contribute to replication of rocky intertidal, beach, and nearshore soft substrate. However, these three habitats are well represented and spaced in the existing MPA Network. The closest backbone MPAs containing these habitats are Vandenberg SMR 10.4 miles south and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA cluster 19.4 miles north of the proposed Point Sal SMCA. Spaced 32.5 miles apart, these backbone MPAs are well within the recommended maximum spacing interval of 31-62 miles. The petitioners also indicate that the proposed MPA would improve replication of hard and soft bottom habitats in the 0-30 and 30-100 m depth zones. Even if the proposed MPA achieved backbone status, the MPA as proposed would need to be expanded by approximately 7 sq. mi. to contain the minimum quantity of nearshore hard bottom habitat or of hard or soft bottom habitat in the 30-100 m depth zone required to contribute to replication of these habitats (Table 2). See Question 9 of Attachment 1 for the SAT Science Guidelines and additional context.

Ultimately, alignment with SAT Science Guidelines is evaluated at the MPA Network scale, where metrics like habitat replication and spacing are assessed collectively across all MPAs rather than individually. Consistent with this approach, individual petitions should not be evaluated in isolation, as changes to a single MPA may affect overall MPA Network performance. The petitions 2023-18MPA and 2022-002 have potential to affect the design of Vandenberg SMR, which introduces uncertainty in the structure of the MPA Network, as there are implications relevant to evaluating conformance of the proposed Point Sal SMCA with the SAT Science Guidelines. However, it does not alter the current assessment that the proposed Point Sal SMCA does not clearly enhance alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines within the existing MPA Network.

QUESTION 10A: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE ALIGN WITH CDFW FEASIBILITY GUIDELINES?

No. The proposed new SMCA as designed would not align with the following Feasibility Guidelines: boundaries are not all described using readily determined lines of latitude and longitude and regional objectives and site-specific rationales should reflect the design of the MPA. Landmarks described in the petition align with the proposed boundaries, but it is unclear whether these landmarks (e.g., the end of VSFB Road) are easily recognizable from both shore and by boat. MLPA Goals and site-specific objectives for the proposed MPA are described, though many are not aligned with the proposed take regulations (e.g., ecological goals should not be attributed to an MPA with an LOP below Moderate-high). See Question 10a of Attachment 1 for CDFW Feasibility Guidelines.

QUESTION 10B: IF NOT, IS THERE A RATIONALE FOR MOVING FORWARD WITH THE PROPOSED CHANGE OR AN ALTERNATIVE THAT COULD MEET THE INTENT BUT BETTER ALIGN WITH FEASIBILITY GUIDELINES??

CDFW has presented alternatives and recommends CFGC consider whether there is rationale for moving forward with an alternative, given the considerations and data gaps presented in the narrative and Table 1. There are alternatives that would meet the intent but better align with SAT Science Guidelines and CDFW Feasibility Guidelines. One alternative to designating a new MPA would be for CFGC to request CDFW to work with NCTC and other California Native American tribes that have cultural ties to the area, and California State Parks to explore designating a SMCPA to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area. Another alternative if CFGC wishes to expand the MPA Network by establishing a new place-based MPA, is to establish an SMR or more highly protected SMCA, which would be more likely to meet the ecological goals stated in the petition. The boundaries could be modified to use readily determined lines of latitude and longitude and easily recognizable permanent landmarks to better align with the Feasibility Guidelines.

If disturbance to bird and pinniped populations is a primary concern, a Special Closure[24] designation restricting access to the waters in the immediate vicinity of Lion Rock would be a more appropriate designation than an MPA. MPA designation affects take of living, geological, or cultural resources. Although this designation is the appropriate designation to offer additional protections for birds

[24] An area designated by CFGC that prohibits access or restricts boating activities in waters adjacent to seabird rookeries or marine mammal haul-out sites; used by CFGC for relatively small, discrete marine areas to achieve the goals of the MLPA (CDFW 2016).

and/or pinnipeds, CDFW does not have site-specific data documenting that other state and federal protections are not adequate to protect birds and pinnipeds in this area. Given that marine mammals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and take of seabirds is generally not permitted, MPA designation is unlikely to provide additional protections for these species.

The Feasibility Guidelines state, a "Special Closures should only be proposed if other state and federal regulations are inadequate to provide protections to marine species. Proposed Special Closures should include information on the rationale behind the proposal, species involved, and specific information on why other existing state and federal protections (including the establishment of an MPA) are not adequate." CFGC has established 14 Special Closures for relatively small, discrete marine areas to achieve the goals of the MLPA (CDFW 2016).

QUESTION 11: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE ENFORCEABILITY OF MPA REGULATIONS?

No. The proposed new MPA would result in enforcement challenges because the boundaries are not aligned with readily determinable lines of latitude and longitude. It is unclear whether the proposed boundaries align with permanent landmarks that are easily recognizable for boat-based and shore-based users.

The proposed change would introduce a new section of MPA regulations which would require enforcement. Partial-take MPAs such as the one proposed in this petition are generally more difficult to enforce than No-take MPAs because of:

- Difficulty in discerning if an activity is allowed when surveilling the MPA from afar,
- Increased potential for non-compliance by members of the public who observe activity taking place in an MPA but are unfamiliar with the specific regulations, and
- Increased potential for the illegal take of other species.

Additionally, because this is a proposed new MPA, there is an anticipated period of non-compliance following regulatory changes, particularly when additional restrictions are implemented. This would require additional resource investments in outreach, education, and enforcement to support enforcement and compliance.

QUESTION 12: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE SIMPLIFY REGULATORY LANGUAGE OR ENHANCE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING WITHOUT CHANGING THE INTENT OF THE MPA?

No. The proposed new Point Sal SMCA would not simplify existing language or enhance public understanding. It would add a new section of regulations and some of the

proposed language would be duplicative with other existing regulations or is unnecessary.

The request to add the proposed language regarding VSFB is not needed in Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, section 632 because: (1) Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, section 632, subd. (a) already includes provisions to accommodate "uses of the waters identified as marine protected areas, special closures, or the lands or waters adjacent to these designated areas by the Department of Defense, its allies or agents," including VSFB; (2) CDFW and VSFB have existing authorities to periodically restrict access to areas, so the language would be redundant; and (3) The directive for CDFW and VSFB to develop an MOU is non-regulatory and CDFW could work with VSFB to amend the existing MOU with VSFB that covers Vandenberg SMR if another MPA is established adjacent to the base.

Further, CDFW and VSFB have a valid MOU for Vandenberg SMR for the purpose of voluntary cooperation in clarifying the goals and objectives in the management and administration for Vandenberg SMR; protecting coastal and marine resources; and preserving essential military training, operational capabilities, and other mission critical activities. CDFW could work with VSFB to amend the existing MOU if another MPA is established adjacent to the base.

QUESTION 13: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE PROTECTION OF MARINE RESOURCES?

Yes. The proposed change would prohibit commercial and recreational boat-based fishing, which could provide localized protection to marine resources, particularly to fish and invertebrates in the offshore portion of the proposed SMCA. The proposed change would also prohibit other shore-based, recreational take (e.g., seaweed and invertebrates such as crab and mussels). However, recreational shore-based hook-and-line fishing would still be permitted, resulting in a Moderate-low LOP under the SAT framework (see response to Question 9). Although ecological objectives including protection of productive key habitats and enhancement of regional connectivity are identified in the petition, the MPA as proposed is not expected to fully achieve these objectives because the LOP is lower than that associated with backbone MPAs under the SAT Science Guidelines.

During the MLPA Initiative planning process, the SAT based LOP assignments on the assumption of maximum plausible intensity for any given proposed activity within MPAs. Thus, activities assigned a Moderate-low LOP were deemed likely by the SAT to alter species abundance relative to an SMR, as well as to significantly alter community structure by changing the abundance of a species that plays an important ecological role. In determining those species likely to benefit from an SMR, the SAT considered species home range sizes and movement patterns, including site fidelity to those home

ranges. Many of the species that may be caught using hook-and-line from shore have small home ranges, exhibit vulnerable life history traits (e.g., late to mature, slow-growing, bear live young), or form spawning aggregations in the surf zone. These characteristics make them particularly vulnerable to the direct impacts of fishing from shore. As such, many surf zone fishes, including surf perches (embiotocids), rockfishes (*Sebastes* spp.), and sharks, skates, and rays (elasmobranchs), were identified as species likely to benefit from MPA protection. These species, along with other frequently targeted surf zone fishes, play important roles in the food web dynamics of nearshore communities. Harvest of these species not only directly alters the abundance of these species, but also likely affects community structure, both in the surf zone and in adjacent habitats and depth zones. As a result, the impacts of fishing from shore may extend far from the zone of actual fishing. With respect to shore fishing, the SAT Guidelines state, "Many of the species removed through shore fishing play important roles in the nearshore community. For example, surfperches and croakers are important invertebrate predators, sea chubs (opaleye and halfmoon) are important omnivorous grazers, silversides are micro-omnivores and all groups provide important prey for a variety of larger fishes, marine birds and mammals. By altering the abundance of multiple species, shore fishing is likely to have impacts on community structure within an MPA both within the range of the actual fishing gear as well as in adjacent depth zones and habitats." In addition to direct impacts, the SAT also considered indirect impacts, including bycatch, incidental take, and habitat/gear interactions.

Point Sal State Beach is currently only accessible via the 12-mile round trip Point Sal Trail because the road has been closed since 2008, making access somewhat challenging for many. However, the petition states, "In addition to the designation of a new Point Sal SMCA, we urge the state to redouble its efforts to provide access to Point Sal State Beach by reopening Point Sal Road." This could increase visitation and use within the area and may also produce unintended adverse impacts to sensitive dune habitats, such as erosion and habitat disturbance (see response to Question 4 for more details).

Given LOP assignments are based on types of allowed activities rather than current or expected intensity of those uses, the proposed new SMCA would have a Moderate-low LOP to ensure consistency with the SAT Science Guidelines and maintain their precautionary approach. Thus, despite the area's current remoteness and access challenges, it would be inconsistent to presume the proposed SMCA would function with a higher LOP or offer the same protection as an SMR. To achieve the petitioner's stated ecological and protection goals, the proposed MPA would need to be established as an SMR with a Very High LOP or as a highly protected SMCA (at least Moderate-high LOP). Otherwise, the MPA as proposed would not qualify as a backbone MPA and thus would not improve alignment with the SAT Science Guidelines or contribute toward MLPA Goals 1 and 2. Inconsistent application of the precautionary approach used to develop the SAT

Science Guidelines risks undermining the scientific foundation of the statewide MPA Network.

Regardless of LOP, additional information is needed to evaluate the conservation benefit of the proposed MPA. For example, while the petitioner notes the presence of kelp beds as a habitat that would benefit from protection at this site, kelp has never been detected within the proposed boundaries in Landsat imagery and was detected only once over a 13-year period of CDFW aerial surveys. The area lies within a biogeographical transition zone and functions as a larval retention zone due to the physiography of the headlands (Wing et al. 1995, Graham and Largier 1997, Mace and Morgan 2006). Although studies cited by the petitioner indicate that eddies formed in the lee of headlands can accumulate larvae, additional analyses would be necessary to evaluate the extent to which the proposed MPA would meaningfully contribute to larval connectivity or recruitment within the broader MPA Network (Mace and Morgan 2006, Robinette et al. 2019). Moreover, as noted in one of the studies cited by the petitioner, such accumulation zones may not always coincide with habitat suitable for meeting MPA science or design objectives (Mace and Morgan 2006). These zones are typically nearshore sandy deposition areas, which, while regionally less common, are well represented in the existing MPA Network. Further analysis would be required to determine the potential marginal value of protecting more of this habitat type within the existing MPA Network.

The petition also mentions the importance of minimizing human disturbance to seabirds and pinnipeds in the area, particularly around Lion Rock. Lion Rock is a significant pinniped haul out and seabird roosting and breeding area (Mason et al. 2007, Capitolo et al. 2011, Robinette and Acosta 2011, Capitolo et al. 2012, Robinette et al. 2012, Robinette et al. 2013, Santora and Sydeman 2015, CDFW OSPR 2018, NMFS 2024, USSF 2025). However, an SMCA designation would still permit entry into the area and may not achieve the effect envisioned by the petitioners; instead, designation of a Special Closure around the rock could be considered as a targeted management measure to specifically address human disturbance and offer more protection.

CDFW considered this proposed change in context of the other proposed actions in the 14 other 2023 Bin 2 petitions. While some adjacent proposals preserve regional protections, the petitions for the Vandenberg SMR have the most critical bearing on Point Sal because they are the only proposals in proximity to Point Sal that pose a net reduction in regional conservation. The petitions for Vandenberg SMR propose adding an allowance for shore-based hook-and-line fishing, which would lower its LOP such that it would lose its status as a backbone MPA. In contrast, to the north, the proposal for Point Buchon SMR preserves its backbone status and the new Chitqawi SMCA introduces no new backbone MPA; to the south, the proposal for Point Conception SMR expands its boundaries. This introduces uncertainty in the structure of the MPA Network and is

relevant to the assessment of whether the proposed new MPA at Point Sal will maintain or enhance protection of marine resources. See response to Question 5 regarding significant information gaps.

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?

See Question 14 of Attachment 1.

QUESTION 15: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT CONSUMPTIVE AND/OR NON-CONSUMPTIVE ACTIVITIES? IF SO, HOW?

Yes. The proposed change has the potential to affect both consumptive and non-consumptive activities.

One of the goals of the proposed MPA is to, "advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council," with supporting cultural access and activities within the MPA one of the specific desired outcomes of co-stewardship. Despite this, the Point Sal SMCA, as proposed, would limit NCTC's and other tribes' ability to continue subsistence practices and cultural harvest of shore-based resources (except hook-and-line fishing for finfish), including shore-based recreational take (e.g., seaweed and invertebrates such as crab and mussels) and boat fishing.

The proposed Point Sal SMCA has the potential to impact both commercial and recreational consumptive uses. Consumptive users that would be impacted include the commercial nearshore groundfish[25] fishery and recreational anglers who travel to the area by boat, such as by CPFV[26] or private/rental boats, from Morro Bay area ports.

The proposed Point Sal SMCA overlaps with Commercial Fishing Blocks 631 and 632. From 2013-2025, these two blocks have contributed roughly $3.4 million in commercial

[25] For a list of all nearshore groundfish, see the California Nearshore Fishery Management Plan (CDFW 2002). Representative nearshore groundfish from the surrounding area of the proposed new MPA include cabezon, *Scorpaenichthys marmoratus;* California scorpionfish, *Scorpaena guttata;* California sheephead, *Bodianus pulcher;* black rockfish, *Sebastes melanops;* black-and-yellow rockfish, *S. chrysomelas;* blue rockfish, *S. mystinus;* brown rockfish, *S. auriculatus,* calico rockfish, *S. dalli;* China rockfish, *S. nebulosus;* copper rockfish, *S. caurinus;* gopher rockfish, *S. carnatus;* grass rockfish, *S. rastrelliger;* kelp rockfish, *S. atrovirens;* olive rockfish, *S. serranoides;* quillback rockfish, *S. maliger;* treefish, *S. serriceps;* kelp greenling, *Hexagrammos decagrammus;* rock greenling, *H. lagocephalus; and* monkeyface prickleback, *Cebidichthys violaceus*.

[26] The CPFV fleet takes paying customers to recreationally fish at offshore coastal locations.

groundfish fishery landings (Figure 1), accounting for approximately 22% of all value of commercial nearshore groundfish landed by all allowed gear types at the nearby ports of Morro Bay and Port San Luis combined. Implementing the proposed MPA would result in loss of those fishing grounds within the MPA.

While the area is not as readily accessible to shore-based fishing due to a long hike to the site, CPFVs and private boaters operating out of Morro Bay area ports (Port San Luis, Morro Bay Harbor, and San Simeon) frequent the area, especially during periods of rough weather when other fishing options are not available. Since the MPA Network was fully implemented, there were a total of 702 CPFV trips to fishing blocks 631 and 632. This tracking spans from 2013 through the most recent 2025 data. During this period, there was an average of 12.4 (± 10.7 SD) CPFV trips per year to block 631, and an average of 49.2 (± 21 SD) CPFV trips per year to block 632 (Figure 2). These blocks account for 12.8% of all CPFV trips out of Morro Bay ports during that time frame. Spatial trends in average catch per angler between 2016 and 2024 from CRFS[27] indicate the area is popular with private and rental boat anglers (Figure 3).

Other shore-based consumptive uses, including the recreational take of resources such as seaweed, crab, and mussels may also be affected.

More specific CPFV location information in the Point Sal area was obtained from the California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo fisheries observer program (Cal Poly Observer Program, abbreviated here as CPOP). This program sends fisheries observers aboard CPFV recreational fishing trips out of Morro Bay and Port San Luis, who collect length and species data for all fish caught by a subset of anglers during each fishing "drop" (the period in which lines were in the water), as well as metadata for each drop such as GPS coordinates (Stephens et al. 2006, Dodgen et al. 2025). CPOP observers accompanied 145 CPFV trips out of Port San Luis between 2004 and 2018 (data from Dodgen et al. 2025). Of these trips, 22, or approximately 15%, fished within the boundaries of the proposed Point Sal MPA (Figure 4, data from Dodgen et al. 2025). All observed CPFV trips located within blocks 631 and 632 went to the area that would be occupied by the proposed MPA. In the 2004-2018 period, there were a total of 5,878 CPFV trips out of Port San Luis, meaning that approximately 2.5% of them were observed. The fact that a considerable proportion, 15%, of the small percentage of trips observed went to this location suggests that it is visited by this fleet frequently. Prohibiting boat-based fishing

[27] CRFS conducts angler-intercept surveys of catch, effort, and location across multiple fishing modes. For the private/rental boat fishing mode, angler-intercept surveys are conducted at launch ramps, boat hoists, and boat rental locations where the public (from a subset of fishing trips) is intercepted to collect information on fish caught and released, biological data on kept catch, and approximate fishing location(s). Fishing locations are at the level of micro fishing blocks (approximately 1 x 1 square miles). Thus, spatial CRFS catch-per-angler data reflects the distribution of fish caught and kept per angler on this surveyed subset of trips.

access in this area is therefore expected to have adverse economic impacts on the CPFV fleet. As noted above in response to Question 7, this area was considered for inclusion in the MPA Network during the planning process but was ultimately excluded due to its high importance to commercial and recreational fisheries. Those same considerations remain relevant and suggest that the proposed change would have substantial effects on existing consumptive uses of the area.

The proposed change would also affect federal stock assessment research. Assessments using CPOP data include the 2015 Bocaccio assessment (He et al. 2015), the 2015 China Rockfish assessment (Dick et al. 2016), the 2017 Bocaccio assessment (He and Field 2018), and the 2019 combined Gopher and Black-and-Yellow Rockfish assessment (Monk and He 2019). Data collected by CPOP is used in the model in two ways, 1) as an index of abundance with associated size structure data, and 2) the fish kept or discarded dead by anglers on these trips is incorporated into the overall estimate of the total weight of all recreational fish removed. Implementing the proposed Point Sal SMCA would preclude open public CPFV fishing trips in the area. This restriction limits localized CPOP data collection and creates a monitoring "blind spot" for stock assessment scientists tracking groundfish populations. For example:

- Continuing CPOP data collection would require specifically charted research trips rather than leveraging existing public fishing trips.
- The Scientific Collecting Permit for the research charters would strictly limit the number of fish that could be legally kept.
- Artificially limiting the number of retained fish introduces sampling bias and makes it difficult to distinguish an actual population decline from a survey that simply missed the fish's geographic concentration.
- Restricting catch data could distort overall length and age composition models, particularly if this specific area serves as a strong population recruitment location.
- These combined data gaps ultimately introduce a much higher measure of uncertainty into final stock assessment estimates.

Given the value of these data for federal stock assessments and that all CPOP-observed trips that went to this area fished within the proposed SMCA's boundaries (data from Dodgen et al. 2025), the new MPA is likely to reduce the availability of fishery-dependent data from this area, which has potential to impact the quality of these assessments and consequently, our understanding of the status and health of economically valuable rockfish populations.

The area also provides many opportunities for human connection with the ocean through non-consumptive activities such as swimming, surfing, beach combing, and

wildlife viewing. Understanding how people interact with and derive benefits from the ocean and how these benefits may be affected by MPAs is challenging (Hall-Arber et. al. 2021, CDFW 2022, Travis et al. 2026). Social science research within the MPA Monitoring Program is a rapidly expanding field of MPA research, as well as a priority DMR Recommendation to invest in improving understanding of the human dimensions of MPAs and develop a human dimensions working group and research agenda (DMR Recommendation 12).

The data described here represents a single analysis of potential impacts on fisheries in the area. The full extent of socioeconomic impacts in this area, including on fisheries, is unknown (see Question 5 in Attachment 1).

QUESTION 16: IS THE PROPOSED CHANGE CONSISTENT WITH CFGC JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY?

See Question 16 of Attachment 1.

QUESTION 17: IS THE PROPOSED CHANGE CONSISTENT WITH CFGC COASTAL FISHING COMMUNITIES POLICY?

The following analysis was prepared by CFGC staff. See Question 17 of Attachment 1 for additional context on CFGC's response.

The proposed change would reduce fishing access, particularly for fishery participants associated with the coastal fishing communities of Avila (Port San Luis) and Morro Bay. While the extent of the impact is unclear, decreased access may affect the viability of the homeported fishing operations and broader fishing community. The action does retain shore-based hook and line fishing.

QUESTION 18: DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGE INTERACT WITH OR HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT PROPOSED CHANGES IN OTHER 2023 MPA PETITIONS?

Yes. There is a potential interaction with petition 2023-18 MPA and 2022-002. While some adjacent proposals preserve regional protections, the petitions for the Vandenberg SMR have the most critical bearing on Point Sal because they are the only proposals in proximity to Point Sal that pose a net reduction in regional conservation. The petitions for Vandenberg SMR propose adding an allowance for shore-based hook-and-line fishing, which would lower its LOP such that it would lose its status as a backbone MPA. In contrast, to the north, the proposal for Point Buchon SMR preserves its backbone status and the new Chitqawi SMCA introduces no new backbone MPA; to the south, the proposal for Point Conception SMR expands its boundaries (see responses to Questions 5, 9, and 13).

V. SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSES, DATA AND INFORMATION, AND CITATIONS

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 2. MPA attributes (area, LOP, depth range, and habitat extent) of Point Sal SMCA as proposed in petition 2023-28MPA_AM2. Habitat extent may be reported in linear miles or square miles, depending on data availability and Science Advisory Team guidance. A dash (—) indicates that the proposed MPA does not contain the habitat type. An MPA contributes to habitat replication only if it first meets the minimum size (>9 sq. mi.) and LOP (Very High, High, or Moderate-high) criteria (i.e., first two rows must be bold), according to SAT Science Guidelines established during the MLPA Initiative planning process. As proposed, the Point Sal SMCA has an LOP of Moderate-low and does not meet the threshold for LOP[a].

	Proposed
MPA Area (sq mi)	**9.27**
Level of Protection	Moderate-low
Min Depth (m)	0
Max Depth (m)	56.9
Eelgrass (sq mi)	—
Kelp (mi)	—
Beach (mi) [a]	2.56
Rocky Intertidal (mi) [a]	2.55
Estuaries (sq mi)	—
Hard Substrate	
0-30 m (mi)	0.86
30-100 m (sq mi)	0.16
100-200 m (sq mi)	—
>200 m (sq mi)	—
Soft Substrate	
0-30 m (mi) [a]	2.64
30-100 m (sq mi)	4.23
100-200 m (sq mi)	—
>200 m (sq mi)	—

[a] If the proposed Point Sal MPA were to meet the SAT Science Guidelines for LOP of at least Moderate-high, the proposed MPA contains sufficient habitat to qualify as a habitat replicate for beach, rocky intertidal, and soft substrate (0-30 m), according to SAT Science Guidelines established during the MLPA Initiative planning process.

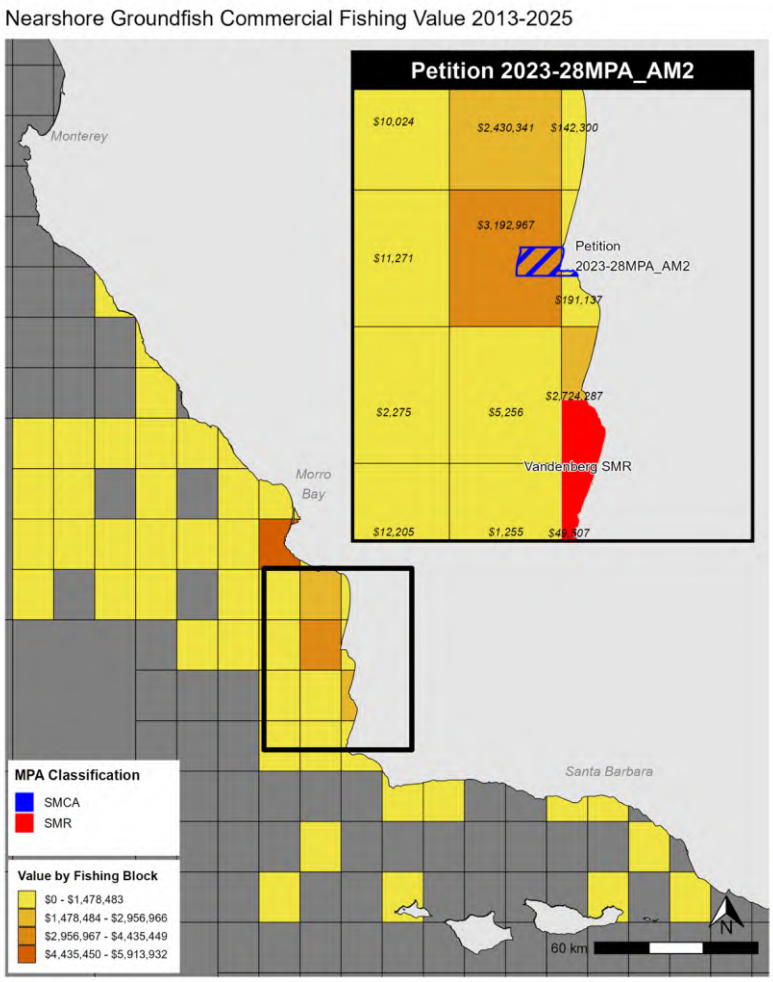

Figure 1. Total value (in $US) of commercially caught nearshore groundfish (cabezon, *Scorpaenichthys marmoratus;* California scorpionfish, *Scorpaena guttata;* California sheephead, *Bodianus pulcher;* black rockfish, *Sebastes melanops;* black-and-yellow rockfish, *S. chrysomelas;* blue rockfish, *S. mystinus;* brown rockfish, *S. auriculatus;* China rockfish, *S. nebulosus;* copper rockfish, *S. caurinus;* gopher rockfish, *S. carnatus;* grass rockfish, *S. rastrelliger;* kelp rockfish, *S. atrovirens;* olive rockfish, *S. serranoides;* quillback rockfish, *S. maliger;* treefish, *S. serriceps;* kelp greenling, *Hexagrammos decagrammus;* rock greenling, *H. lagocephalus;* and monkeyface prickleback, *Cebidichthys violaceus*)* via a variety of gear types from 2013 to 2025. The proposed new Point Sal SMCA is shown on the inset as blue hatching and the existing Vandenberg SMR is shown in red. The proposed MPA lies across Commercial Fishing Blocks 631 and 632. Each block is ten minutes of longitude by ten minutes of latitude (roughly ten miles square). *Note that no calico rockfish were landed during this period for the Point Sal area.

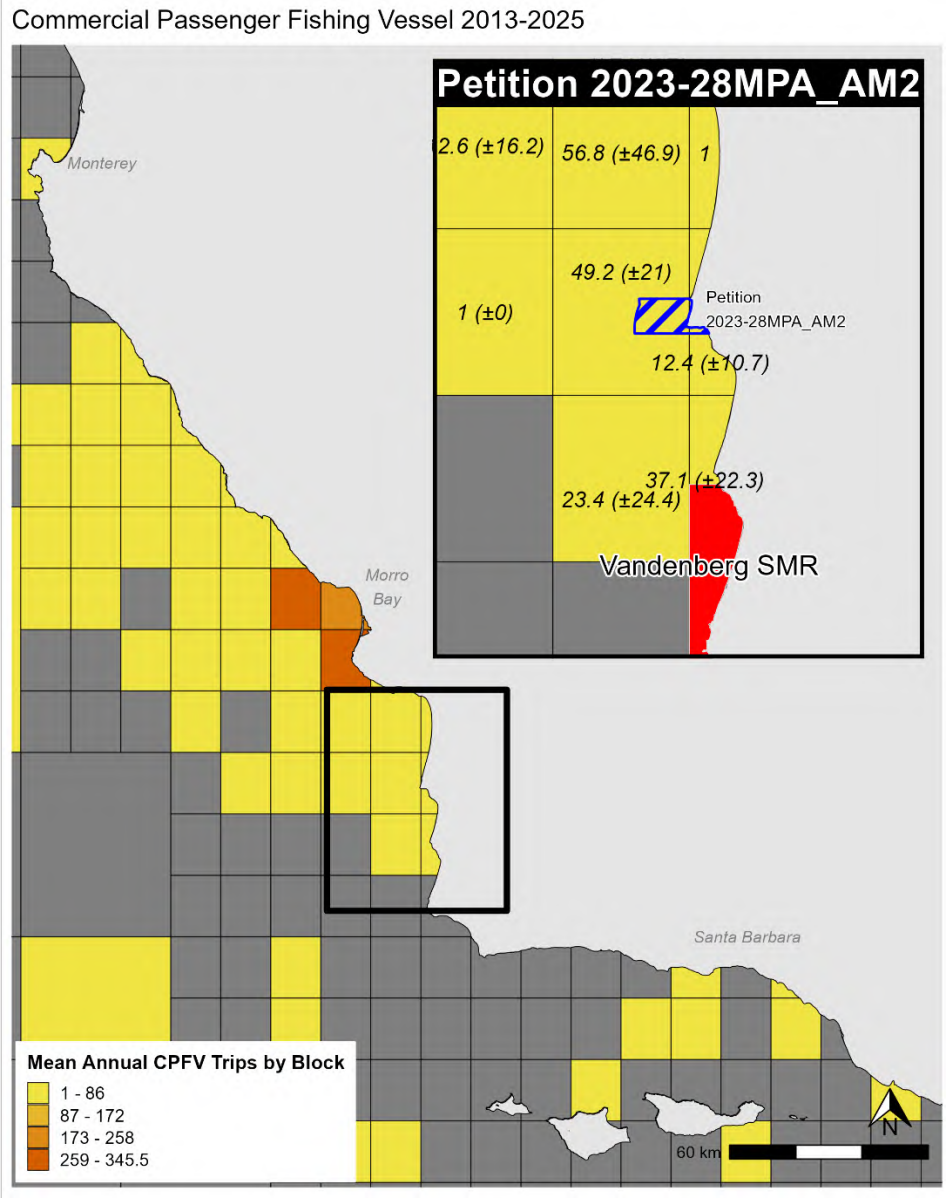

Figure 2. Mean annual (±SD) Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) trips by Commercial Fishing Block (fishing block) for the area surrounding the proposed Point Sal MPA, between 2013 and 2025. The CPFV fleet brings paying passengers to recreationally fish at offshore coastal locations. The proposed new Point Sal SMCA is shown on the inset as blue hatching and the existing Vandenberg SMR shown in red. The proposed MPA overlaps with fishing blocks 631 and 632. Each fishing block is ten minutes of longitude by ten minutes of latitude (roughly ten miles square). CPFV trips represented here do not include multi-day fishing trips.

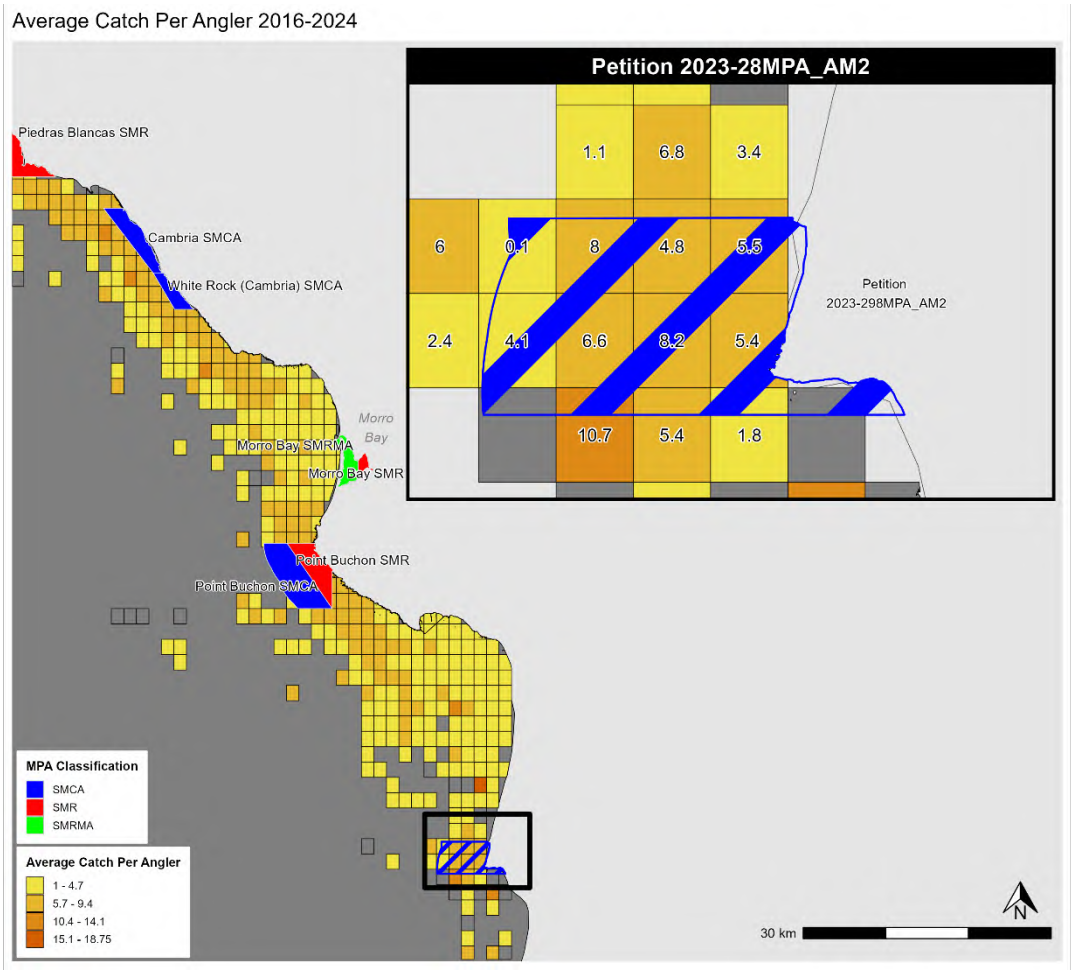

Figure 3. Average catch per angler (includes fish kept and released) for recreational anglers on private or rental boats from 2016 to 2024 by California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) microblock (1 minute of longitude x 1 minute of latitude, or roughly 1 mile square). The proposed new Point Sal SMCA is shown in blue hatching. CRFS conducts angler-intercept surveys of catch, effort, and location across multiple fishing modes. For the private/rental boat fishing mode, angler-intercept surveys are conducted at launch ramps, boat hoists, and boat rental locations where the public (from a subset of fishing trips) are intercepted to collect information on fish caught and released, biological data on kept catch, and approximate fishing location(s). Thus, spatial CRFS catch per angler data reflects the distribution of fish caught and kept per angler on this surveyed subset of trips.

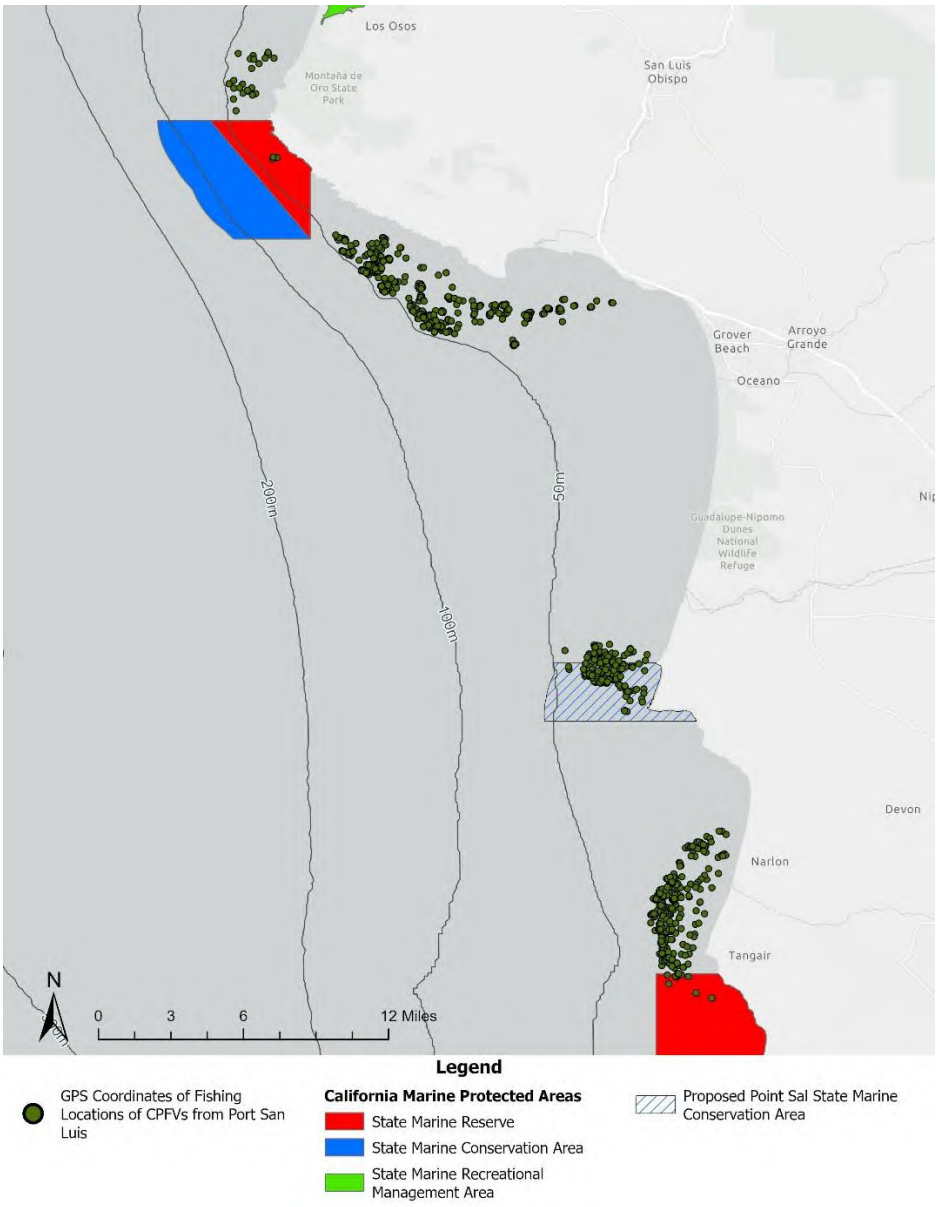

Figure 4. GPS points from California Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) trips out of Port San Luis taken by California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo fisheries observer program observers between 2004 and 2018 (data from Dodgen et al. 2025). The CPFV fleet brings paying passengers to recreationally fish at offshore coastal locations. GPS points are taken multiple times per trip, so one point does not represent one trip, it represents locations where fishing occurred throughout any given trip. Note that some points overlap with State Marine Reserves (SMRs), which do not allow take; this is because the dataset spans the period before, during, and after implementation of the MPA Network and those areas were not SMRs when the data was collected before implementation. Existing MPAs are shown in solid colors, and the proposed Point Sal SMCA is shown as blue hatching.

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CALIFORNIA
OCEAN
PROTECTION
COUNCIL

July 31, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
Transmitted via email: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: OPC Staff Recommendations - Petitions to Adaptively Manage California's Marine Protected Area Network

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Anderson, and Members of the California Fish and Game Commission,

Thank you for your leadership in managing California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network – the global gold standard for marine conservation. Building on our public letter transmitted to the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGC) on March 20[1], which outlined the role of the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) in MPA management and highlighted major OPC policy priorities for MPAs, we are pleased to provide specific input and OPC staff's recommendations on submitted petitions for changes to the MPA Network currently under consideration by CFGC. As noted in our March 20 letter, this input is intended to complement the comprehensive evaluations of MPA petitions conducted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) under a separate set of questions and criteria established by CFGC.

The first-ever Decadal Management Review of the MPA Network, released in 2023, clearly demonstrated that MPAs are working to improve California's ocean health. However, the Decadal Management Review did not specifically explore opportunities to strengthen the existing MPA Network. As noted in our March 20 letter, OPC believes that evaluating MPA petitions with this question in mind is essential for ensuring the continued success of California's MPAs, especially as a changing climate increasingly threatens coastal and marine

1 https://opc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/OPC-letter-on-MPA-petitions_3.20.26-508.pdf

ecosystems and ecosystem services. Therefore, this input provided by OPC staff is explicitly focused on whether proposed actions hold promise to strengthen the performance and durability of the MPA Network. This is consistent with OPC's Strategic Plan[2] and key recommendations from the Decadal Management Review[3].

Overall, **OPC's petition recommendations are rooted in a precautionary approach.** The 2026 California Coast and Ocean Report[4], released earlier this year, indicates that climate change is increasingly threatening coastal and marine ecosystems, as well as benefits provided by those ecosystems to coastal communities and California Native American tribes. In the face of warming oceans, sea level rise, the devastation of our state's kelp forests, severe shocks to fishing communities, and other climate-driven impacts, California's MPA Network is one of our most effective conservation tools for safeguarding biodiversity, building climate resilience, and ensuring the continued delivery of important ecosystem services that drive our state's multi-billion dollar ocean economy.

It is through this lens that we assessed petitions. Specifically, we looked for opportunities to bolster the types of MPA benefits anticipated to serve as an "insurance policy" against changing ocean conditions, such as increased population sizes, higher genetic diversity, strengthened ecological connectivity, and intact food webs. In doing so, we acknowledge that the effects of climate change are uncertain and that MPAs are not a panacea for the threats facing our ocean. We strongly support continued research and monitoring to assess the impacts of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and how MPAs may mitigate these impacts. In particular, California's robust MPA monitoring program, which is actively tracking the effects of MPAs across key ecosystems and coastal communities statewide, will continue to be a crucial tool in evaluating the overall success of the Network and any adaptive management changes made through the petition process. OPC is committed to continuing our support for the development and application of best available science to adaptively manage the Network into the future.

Given this precautionary approach, **we do not recommend that CFGC approve any petition that would weaken the existing MPA Network** (Petitions 2023-14MPA, 2023-15MPA_AM, 2023-

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2 OPC 2026-2030 Strategic Plan Objective 3.1: Strengthen the performance and durability of California's Marine Protected Area Network.

3 Decadal Management Review recommendations #4 (Apply what is learned from the first Decadal Management Review to support proposed changes to the MPA Network and Management Program); #23 (Expand and target monitoring and research efforts to examine the design attributes of the MPA Network more effectively); #28 (Further integrate influencing factors into ecological and human study designs and interpretations of MPA performance).

4 https://opc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/California-Coast-and-Ocean-Report-2026.pdf

16MPA, 2023-18MPA[5], and 2023-23MPA_AM[6]**.** These petitions include several proposed actions that would open no-take State Marine Reserves or limited-take State Marine Conservation Areas to certain new types of fishing. OPC appreciates the thoughtfulness of petitioners in developing these proposals; however, we find that any actions that would roll back existing protections pose an unacceptable risk to the integrity of the existing Network. Such actions, while well-intentioned, have the potential to compromise existing conservation benefits and degrade the ability of the Network to meet the goals of the Marine Life Protection Act.

As a first step in assessing petitions with potential to strengthen the MPA Network (i.e. proposals for new MPAs, expanded MPAs, or stricter regulations), OPC staff first considered **whether petitions would improve MPA Network design**. Importantly, neither the Decadal Management Review nor CDFW's recently released Science Guide to California's MPA Network[7] identify significant design deficiencies in the MPA Network. Indeed, the Network is largely compliant with science guidance from the MPA planning process, with most MPAs meeting minimum size guidelines and all MPAs meeting minimum spacing guidelines. However, from a precautionary standpoint, some petitions have clear potential to improve MPA Network design, for example by reducing large distances between MPAs or increasing the representation of vulnerable habitats within the Network. OPC finds clear Network design benefits for three petitions: Petition 2023-29MPA_AM2, Petition 2023-32MPA, and two actions within Petition 2023-33MPA_AM1.

As a next step, OPC considered **whether petitions would result in meaningful additional biodiversity protection beyond what the current MPA Network already provides**. This could include actions such as: bolstering protections for important geological or biological features; protecting additional sensitive habitat, such as eelgrass, kelp forests, or rocky shores; protecting ecosystems that are important larval sources, sinks, or retention zones; strengthening ecological

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5 Petition 2023-18MPA includes an action that would open Vandenberg State Marine Reserve to certain types of shore fishing. A petition submitted in 2022 by the City of Lompoc (Petition 2022-04) proposes a similar action and will be considered by CFGC alongside the other petitions discussed here. While we recognize that Petition 2022-04 is intended to improve equitable coastal access for local residents, it would weaken protections provided by Vandenberg State Marine Reserve, which serves as a critical backbone MPA in the region. We recommend that CFGC deny Petition 2022-04.

6 One action in 2023-23MPA_AM (Action 20) has potential to strengthen the MPA Network: designation of a new MPA at Tanker's Reef. However, as proposed, this new MPA falls far below the minimum area required to function as a replicate in the MPA Network and is unlikely to provide meaningful additional conservation benefits beyond those already achieved by the existing Network, especially in the highly protected Monterey Bay region.

7 https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=246940&inline

connectivity; reducing fishing pressure on populations in decline; promoting improved ecosystem structure and function; or enhancing the resilience of the MPA Network to current or predicted climate impacts. Importantly, in exploring this consideration, OPC gave equal weight to petitions that would address current specific threats to biodiversity, such as the impacts of fishing gear on sensitive habitats, and petitions that would improve the Network's ability to withstand larger-scale and more diffuse impacts, such as marine heat waves. OPC finds compelling biodiversity benefits for several petitions: Petition 2023-21MPA_AM1, Petition 2023-27MPA_AM1, Petition 2023-28MPA_AM1, Petition 2023-29MPA_AM2, Petition 2023-32MPA, and two actions within Petition 2023-33MPA_AM1.

Finally, OPC considered **whether petitions would help support and revitalize tribally-led stewardship**. OPC is highly supportive of MPA adaptive management actions that advance co-governance, co-management, and collaborative stewardship with tribes. Such actions, which include protecting places with high biocultural significance, are essential not only for righting historical wrongs, but also for reconnecting tribes to traditional stewardship practices that can directly benefit biodiversity. Increased support for tribal stewardship is a top priority in both OPC's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan[8] and the California Natural Resources Agency's recently released Tribal Stewardship Policy[9], which aims to expand tribal stewardship of at least 7.5 million acres of California's lands and coastal waters. OPC finds that the following petitions have strong potential to advance tribally-led stewardship: Petition 2023-20MPA_AM1, Petition 2023-21MPA_AM1, Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2, and Petition 2023-29MPA_AM2.

Based on these considerations, OPC recommends approval of the following petitions, with some modifications. In developing these recommendations, OPC staff evaluated the most recent versions of petitions, including any amendments or clarifications received from petitioners after CFGC's March 2025 deadline for petition amendments.

8 OPC 2026-2030 Strategic Plan Objective 2.1: Strengthen partnerships with California Native American tribes.

9 https://resources.ca.gov/Initiatives/Tribalaffairs/TribalStewardshipPolicyAndToolkit

Table 1. OPC's recommended petitions.

Petition Number	MPA(s) Affected	Petitioner	Proposed Action	OPC Recommendation
2023-20MPA_AM 1 (as amended at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting)	Point Buchon SMCA and Point Buchon SMR (existing)	Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians	Add a tribal take exemption at Point Buchon SMCA, rename Point Buchon SMCA, and adjust northern boundary of Point Buchon SMR	Approve tribal take exemption and renaming; deny proposed boundary change
2023-21MPA_AM1 (as amended at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting)	Pyramid Point SMCA (existing)	Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation	Remove recreational take of true smelt in Pyramid Point SMCA and adjust northern boundary of Pyramid Point SMCA	Approve proposed removal of recreational take of true smelt; deny proposed boundary change
2023-27MPA_AM1 (as clarified at the May 6, 2026 CFGC regional meeting)	Anacapa Island SMCA (existing)	Environmental Defense Center	Modify regulations at Anacapa Island SMCA to protect sensitive eelgrass habitats (with several options proposed)	Modify SMCA regulations to prohibit the deployment of lobster traps shallower than 50 feet
2023-28MPA_AM2 (as amended at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting)	Point Sal SMCA (new)	Northern Chumash Tribal Council and Natural Resources Defense Council	Add a new MPA near Point Sal	Approve the proposed new Point Sal SMCA

Petition Number	MPA(s) Affected	Petitioner	Proposed Action	OPC Recommendation
2023-29MPA_AM2 (as amended at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting)	Mishopshno SMCA (new)	Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and Natural Resources Defense Council	Add a new MPA near Carpinteria	Approve the proposed new Mishopshno SMCA
2023-32MPA (as clarified at the April 21, 2026 CFGC regional meeting)	Duxbury Reef SMCA (existing)	Environmental Action Committee of West Marin	Expand Duxbury Reef SMCA and modify regulations to strengthen protections for intertidal species	Designate two new SMCAs to protect the northern and southern portions of Duxbury Reef, each with take regulations that protect intertidal seaweed and invertebrates while allowing for continuation of other existing shore- and boat-based fishing
2023-33MPA_AM1	Various existing MPAs and one proposed new MPA	Environment California and Azul	Expand six existing MPAs statewide and add a new MPA in Santa Cruz	Approve proposed expansion of Point Dume SMCA, but deny proposed additional take allowance in Point Dume SMCA. Approve a smaller expansion of Point Conception SMR. Deny proposed expansion of Natural Bridges SMR, Cabrillo SMR, South Point SMR, or Gull Island SMR. Deny proposed designation of a new SMCA at Pleasure Point.

Detailed narratives providing justification for these recommendations are provided in the "Recommendation Narratives" section below, starting on page 10.

We recognize that our recommendations do not include three petitions intended to strengthen the MPA Network: Petition 2023-19MPA, Petition 2023-24MPA and Petition 2023-34MPA.

- Petition 2023-19MPA, submitted by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, would designate a new SMCA, to be named Chitqawi in honor of a nearby Chumash coastal

village, offshore and to the north of Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County. The proposed Chitqawi SMCA would protect waters adjacent to Morro Rock. However, the proposed SMCA would be located immediately adjacent to Morro Bay Harbor, a critical regional port, potentially presenting significant challenges. OPC also recognizes that many California Native American tribes, including non-federally recognized tribes, have significant cultural ties to Morro Rock. Given that the original petition focused on co-management of the area as its main goal, OPC recommends that CFGC work with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians to identify alternative pathways for strengthening protection of Morro Rock and establishing meaningful co-management agreements here and in the broader region. The petition process may have been an irregular fit for the Tribe's goals with this petition and OPC is committed to working with the Tribe going forward to protect this area through meaningful co-management.

- Petition 2023-24MPA, submitted by the Laguna Bluebelt Coalition, would extend the southern boundary of the Laguna Beach No-Take SMCA into the northern portion of Dana Point SMCA, expanding the No-Take SMCA and aligning its southern boundary with the southern border of the City of Laguna Beach. While this would increase overall protection in the area and potentially benefit fished species (e.g. finfish, lobster, and urchin) within the Dana Point SMCA, OPC notes that the existing boundary of the Laguna Beach No-Take SMCA currently aligns with both a clear latitude line as well as prominent rocky outcroppings, which serve as a helpful landmark for both boat-based and shore-based anglers. Changing this well-established and clear boundary has the potential to result in increased confusion and potential enforcement challenges.

- Petition 2023-34MPA, submitted by Environment California and Azul, would reclassify Point Buchon SMCA to an SMR and strengthen protections in Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs by removing all take except for recreational spearfishing. Petitioners argue that these changes are necessary to address issues regarding compliance with MPA regulations; however, neither Point Buchon SMCA nor Farnsworth Onshore or Offshore SMCAs appear to have an unusually high number of MPA-related citations and, in fact, citation data demonstrate an overall trend of improved compliance with MPA regulations at Point Buchon SMCA.

For reference, our recommendations on each of the fifteen MPA petitions currently under consideration by CFGC are summarized in the "Recommendations At-a-Glance" table below, starting on page 28.

In closing, OPC appreciates the robust conversation around MPA petitions to date and recognizes that the many Californians who have engaged in this process hold a diversity of

perspectives, interests, and viewpoints related to these petitions. OPC staff attended all three in-person regional meetings of CFGC held earlier this year, which were intended to provide a venue for public feedback on petitions. At those meetings, we heard tribal members, conservation advocates, and students voice strong and passionate support for a strengthened MPA Network that can help protect our vulnerable coast and ocean in a time of rapid environmental change. However, we were also compelled by the serious concerns of many members of local communities, including commercial and recreational fishermen, whose lives and livelihoods have the potential to be significantly impacted by new or expanded MPAs. We deeply value California's commercial and recreational fishing communities and recognize their critical role in supporting a thriving blue economy. To that end, where possible, we have endeavored to provide creative recommendations on petitions that add conservation value to the existing MPA Network while limiting impacts to commercial and recreational fishing. More broadly, as highlighted in Goal 4 of our 2026-2023 Strategic Plan, OPC is committed to advancing a sustainable blue economy by investing in healthy marine ecosystems and resilient coastal communities that can continue to support fishing livelihoods for generations to come.

Additionally, the regional meetings made it abundantly clear that many communities, especially communities entitled to environmental justice, can face significant systemic barriers to accessing the coast and ocean and to participating in MPA management and decision-making processes. Millions of Californians visit the coast each year to access the ocean in different ways, including to engage in both consumptive and non-consumptive uses. Because of this, assessing benefits related to equitable access for individual petitions is a complex undertaking. Impacts of individual petitions on equitable access[10] and on advancing CFGC's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy[11] have been initially assessed via a joint effort between OPC and CDFW [12]; OPC is committed to expanding equitable access to the coast and ocean and supporting improved inclusion in coastal and ocean management, consistent with the goal of OPC's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan to maximize community benefits and stewardship, as well as OPC's Equity Plan[13].

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10 Specifically Question 14 in CDFW's Evaluation Framework: Does the proposed change provide more equitable access opportunities (e.g., fishing, educational, and/or other recreational opportunities) for traditionally underserved or marginalized communities?

11 Specifically Question 16 in CDFW's Evaluation Framework: Is the proposed change consistent with the CFGC Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (https://fgc.ca.gov/About/JEDI)?

12 Available here: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=246997&inline

13 https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/_media_library/2022/11/OPC-Equity-Plan-508.pdf

Thank you for considering our recommendations. We look forward to the work ahead and to continued meaningful engagement with California's diverse coastal communities as the petition process unfolds.

Sincerely,

Jenn Eckerle
Deputy Secretary for Oceans and Coastal Policy, California Natural Resources Agency
Executive Director, Ocean Protection Council

Recommendation Narratives

Petition 2023-20MPA_AM1: Add a tribal take exemption at Point Buchon SMCA, rename Point Buchon SMCA, and change northern boundary of Point Buchon SMR

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (SYBCI) has proposed several changes to Point Buchon SMCA[14] and Point Buchon SMR[15]. As amended by the tribe at the April 14, 2026 meeting of CFGC's Tribal Committee[16], these proposed changes are: add a tribal take exemption at Point Buchon SMCA for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, rename Point Buchon SMCA, and change the northern boundary of Point Buchon SMR. Located approximately eight miles south of Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County, Point Buchon SMCA and Point Buchon SMR together protect nearly 19 square miles of rocky reefs, sandy seafloor, beaches, kelp forests, rocky intertidal habitat, offshore pinnacles, and some of the shallowest cold-water corals in California (SeaSketch California 2026). Point Buchon SMR spans approximately 2.5 miles of coastline between Coon Creek and Diablo Canyon and protects 6.7 square miles of coastal waters between shore and approximately 200 feet deep (SeaSketch California 2026). Point Buchon SMCA protects more than 12 square miles of coastal waters offshore of the SMR, ranging from approximately 200 to 400 feet deep (SeaSketch California 2026).

Adding a tribal take exemption to Point Buchon SMCA and renaming Point Buchon SMCA to better reflect Chumash cultural heritage both represent significant opportunities to advance tribal sovereignty, collaborative governance, and tribal stewardship within the Central Coast[17] bioregion of the MPA Network. Similar to other tribal take exemptions currently granted to SYBCI for MPAs in the South Coast bioregion of the MPA Network, such as Kashtayit SMCA, the proposed tribal take exemption for Point Buchon SMCA would exempt SYBCI members from MPA-specific take restrictions and thus allow SYBCI members to harvest living marine resources

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14 SMCA = State Marine Conservation Area. In this type of MPA, certain recreational or commercial fishing activities may be allowed, while other types of take are prohibited. https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Definitions#mpa

15 SMR = State Marine Reserve. In this type of MPA, all take is prohibited. https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Definitions#mpa

16 https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=245526&inline

17 As defined in the 2018 MPA Monitoring Action Plan (https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=161748&inline), the bioregions of the MPA Network are: North Coast (California/Oregon border to San Francisco Bay, including the Farallon Islands), Central Coast (San Francisco Bay to Point Conception), and South Coast (Point Conception to U.S./Mexico border, including the Channel Islands).

for cultural, subsistence, and stewardship purposes. Regulations in the adjacent Point Buchon SMR would remain unchanged.

Point Buchon is also culturally significant. The petition identifies Buchon as a historical Chumash village site and describes the area as having special spiritual significance to Chumash maritime peoples. Establishing a tribal take exemption at Point Buchon SMCA and renaming the SMCA would recognize this significance and advance progress toward tribal co-management of this MPA, which the tribe has requested to pursue through a non-regulatory pathway. **OPC recommends that CFGC approve the proposed tribal take exemption and name change for Point Buchon SMCA.**

Petitioners have also requested to adjust Point Buchon SMR's northern boundary further to the north, arguing that doing so would better capture the full marine area offshore of Point Buchon. However, OPC notes that the existing northern boundary aligns with a readily determinable line of latitude (35° 15.250' N) and prominent onshore landmarks; changing the boundary could cause confusion and enforcement challenges and would also result in a misalignment of the northern boundaries of Point Buchon SMR and SMCA. **OPC recommends that CFGC deny the requested boundary adjustment for Point Buchon SMR.**

Petition 2023-21MPA_AM1: Remove recreational take of true smelt in Pyramid Point SMCA and adjust northern boundary of Pyramid Point SMCA

The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation has proposed two changes to Pyramid Point SMCA, located at Pyramid Point in Del Norte County near the California-Oregon border: removal of the current recreational take allowance for true smelt, and adjustment of the SMCA's northern boundary. Pyramid Point SMCA is the northernmost MPA in California's MPA Network and covers approximately 14 square miles of sandy beaches, offshore rocks, and soft seafloor; currently the only type of take allowed in this MPA is recreational take of surf smelt (*Hypomesus pretiosus*, known as *lhvmsr* in the Tolowa language)[18] by dip net or Hawaiian-type throw net, as well as tribal take of all species, consistent with applicable state fishing regulations, by the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation through a tribal take exemption. The proposal is intended to protect a culturally and ecologically important forage fish species while maintaining tribal take of that species,

18 Technically, Pyramid Point SMCA allows take of a three-species "true smelt" group: surf smelt, night smelt, and whitebait smelt. To achieve the requested removal of the recreational take allowance for surf smelt, it is necessary to remove the recreational take allowance for the species group. At the April 14, 2026 meeting of CFGC's Tribal Committee, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation amended this petition to change its request from removal of the take allowance for surf smelt to removal of the take allowance for true smelt.
https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=245526&inline

particularly take associated with traditional Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation "fish camps" – annual events where members of the Nation travel to the coast to fish, camp, and traditionally process surf smelt during its spawning months from July to October.

Petitioners argue that removal of the existing recreational take allowance is needed because, according to the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation's Traditional Knowledges – particularly the observations of traditional surf smelt fishermen – surf smelt populations have declined substantially since the late 1990s. OPC respects and affirms the importance of tribal science and Traditional Knowledges and also notes that this trend has been documented through non-indigenous science. Though no formal stock assessments have been completed for surf smelt, CDFW's 2020 Enhanced Status Report for the species shows that commercial landings statewide (95% of which occur in Humboldt and Del Norte County ports) regularly exceeded 500,000 pounds per year in the mid-1990s but dropped precipitously in 1998-1999 and have not exceeded 250,000 pounds per year in the last twenty years (CDFW 2020). Commercial surf smelt landings declined to record lows of approximately 700-1,000 pounds annually between 2017 and 2019 before showing a modest rebound beginning in 2020, although catches remained well below historical levels (CDFW 2025). California Recreational Fisheries Surveys (CRFS) data summarized in CDFW's Enhanced Status Report that recreational surf smelt landings were negligible from 2005 through 2017, apart from an anomalous spike to approximately 110,000 pounds in 2011; the CRFS program that produced these estimates was discontinued in 2018 (CDFW 2020, CDFW 2025).

The decline of surf smelt populations concerns OPC for several reasons. First, forage fishes such as surf smelt play critical roles in nearshore food webs because they transfer energy from plankton-rich coastal waters to higher trophic levels, supporting fish, seabird, and marine mammal populations (Pikitch et al. 2014, Essington et al. 2015). Surf smelt in particular play a foundational role in Northern California coastal ecosystems by serving as prey for species such as salmon, seabirds, marine mammals, and other predators. As an important forage fish, their abundance can reflect broader ecosystem condition and food web dynamics (Santora et al. 2021, NOAA Fisheries 2022). Second, Native American tribes on California's North Coast have relied on surf smelt since time immemorial for subsistence and cultural heritage. As described in the petition, Tolowa families return to the coast each year for "fish camps" that involve the harvest of surf smelt using traditional A-frame nets, with associated prayers, protocols, and ceremonies. Maintaining access to a healthy surf smelt population is essential to the continuation of tribes' cultural practice, food sovereignty, spiritual relationships, and community well-being (Turner et al. 2008, Charles & Wilson 2009).

Surf smelt are a sensitive species and their population trends can be heavily influenced by a number of factors. This includes not only fishing pressure – heavy fishing can cause surf smelt populations to decline quickly given their short life cycles and the fact that most fishing occurs

during spawning – but also environmental stressors, including warming waters, pollution, and physical impacts to beaches where they spawn (Russell et al. 2022, Tomlin et al. 2021). OPC recognizes that MPAs have limited ability to mitigate these larger-scale threats. However, given the population declines noted above and the ecological and cultural importance of surf smelt, OPC supports stricter MPA regulations to strengthen protections for this vulnerable species. OPC notes that approval of this petition would allow continued tribal harvest of surf smelt, but this traditional take is unlikely to have population-level impacts.

To support the recovery of surf smelt, the integrity of nearshore food webs, and the continuation of tribal stewardship and cultural use of this species into the future, **OPC recommends that CFGC approve removal of the allowance for recreational take of true smelt in Pyramid Point SMCA**. The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation would retain its existing tribal take exemption for this SMCA.

Petitioners have also requested a boundary adjustment to align the northern boundary of Pyramid Point SMCA with the terrestrial California-Oregon border. California's terrestrial northern boundary was intended to run along the 42° N latitude line, but initial surveys with primitive equipment in 1868 resulted in a zigzag border that deviates up to a half mile north or south of that latitude line. In contrast, the offshore northern boundary is an arc that projects seaward from the 42° N latitude line and connects the outermost headlands of the mainland coast to offshore rocks. For this reason, California's offshore and terrestrial borders are slightly misaligned; the offshore boundary is consistent with California's legally recognized northern border at 42° N latitude and is used in all ocean-based regulations. Changing the northern boundary of Pyramid Point SMCA so that it no longer aligns with this recognized offshore boundary would likely result in regulatory confusion and enforcement challenges. **OPC recommends that CFGC deny the request to modify Pyramid Point SMCA's northern boundary.**

Petition 2023-27MPA_AM1: Modify regulations at Anacapa Island SMCA to protect sensitive eelgrass habitats

Environmental Defense Center has submitted a petition with three options intended to better protect sensitive eelgrass meadows inside the Anacapa Island SMCA from the impacts of lobster traps and other hard-bottomed fishing gear. As clarified by the petitioner at the May 6, 2026 CFGC regional meeting[19], the proposed options are 1) Change regulations to disallow commercial lobster fishing year-round within the Anacapa Island SMCA; 2) Change regulations

19 Video available at https://cal-span.org/meeting/cfg_20260506/. Discussion of Petition 2023-27MPA_AM1 begins at 01:05:13.

to disallow hard bottomed fishing gear (including anchoring if applicable) near eelgrass meadows within the Anacapa Island SMCA, or 3) Change the border of the Anacapa Island Special Closure to prohibit the deployment of lobster traps from 0-50 feet deep, instead of the existing 0-20 feet deep.

Pacific eelgrass (*Zostera pacifica*) is a foundational species that is found along California's open coast and provides vital habitat, food, and shelter for a variety of marine fishes and invertebrates. Eelgrass also supports sediment stabilization and erosion protection, plays an important role in nutrient cycling, and helps mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon (Waycott et al. 2009, Fourqurean et al. 2012, Duarte et al. 2013). Eelgrass beds are inherently dynamic and naturally fluctuate from year to year; eelgrass persistence is influenced by a variety of environmental factors including temperature, currents, sediment dynamics, water quality, and availability of suitable substrate (Grech et al. 2012, Rock & Daru 2021, Zabarte-Maeztu et al. 2021, Herrera et al. 2022). At the same time, numerous studies have demonstrated that hard-bottomed fishing gear, including traps and pots, can negatively impact eelgrass (Stevens 2021, Rees et al. 2021). Traps can crush eelgrass shoots and rhizomes upon impact, and they may smother eelgrass if left in place. The setting and retrieval of traps, dragging of trap lines, and movement of traps while in the water often leaves bare scouring marks or "haloes" of damage in eelgrass meadows (Abadie et al. 2016, Stevens 2021, Rees et al. 2021).

Eelgrass meadows were once abundant along the north sides of all three islets that make up Anacapa Island, generally found from approximately 0-20 feet deep but sometimes extending to 45 feet deep (Altstatt 2021). Although eelgrass virtually disappeared around Anacapa Island during the late 1980s following the 1982-1983 El Niño and subsequent overgrazing by white sea urchins, it has recovered in many places thanks in part to a successful eelgrass restoration effort initiated in 2002 at Frenchy's Cove on the north side of West Anacapa Island (Altstatt et al. 2014).

Frenchy's Cove is situated within both the island-wide nearshore Anacapa Island Special Closure, which prohibits the use of nets and traps from 0-20 feet deep, as well as the much larger Anacapa Island SMCA, which extends to the three nautical mile state water boundary and prohibits most forms of take except for recreational take of lobster and pelagic finfish, as well as commercial take of lobster. Offshore of Frenchy's Cove, a Brown Pelican Fledgling Area – an extension of the Special Closure across approximately 4,000 feet of coastline – prohibits all boating activity and access from 0-120 feet deep from January 1 - October 31. Together, these regulations protect eelgrass meadows located in 0-20 feet of depth year-round, and meadows located deeper than 20 feet for 10 months out of the year.

These existing regulations already provide eelgrass meadows at Frenchy's Cove with substantial protection from fishing gear impacts. However, eelgrass meadows deeper than 20 feet at Frenchy's Cove are still vulnerable to fishing gear impacts for two months out of the year. Subtidal surveys conducted by the Channel Islands monitoring program show that these deeper meadows represent a substantial proportion of the eelgrass inside the Anacapa Island SMCA (SeaSketch California 2026) and, because eelgrass is a delicate ecosystem that can take years to recover from fragmentation or scarring (Altstatt et al., 2014; Reed & Hovel, 2006), damage accrued during the two months that the Brown Pelican Fledgling Area is open is likely to have lasting and outsized impacts on the integrity and function of these eelgrass meadows.

OPC recognizes that some data gaps exist regarding the distribution of eelgrass at Frenchy's Cove and Anacapa Island more broadly, as well as the drivers contributing to its persistence and loss. However, in the context of substantial declines of eelgrass statewide since the 1950s (Waycott et al. 2009, Harris et al. 2026), and the critical importance of eelgrass meadows for marine biodiversity (Kindeberg et al. 2022), OPC finds that regulatory action to protect the full extent of eelgrass meadows inside Anacapa Island SMCA, i.e. providing new protections for meadows that occur from 20-45 feet, is warranted. In assessing the petitioner's proposed options, OPC finds that Option 1 (prohibiting lobster fishing within the entire Anacapa Island SMCA, which extends three nautical miles offshore to a depth of nearly 500 feet) is unnecessary to protect eelgrass meadows, which are a nearshore ecosystem. Further, OPC notes that Option 2 (prohibiting lobster fishing "near eelgrass meadows") would be difficult to enforce given the inherently dynamic nature of these ecosystems. Finally, OPC is concerned that Option 3 (extending the boundary of the Anacapa Island Special Closure from 20 feet deep to 50 feet deep) could be problematic for multiple reasons: first, the specific intent of the Special Closure is to decrease entanglement risk for birds feeding near roosting grounds on the island; second, changing the boundary could add to existing significant regulatory confusion between the Anacapa Island SMCA, SMR, and Special Closure/Brown Pelican Fledgling Area; and third, this option would unnecessarily restrict lobster fishing opportunities outside of the Anacapa Island SMCA. Therefore, **OPC recommends that CFGC modify the regulations at Anacapa Island SMCA to prohibit the deployment of lobster traps shallower than 50 feet**. This simplified alternative pathway would strengthen protections for eelgrass meadows within their full depth range inside the SMCA, while maintaining lobster fishing opportunities outside the SMCA.

OPC also recognizes that non-consumptive activities, such as anchoring, may have similar impacts on eelgrass meadows as lobster trapping. OPC recommends exploration of non-regulatory management solutions, potentially including installation of moorings within the SMCA, to mitigate other activities that can damage the seafloor.

Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2: Add a new MPA near Point Sal (Point Sal SMCA)

The Northern Chumash Tribal Council and the Natural Resources Defense Council have proposed the designation of a new State Marine Conservation Area at Point Sal, California, situated at the northern end of Vandenberg Space Force Base near the City of Guadalupe in northern Santa Barbara County. As amended by petitioners at the April 14, 2026 meeting of CFGC's Tribal Committee[20], the proposed new Point Sal SMCA, which would eventually be given a name in a Chumash language to honor the importance of the area to local Chumash peoples, would span close to 7 miles of coastline and encompass nearly 15 square miles, from shore to a maximum depth of 187 feet (SeaSketch California 2026). It would prohibit all forms of take except for recreational take of finfish from shore using hook and line.

The proposed new Point Sal SMCA is located roughly 50 miles to the north of Point Conception, at the northern end of a major biogeographic transition zone within the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem, where warmer waters from the south meet colder, nutrient-rich waters from the north, supporting exceptionally high biodiversity (Hamilton et al. 2010, Blanchette et al. 2008, Arafeh-Dalmau et al. 2023). The waters offshore of Point Sal in particular are highly productive and nutrient-rich due to seasonal coastal upwelling in the area. This area supports abundant fish and invertebrate populations and serve as critical foraging grounds for seabirds and marine mammals – including multiple iconic California species such as brown pelicans, southern sea otters, and humpback whales (Checkley & Barth 2009).

The proposed new SMCA would protect a large portion of Point Sal's coastline and offshore waters, including sandy beach, rocky shoreline, shallow hard bottom, shallow soft bottom, and deep soft bottom habitats (SeaSketch California 2026). The new SMCA would also include a known krill hotspot that supports feeding blue whales from late spring to early fall (Santora et al. 2011, Savoca et al. 2021). Importantly, as noted by the petitioner, the area inside the proposed SMCA leeward of Point Sal may also function as a larval retention zone. Headlands and coastal promontories like Point Sal can slow or recirculate ocean currents, allowing fish and invertebrate larvae to remain near suitable settlement habitats rather than being transported offshore during upwelling events (Mace & Morgan 2006, Morgan et al. 2011, Harvey et al. 2021, Robinette et al. 2019). Robinette et al. (2019) found that seabird foraging rates, which can be used as an indicator of juvenile fish abundance, are generally higher in the lee of headlands and along south-facing coasts such as Point Sal. This suggests that the proposed new MPA has the

20 https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=245526&inline

potential to protect an area of high juvenile fish recruitment, which could potentially add a rich new larval source "node" to the MPA Network.

The proposed Point Sal SMCA would also protect an area of substantial cultural importance to the Chumash people. There are long-standing Chumash connections to Point Sal, including archaeological evidence of occupation near the area dating back nearly 5,000 years. The Northern Chumash Tribal Council has stated that Point Sal is an especially sacred area within the broader Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and designation of the proposed new Point Sal SMCA represents a unique opportunity to strengthen biodiversity protections within the Sanctuary.

Importantly, Point Sal is extremely remote. The public access road to Point Sal State Beach was washed out during severe storms during the 1998 El Niño event and was never repaired. Currently, access to Point Sal State Beach requires a round-trip hike of approximately 10 miles. Therefore, although the petitioners' proposed take allowance for hook-and-line fishing from shore would technically result in a moderate-low level of protection for Point Sal based on the science guidelines from the MPA planning process, OPC finds that the proposed new SMCA would likely still provide meaningful and significant biodiversity benefit given the difficulty associated with accessing Point Sal State Beach for shore-based fishing. Should existing conditions change in the future, we would support revisiting the take allowance for shore-based fishing.

Overall, OPC finds that the proposed new Point Sal SMCA represents an important opportunity to protect a pristine and relatively undisturbed biodiversity hotspot, while recognizing the biocultural significance of the area to local Chumash tribes. **OPC recommends that CFGC approve the proposed new Point Sal SMCA.**

Petition 2023-29MPA_AM2: Add a new MPA near Carpinteria (Mishopshno SMCA)

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Environmental Defense Center have proposed the designation of a new SMCA near Carpinteria, California, located approximately twelve miles southeast of Santa Barbara. The proposed new MPA, to be named Mishopshno in honor of a nearby Chumash coastal village, would protect key nearshore ecosystems in the Santa Barbara Channel, including a large portion of Carpinteria Reef. As amended by petitioners at the April 14, 2026 meeting of CFGC's Tribal Committee[21], the proposed new Mishopshno SMCA would span nearly 4 miles of shoreline and encompass

21 https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=245526&inline

approximately 9 square miles, from shore to a maximum depth of 141 feet (SeaSketch California 2026). It would prohibit all forms of take except for recreational take of finfish from shore using hook and line, with a tribal take exemption for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.

The Santa Barbara Channel is part of a major biogeographic transition zone near Point Conception, separating cold waters to the north of Point Conception from warmer waters to the south (Dever et al. 2004, Johnson & Hartwell 2018). The proposed new Mishopshno SMCA would protect a number of important coastal and marine habitats within the Santa Barbara Channel, including sandy beach, coastal marsh, estuary, and kelp forest habitats (SeaSketch California 2026). Importantly, a new Mishopshno SMCA would provide new protection for Carpinteria Reef, a shallow kelp forest and rocky reef ecosystem that is home to a diversity of marine fishes and invertebrates such as Lingcod, California Sheephead, Kelp Bass, and both red and purple sea urchins (Levenbach 2008, Carr et al. 2017). This reef supports a large kelp patch that, according to Landsat data from 1984-2023 (Bell et al. 2024), has continued to persist despite the recent 2014-2016 marine heat wave and overall declines in the region, making it one of the most stable kelp forests in the Santa Barbara Channel (Fig. 2). The petitioners also note that Carpinteria Reef may serve as an aggregation site for juvenile Great White Sharks, though such aggregations are often highly dynamic and may shift locations from year to year.

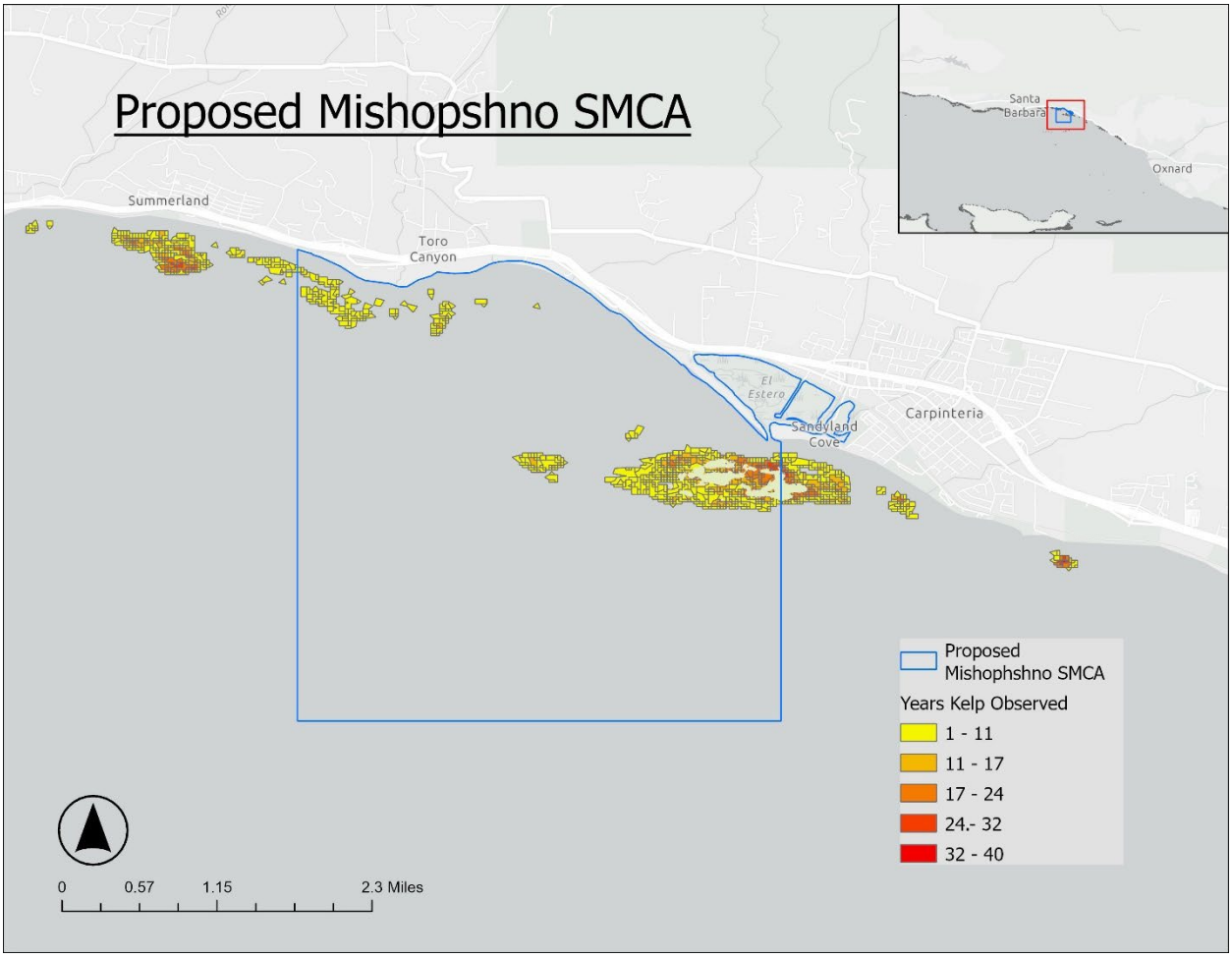

Figure 1. The proposed new Mishopshno SMCA. Satellite monitoring of kelp canopy cover via Landsat from 1984-2023 shows a persistent kelp forest at Carpinteria Reef near the proposed eastern boundary of the SMCA.

In addition to protecting an area of high biodiversity in an ecologically important region of the state, the most significant way in which the proposed Mishopshno SMCA could improve the ecological performance of California's MPA Network is by strengthening connectivity between Campus Point No-Take SMCA to the west and Point Dume SMCA to the southeast. Ensuring that larvae, eggs, spores, or juveniles of marine species are able to move into, out of, or between MPAs is fundamental to the success of California's MPAs as an ecologically connected network. For this reason, science guidance from the MPA planning process included explicit spacing guidelines for MPAs. According to this guidance, in order for MPAs to be within dispersal range for most ecologically and economically important groundfish and invertebrate species, they should be spaced 31-62 miles apart. Currently, the distance between the eastern boundary of Campus Point SMCA and the western boundary of Point Dume SMCA is approximately 60 miles (SeaSketch California 2026). This is very near the upper limit of the spacing guidelines and the largest distance between MPAs in the entire Network.

This distance concerns OPC for multiple reasons. First, while there are several MPAs nearby at the Northern Channel Islands, recent studies suggest the islands may not be as reliably or consistently ecologically connected to the mainland as previously thought due to the presence of small-scale eddies and coastal currents that can impact cross-channel exchange during some oceanographic conditions, while enhancing local retention and alongshore connectivity under others (Dauhajre et al. 2019, Robinette et al. 2012, Harvey et al. 2021). Second, both Campus Point No-Take SMCA and Point Dume SMCA contain kelp forests. Potentially weak connectivity between these habitats could pose risks to kelp resilience in the broader region. Finally, ecological connectivity has the potential to be highly disrupted by the impacts of climate change, which have already been well documented in the Southern California Bight (Magris et al. 2014, Schiff et al. 2019, Wilson et al. 2020, Kekuewa et al. 2022, Frieder et al. 2024). Climate-driven changes in temperature, ocean circulation, and upwelling can dramatically affect larval development, settlement, and survival, with important implications for connectivity (O'Connor et al. 2007, Kendall et al. 2016, Pecl et al. 2017, Pinsky et al. 2019, Wilson et al. 2020). Additionally, in some cases, climate impacts can eliminate important larval source populations entirely, such as when kelp forests are converted to urchin barrens (Rogers-Bennett & Catton 2019, Starko et al. 2024) – potentially making the effective ecological distance between intact protected habitats much greater than the geographic distance between MPA boundaries (Wilson et al. 2020).

The proposed Mishopshno SMCA, which would be located 14.6 miles from Campus Point No-Take SMCA and 44.1 miles from the Point Dume SMR/SMCA cluster (SeaSketch California 2026), would fill the existing large distance between these two MPAs and potentially act as a key "stepping stone" in the Santa Barbara Channel. This has the potential to improve ecological connectivity between Campus Point No-Take SMCA and Point Dume SMCA, especially between the kelp habitats protected by these MPAs, buffer against future climate impacts on connectivity, and strengthen overall resilience in the Santa Barbara Channel. OPC recognizes that the petitioners' proposed allowance for hook-and-line fishing from shore would result in a moderate-low level of protection per science guidance from the MPA planning process, with potential impacts on connectivity; however, continued shore-based fishing access to this area has significant potential to benefit local communities and non-federally recognized tribes.

OPC also recognizes the cultural significance of this area to local Chumash peoples. Members of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians have described ecosystems within the proposed Mishopshno SMCA as "living homelands and cultural landscapes" where gathering, teaching, ceremony, and other cultural practices have occurred for millennia. The area is also central to Chumash peoples' creation stories and canoe-building traditions. Designation of the proposed Mishopshno SMCA would represent a significant opportunity to protect the biocultural significance of the area and advance co-management with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash

Indians, supporting the continued stewardship and care of this area's unique coastal and marine biodiversity by its original guardians.

Overall, OPC finds that the proposed new Mishopshno SMCA represents an important opportunity to improve MPA Network design, strengthen ecological connectivity, and recognize the biocultural significance of the area to local Chumash tribes. **OPC recommends that CFGC approve the proposed new Mishopshno SMCA.**

Petition 2023-32MPA: Expand Duxbury Reef SMCA and modify regulations to strengthen protections for intertidal species

The Environmental Action Committee of West Marin has proposed several actions intended to strengthen protections at Duxbury Reef SMCA. As clarified by the petitioner at the April 21, 2026 CFGC regional meeting[22], those actions are: expand the northern and southern boundaries of Duxbury Reef SMCA to protect the majority of Duxbury Reef's contiguous rocky intertidal habitat and modify regulations in Duxbury Reef SMCA to remove the current allowance for shore-based take of finfish by methods other than hook-and-line.

Duxbury Reef SMCA, located at the southern tip of the Point Reyes Peninsula in Marin County approximately one mile west of Bolinas, was designed specifically to protect Duxbury Reef, one of the largest shale reefs in North America and a unique geological feature found nowhere else in California (U.S. Geological Survey 2005). Duxbury Reef is very large and shallow; its broad, low-relief, gently sloping shale platform hosts an extensive network of cracks and crevices that are exposed at low tide and support exceptionally high biodiversity, including iconic intertidal species such as anemones, sea stars, and nudibranchs. It is one of the most accessible and frequently visited coastal sites in the region for tidepooling, and the reef serves as one of California's premier locations for environmental education and tidepool interpretation. Duxbury Reef SMCA was intentionally designed as a narrow, nearshore MPA that extends from the mean high tide line out to 1,000 feet seaward of mean lower low water, protecting intertidal habitat while allowing for commercial and recreational fishing further offshore, as well as recreational take of abalone (when allowed) and finfish from shore.

Currently, Duxbury Reef SMCA does not encompass the full extent of the reef's rocky intertidal habitat. This means that the northernmost and southernmost portions of Duxbury Reef currently receive no MPA protection, despite functioning as part of the same unique and biodiverse ecosystem as the portion of the reef within the existing SMCA. Expanding protections

22 Video available at https://cal-span.org/meeting/cfg_20260421/. Discussion of Petition 2023-32MPA begins at 03:11:24.

northward to Double Point/Stormy Stack Rock Special Closure and southward to the southernmost fringe of the reef, as proposed by petitioners, would capture the vast majority of Duxbury Reef, nearly doubling the amount of rocky shoreline protected by this MPA from 3.26 linear miles to 6.83 linear miles (SeaSketch California 2026) and improving representation of intertidal habitats, one of the rarest and most vulnerable coastal habitats in California, in the North Coast bioregion of the MPA Network (U.S. Geological Survey 2005).

OPC finds that these additional protections have the potential to increase biomass of currently harvested intertidal species, such as seaweed and shellfish, in the expansion areas, bolster overall species richness and diversity at Duxbury Reef, and improve ecological connectivity across the full reef ecosystem. Additional protection could also strengthen the reef's resilience to future climate change impacts, as protected rocky intertidal ecosystems have been found to exhibit greater resistance to, and recovery from, climate-driven disturbances such as marine heat waves compared to unprotected areas, helping to maintain community structure and ecological function during periods of extreme heating (CDFW 2023, Smith et al. 2023). However, OPC also notes that simply expanding the northern and southern boundaries of the existing SMCA could unnecessarily restrict existing boat-based commercial and recreational fishing activities in the proposed expansion areas, such as an important local commercial hook-and-line halibut fishery, that are not currently impacting intertidal biodiversity.

OPC recommends adding new protections for the intertidal in a way that does not change the existing Duxbury Reef SMCA and does not restrict existing commercial or recreational take, beyond new protections for intertidal seaweed and invertebrates, in the expansion areas. To accomplish this, **OPC recommends that CFGC designate two new SMCAs to protect the northern and southern portions of the contiguous rocky intertidal habitat of Duxbury Reef, with take regulations that protect intertidal seaweed and invertebrates (except abalone when allowed) while allowing for existing shore- and boat-based fishing**. We defer to CDFW to recommend final boundaries for these two new SMCAs based on feasibility and enforceability.

Petition 2023-33MPA_AM1: Expand six MPAs statewide and add a new MPA in Santa Cruz

Environment California and Azul have proposed a suite of actions – six proposed MPA expansions and one proposed new MPA – aimed at strengthening protections for kelp forest habitats across the state. Specifically, this petition proposes to expand Cabrillo SMR (southern San Diego), South Point and Gull Island SMRs (Northern Channel Islands), Point Dume SMCA (north of Los Angeles near the Los Angeles County/Ventura County border), Point Conception SMR (north of Santa Barbara), and Natural Bridges SMR (Santa Cruz). It also proposes the designation of a new SMCA at Pleasure Point (Santa Cruz). The proposed expansions and new MPA are aimed at protecting persistent, healthy kelp patches currently unprotected by the MPA

Network. Petitioners argue that protecting these new locations will help improve the resilience of kelp forest ecosystems across the state in the face of anticipated future marine heat waves and other climate stressors.

Kelp forests in California provide a variety of critical ecological functions and ecosystem services. Kelp serves as habitat and an important food source for a rich diversity of invertebrates, fishes, marine mammals, and birds, including ecologically and economically important species such as abalone, rockfishes, and sea otters (Hamilton et al. 2022, Bell et al. 2020). Kelp forests are critical to the well-being of California's coastal residents and the state's multi-billion-dollar ocean economy, providing valuable recreational opportunities such as scuba diving and wildlife viewing (Schiel & Foster 2015, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries 2025, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary 2025), and kelp forest ecosystems also hold tremendous cultural significance for California Native American tribes. Unfortunately, recent climate-driven changes have resulted in severe and concerning kelp loss in California. A prolonged marine heat wave beginning in 2014 triggered unprecedented declines in California's kelp forests (Rogers-Bennett & Catton 2019, McPherson et al. 2021). Along the North Coast, more than 95% of bull kelp canopy was lost from 2014-2019 and has shown little recovery since then (McPherson et al. 2021), while statewide more than 75% of kelp forests remain below their long-term average in 2024 (Harris et al. 2026). As marine heat waves are expected to become more frequent and more severe as climate change accelerates, supporting the protection and restoration of these vulnerable ecosystems is a top priority for OPC.

Though MPAs cannot directly mitigate climate stressors such as warming ocean waters, petitioners argue that MPAs can support kelp resilience by promoting intact food webs. Specifically, petitioners note that healthy, abundant populations of predatory organisms, such as California Sheephead and California spiny lobster, can keep populations of kelp grazers like sea urchins in check, preventing urchins from overgrazing kelp (Hamilton et al. 2010, Caselle et al., 2015). While this is an active area of research and scientific evidence for the kelp resilience benefits of MPAs is mixed (Cavanaugh et al. 2019), several recent studies in California have demonstrated support for this "trophic cascade" hypothesis.

Eisaguirre et al. (2020) analyzed decades of subtidal monitoring data from the Northern Channel Islands and found that giant kelp density was significantly higher, and purple sea urchin density significantly lower, inside MPAs compared to adjacent fished areas. Kumagai et al. (2024) combined subtidal monitoring data with remotely sensed kelp canopy data to evaluate the statewide response of kelp forests to the 2014-2016 heat wave and found that fully protected MPAs appeared to enhance kelp forests' resistance to, and recovery from, marine heat waves in Southern California. Ortiz-Villa et al. (2025) used four decades of remote sensing data to examine the effects of 54 MPAs on kelp canopy coverage statewide and found that

implementation of MPAs resulted in an 8.5% increase in kelp canopy coverage compared to unprotected areas, with kelp forests in MPAs showing faster and more significant recovery following the 2014-2015 marine heat wave. Finally, results from the first Decadal Management Review of California's MPA Network showed that kelp canopy was more stable and resilient in MPAs, particularly in the South Coast (CDFW 2023).

Importantly, these documented benefits have largely been limited to Southern California, where lobster and Sheephead are abundant. In central California, where these predators are absent or uncommon and the main predator of sea urchins is the southern sea otter, most studies here have found little to no significant differences in urchin or kelp densities between MPAs and unprotected areas (Hamilton et al. 2010, Eisaguirre et al. 2020).

To identify specific areas to target for additional MPA protection, petitioners focused on areas of overlap between highly persistent kelp patches, as identified by Arafeh-Dalmau et al. (2021) using satellite data, and "medium-priority kelp restoration sites" as identified by Giraldo-Ospina et al. (2025) – defined as historically stable kelp beds that resisted the effects of the 2014-2015 marine heat wave and currently have a high proportion of kelp compared to their historical mean. This classification was intended by the authors of this study for use in a kelp restoration context; however, satellite imagery of kelp forest canopy, specifically Landsat data from 1984-2023 (Bell et al. 2024), does show that the areas identified by petitioners appear to be largely persistent over time (Fig. 2, Fig. 3). Given the anticipated impacts of climate change on kelp statewide, especially in the context of a historic new marine heat wave currently forming along the California coast and a predicted "Super El Niño" this year, OPC finds that, from a precautionary standpoint, protecting additional persistent kelp within the MPA Network is worth exploring at a limited scale.

Of the actions proposed in the petition, OPC recommends that CFGC deny the proposed expansion of Natural Bridges SMR and deny the proposed designation of a new SMCA at Pleasure Point. Both of these areas are located in Santa Cruz, at the northern end of the Monterey Bay. As described above, empirical support for the hypothesized "trophic cascade" benefits of MPAs for kelp has not been found in central California. Additionally, the proposed new MPA at Pleasure Point would not meet minimum guidelines for MPA size or level of protection, making it unlikely to accomplish biodiversity conservation objectives.

The remaining proposed actions are all focused on Southern California, where MPAs may promote improved kelp resilience by promoting trophic cascades. Of these actions, **OPC recommends that CFGC deny the proposed expansion of Cabrillo SMR.** Per the U.S. Navy, this proposed expansion has the potential to impact military readiness in the area. **OPC recommends that CFGC deny the proposed expansions of South Point SMR and Gull Island**

SMR; these proposed expansions would compromise the decades-long, deeply institutionalized state-federal partnership to co-manage the existing Channel Islands MPAs, which currently protect 20% of state waters around the Northern Channel Islands in no-take marine reserves. The proposed expansion of South Point SMR in particular would result in a misalignment with the boundaries of the neighboring Federal Marine Reserve.

OPC recommends approval, with modifications, of the remaining two proposed actions in Southern California (expansion of Point Dume SMCA and Point Conception SMR).

Point Dume SMCA. Located just offshore of Malibu in Los Angeles County, the existing Point Dume SMCA currently protects nearly 16 square miles of sandy beach, rocky shoreline, and kelp forest, as well as portions of a submarine canyon extending more than 2,000 feet deep. Petitioners propose expanding the existing Point Dume SMCA to the west by 4.6 square miles, approximately a 29% expansion, to protect a portion of a large, persistent kelp bed immediately adjacent to the SMCA. This expansion would increase the amount of kelp protected by the SMCA from 1.2 linear miles to 2.9 linear miles (SeaSketch California 2026, Fig. 3). **OPC recommends that CFGC approve the proposed expansion of Point Dume SMCA**. Petitioners have also proposed an adjustment to the take allowance at Point Dume SMCA to allow additional recreational take, including a new take allowance for recreational shore-based hook-and-line fishing. **OPC recommends that CFGC deny the proposed additional take allowance at Point Dume SMCA**, as this would drop the SMCA's Level of Protection from high to moderate-low such that it would no longer serve as a replicate MPA for kelp, beach, rocky intertidal, and soft bottom habitats.

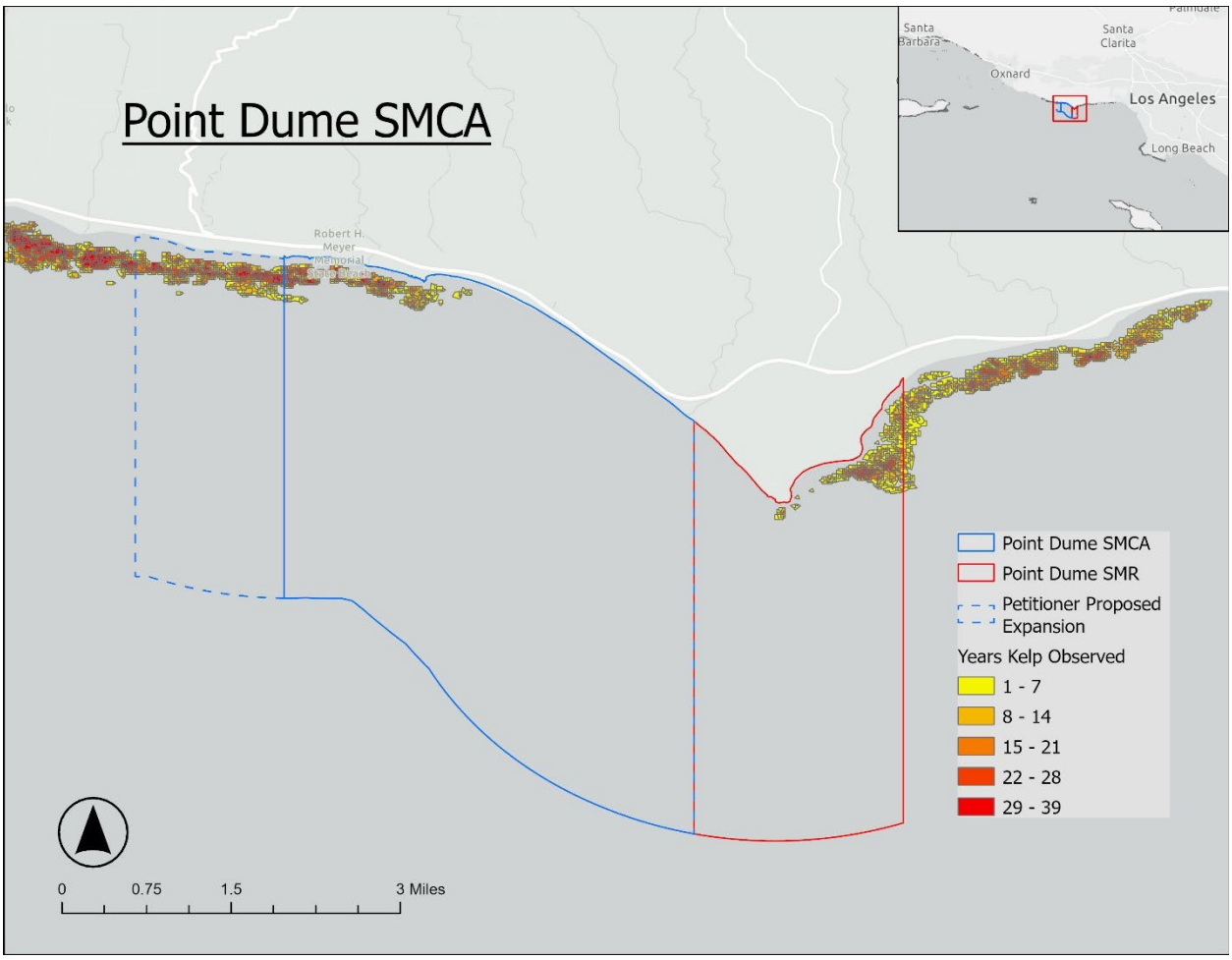

Figure 2. Point Dume SMCA and SMR, with petitioners' proposed expansion of Point Dume SMCA shown.

Point Conception SMR. Located at a major biogeographic transition zone, Point Conception SMR currently protects more than 22 square miles of rocky reefs, surfgrass beds, and kelp forests. Petitioners propose expanding the existing Point Conception SMR to the east by 14.6 square miles, which would include a very large patch of persistent kelp (Fig. 3). However, given the existing large size of this MPA, OPC finds that a smaller expansion, similar to the scale of expansion proposed for Point Dume SMCA, is more appropriate and would capture a significant portion of persistent kelp while maintaining some continued fishing access in this area. **OPC recommends that CFGC expand Point Conception SMR by shifting the eastern boundary of the SMR from the current 120° 25.000' W longitude line eastward to the 120° 23.000' W longitude line** (Fig. 3). This would expand the SMR by 7.65 square miles, approximately a 35% expansion, and increase the amount of kelp protected by the SMR from 2.27 linear miles to 4.44 linear miles (SeaSketch California 2026).

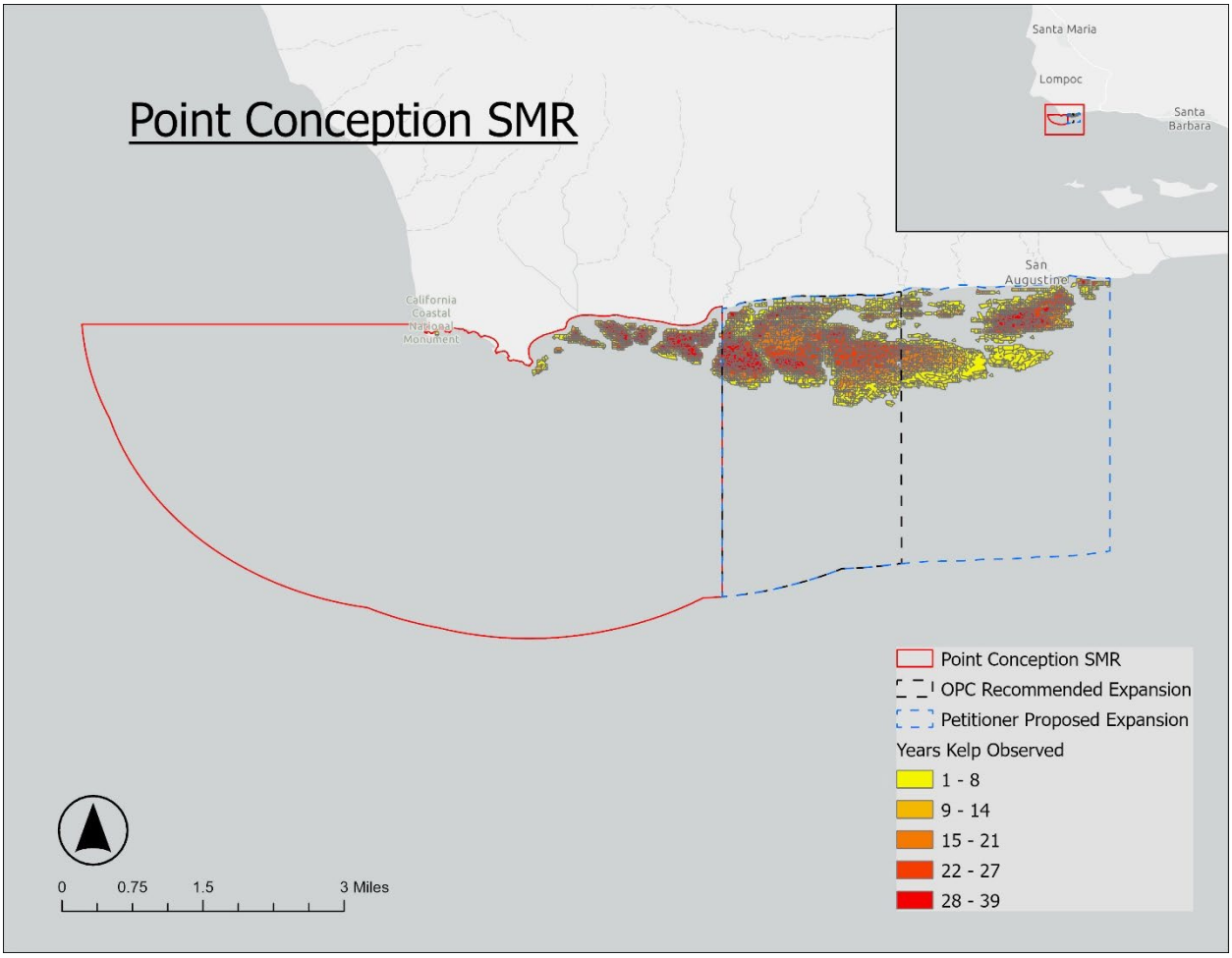

Figure 3. Point Conception SMR with petitioners' proposed expansion (blue dotted line) and OPC's recommended expansion (black dotted line) shown. OPC's recommended expansion encompasses much of the persistent kelp immediately adjacent to Point Conception SMR.

Recommendations At-a-Glance

Table 2. OPC's recommendations on all MPA petitions currently under consideration by CFGC.

Petition Number	MPA(s) Affected	Petitioner	Proposed Action	OPC Recommendation
2023-14MPA	Nine SMCAs statewide (existing)	California Sea Urchin Commission	Allow commercial take of sea urchin in various MPAs	Deny
2023-15MPA_AM	Footprint SMR, Gull Island SMR, and Santa Barbara Island SMR (existing)	Blake Hermann	Reclassify SMRs to SMCAs to allow limited take of highly migratory species and possession of coastal pelagic species, or the take of pelagic finfish	Deny
2023-16MPA	Stewarts Point SMR and Bodega Head SMR (existing)	Bodega Bay Fisherman's Marketing Association	Reclassify SMRs to SMCAs to allow commercial take of salmon by trolling	Deny
2023-18MPA	Vandenberg SMR, Kashtayit SMCA, and San Miguel and Anacapa Island Special Closures (existing)	Ocean Conservancy	Multiple actions to modify allowed uses at several Santa Barbara Channel MPAs	Deny

Petition Number	MPA(s) Affected	Petitioner	Proposed Action	OPC Recommendation
2023-19MPA	Chitqawi SMCA (new)	Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians	Add a new MPA near Morro Bay	Deny
2023-20MPA_AM1 (as amended at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting)	Point Buchon SMCA and Point Buchon SMR (existing)	Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians	Add a tribal take exemption at Point Buchon SMCA, rename Point Buchon SMCA, and adjust northern boundary of Point Buchon SMR	Approve tribal take exemption and renaming; deny proposed boundary change
2023-21MPA_AM1 (as amended at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting)	Pyramid Point SMCA (existing)	Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation	Remove recreational take of true smelt in Pyramid Point SMCA and adjust northern boundary of Pyramid Point SMCA	Approve proposed removal of recreational take of true smelt; deny proposed boundary change
2023-23MPA_AM1	Various MPAs in Monterey County (existing)	Giant Giant Kelp Restoration Project	Modify several regulations related to kelp restoration, including allowing urchin culling in Monterey MPAs; establish a new SMR at Tankers' Reef	Deny

Petition Number	MPA(s) Affected	Petitioner	Proposed Action	OPC Recommendation
2023-24MPA_AM1	Laguna Beach No-Take SMCA and Dana Point SMCA (existing)	Laguna Bluebelt Coalition	Extend the southern boundary of the Laguna Beach No-Take SMCA to the southern border of Laguna Beach	Deny
2023-27MPA_AM1 (as clarified at the May 6, 2026 CFGC regional meeting)	Anacapa Island SMCA (existing)	Environmental Defense Center	Modify regulations at Anacapa Island SMCA to protect sensitive eelgrass habitats (with several options proposed)	Modify SMCA regulations to prohibit the deployment of lobster traps shallower than 50 feet
2023-28MPA_AM2 (as amended at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting)	Point Sal SMCA (new)	Northern Chumash Tribal Council and Natural Resources Defense Council	Add a new MPA near Point Sal	Approve the proposed new Point Sal SMCA
2023-29MPA_AM2 (as amended at the April 14, 2026 CFGC Tribal Committee meeting)	Mishopshno SMCA (new)	Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and Natural Resources Defense Council	Add a new MPA near Carpinteria	Approve the proposed new Mishopshno SMCA

Petition Number	MPA(s) Affected	Petitioner	Proposed Action	OPC Recommendation
2023-32MPA (as clarified at the April 21, 2026 CFGC regional meeting)	Duxbury Reef SMCA (existing)	Environmental Action Committee of West Marin	Expand Duxbury Reef SMCA and modify regulations to strengthen protections for intertidal species	Designate two new SMCAs to protect the northern and southern portions of Duxbury Reef, each with take regulations that protect intertidal seaweed and invertebrates while allowing for continuation of other existing shore- and boat-based fishing
2023-33MPA_AM1	Various existing MPAs and one proposed new MPA	Environment California and Azul	Expand six existing MPAs statewide and add a new MPA in Santa Cruz	Approve proposed expansion of Point Dume SMCA, but deny proposed additional take allowance in Point Dume SMCA. Approve a smaller expansion of Point Conception SMR. Deny proposed expansion of Natural Bridges SMR, Cabrillo SMR, South Point SMR, or Gull Island SMR. Deny proposed designation of a new SMCA at Pleasure Point.
2023-34MPA	Point Buchon SMCA, Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs (existing)	Environment California and Azul	Reclassify Point Buchon SMCA to an SMR to prohibit take; Remove all take except for recreational spearfishing in Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs	Deny

References

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Outlook

NCTC & NRDC short letter re: Pt. Sal evaluations

From Aylesworth, Sandy <saylesworth@nrdc.org>

Date Mon 08/10/2026 05:59 PM

To Eckerle, Jenn@CNRA <Jenn.Eckerle@resources.ca.gov>; Eric Sklar [redacted] Samantha Murray [redacted] Commissioner Anderson [redacted] Commissioner Hostler-Carmesin [redacted] Erika Zavaleta [redacted]

Cc Violet Sage Walker [redacted] Esgro, Michael@CNRA <Michael.Esgro@resources.ca.gov>; Lewis, Staci@CNRA <Staci.Lewis@resources.ca.gov>; FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Good evening, Commissioners and Deputy Secretary Eckerle,

In the attached please find the Point Sal SMCA co-sponsors' initial response to the OPC and CDFW evaluations. We apologize that we were unable to meet the the Friday deadline, though sincerely hope that you're able to read the letter ahead of the Tribal Subcommittee and full Commission meeting this week.

Thank you, and safe travels!

Best,
Violet and Sandy

August 10, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
Transmitted via email: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: Agenda Item 7: Bin 2 Marine Protected Area (MPA) Petitions: Evaluations and Recommendations for MPA Regulation Change Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 Point Sal SMCA

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Anderson, and Members of the California Fish and Game Commission,

This letter is written on behalf of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). We appreciate your significant investment of time and energy to the marine protection area (MPA) petition evaluation process. We offer these brief comments with the goal of providing an initial response to both the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) evaluations of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) proposal. We intend to follow this letter in the coming weeks with more details on the points below.

We strongly support OPC's recommendation that the Fish and Game Commission approve the Point Sal SMCA proposal as set out in our amended petition. The SMCA would safeguard the area's profound cultural importance to the Chumash people and protect a biodiversity hotspot that supports blue whales, seabirds, juvenile fish recruitment, and southern sea otters. Indeed, NCTC and NRDC believe that our Point Sal SMCA proposal offers the state a historic opportunity to protect sacred Chumash waters, respond to community requests to further protect the Point Sal headland and surrounding waters, and strengthen protections within the state's inventory of 30x30 areas.

We appreciate that CDFW has suggested that FGC consider multiple options relating to the proposal. However, as we currently understand it, only Option 4 – which most closely aligns with the OPC recommendation for full approval – has the potential to definitively confer the cultural and wildlife protections that NCTC and NRDC request in the proposal.

Below we briefly comment on all of the options CDFW offers, starting with Option 4, the option we support – depending on what CDFW suggests pursuant to its recommendation for alternative boundaries.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 4: "Grant in concept Point Sal SMCA: Establish a new SMCA at Point Sal as proposed in 2023-28MPA_AM2 that allows recreational take of fin fish by hook-and-line from shore (Moderate-low LOP) and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2."

The Point Sal SMCA would advance California's Tribal co-stewardship policies, conserve marine life, and support Guadalupe's aspiration to become an ecotourism destination. Further, it presents a unique possibility for the state to advance holistic, land-to-sea, seascape-level conservation, an objective OPC articulates in Pathways to 30x30: California - Accelerating Conservation of California's Nature. In addition to its ecological merits, the Point Sal SMCA proposal has broad and diverse community support. Lion Rock and the Point Sal headland are beloved local sites due to the spiritual, recreational, and mental health benefits they provide.

CDFW's Option 4 adopts our proposal with the exception of a recommendation for alternative boundaries. The boundaries in the October 2025 amendments to our petition, which were formally adopted at the April 2026 FGC meeting, reflect input from Chumash community members, subsistence and recreational fishers, and extensive discussion with Vandenberg Space Force Base. If there are minor adjustments to the northern and southern boundaries of the proposed MPA that would improve its enforceability, we are eager to work with CDFW to ensure that such boundaries better align with the Feasibility Guidelines.

With respect to the southern boundary of the proposed MPA, we note that the amended boundary reflects a balance between ensuring that the Point Sal SMCA would not conflict with mission-critical VSFB operations and maximizing protections for the area south of the Point Sal headland (i.e., the larval retention zone). In addition, in order for the southern boundary to align with an obvious physical feature, it corresponds roughly with the southern terminus of Point Sal State Beach. It is also an even line of latitude. However, we are open to the possibility that there may be a more prominent feature on the southern boundary that is more suitable for enforcement purposes. With respect to the northern boundary, it is intended to align with Mussel Point, a well-known and highly recognizable feature at the northern end of Paradise Beach. It is also an even line of latitude.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 1: "Support with Alternative Pathway: Request CDFW engage with the NCTC, other interested tribes, and California State Parks to explore designating the area as a State Marine Cultural Preservation Area (SMCPA) to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area, rather than establishing a new MPA."

A key goal of the Point Sal SMCA proposal is to meaningfully conserve the area's natural cultural resources for future generations – we see conserving them today as essential to carrying forth the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and other Chumash tribes' legacies. We are unfamiliar with the structure and regulatory options for an SMCPA, and are therefore unclear whether a Point Sal SMCPA would have the same potential to conserve living cultural resources as the SMCA would. If the SMCPA did not have the same take allowances we propose, it would not adequately protect the ecosystem's wildlife and habitats intended for conservation. Finally, as CDFW notes, there are no existing SMCPAs within California waters and such designations are typically under the purview of California State Parks. We are concerned that these two factors could potentially preclude or delay the establishment of the Point Sal MPA.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 2: "Grant with Alternative Pathway: Point Sal SMR or a SMCA with at least a Moderate-high LOP: Establish a new MPA at Point Sal and request CDFW

identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2."

In their evaluation, CDFW concludes that the Point Sal SMCA proposal would only offer a moderate-low level of protection and would therefore have few ecological benefits. We appreciate CDFW's interest in ensuring that, if designated, the Point Sal SMCA would have a sufficiently high level of protection (LOP) for it to confer the intended conservation benefits. However, CDFW's assessment rests on a key assumption in the SAT Scientific Guidelines methodology to determine LOP – namely, that "any allowed activity could occur at high intensity" (p.17 of 2009 Methods Used to Evaluate Marine Protected Area Proposals in the MLPA South Coast Study Region). At Point Sal, this assumption does not reflect reality. CDFW's consideration of potential impacts from hook-and-line shore fishing within the Point Sal MPA proposal should account for the area's remoteness and the significant "access challenges" the shoreline presents.

Specifically, CDFW itself notes that accessing the southern boundary requires a 12-mile round trip hike over steep terrain. Accessing the northern boundary requires a roughly four-mile round trip walk on sand and a steep climb up Mussel Point. While local hook-and-line shore-based fishers make and treasure these trips to both Mussel Point and Point Sal itself, CDFW's application of the 2009 LOP Evaluation Framework's assumption of "maximum plausible intensity" to hook-and-line shore-fishing is incorrect in this instance. It is also significant that independent scientists have assessed the Point Sal SMCA proposal as offering a "high" level of protection per the level of protection evaluation process in the MPA Guide (as summarized in the January 2026 letter to FGC from the Marine Conservation Institute).

CDFW further argues that there is risk that future use may intensify the current low intensity of shore fishing activity. However, the adjacent lands are fully protected in various terrestrial conservation areas, meaning future coastal development of any kind is extremely unlikely. There is also no indication that vehicle access via Brown's Road – which was heavily damaged in storms in 1998 and has been closed for nearly 30 years – will be reestablished. While NCTC and NRDC have indicated our support for reopening the access road to Point Sal State Beach, we know there is a low likelihood that this would occur. The current level of access via Browns Road (sunrise to sunset access for pedestrians only, no bikes or vehicles) was the result of considerable coordination and compromise between Santa Barbara County Parks, Vandenberg Space Force Base, and Santa Barbara County. The agreement has been in place since 2008. Furthermore, should future shore-based fishing activity increase substantially despite these access limitations, the state could reassess the shore fishing allowance regulations accordingly.

The March 2025 amendment to allow for hook-and-line shore fishing was the result of feedback from many conversations with Tribal representatives and community members in Guadalupe. Our understanding, based on those conversations and the proposed MPA's proximity to the City of Guadalupe, is that many of the area's hook-and-line fishers are low-income and fish for subsistence. Given that scientists have assessed the Point Sal SMCA as being highly protected according to the MPA Guide, and the likelihood of shore-based fishing intensifying in the future is low, the petitioners feel strongly that it is important to retain the shore fishing allowance to honor the conversations we had with community members, including those representing non-federally recognized Tribes and low-income subsistence fishers.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 3. "Grant with Alternative Pathway, Special Closure Lion Rock: Establish a new Special Closure around Lion Rock for birds and pinnipeds. This alternative could be considered on its own or as an add-on to Options (1), (2), and (4)."

We appreciate CDFW's flexibility in suggesting a Special Closure as a tool that might help advance the objectives NCTC and NRDC put forth in the petition. However, CDFW misunderstands the petitioners' intent in requesting that the waters around Lion Rock receive additional protections. Due to its remoteness, the physical rock already serves as an undisturbed site for pinniped haulouts and for seabirds. Our proposal is focused instead on reducing other local stressors surrounding Lion Rock to ensure there is abundant prey availability for seabirds and marine mammals, such as harbor seals, and to maintain healthy ecosystem functioning of the environment surrounding this rare geologic feature on the Central Coast. Specifically, by eliminating most fishing pressure in the proposed SMCA, the many species for which Lion Rock is home would likely continue to benefit from abundant food in the area near their haul out, nesting, breeding, and roosting location.

A Special Closure alone would not achieve the biodiversity and cultural benefits that a nine-square mile SMCA would confer. In addition, we believe that pairing the Point Sal SMCA with a Special Closure is unnecessary and risks excluding recreational users from the area.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 5. "Deny: Do not establish a new SMCA (or SMR or Special Closure) at Point Sal."

We oppose this option because it would deny California the significant cultural, ecosystem, and economic benefits scientists, tribes, elected officials, and members of the public anticipate the Point Sal SMCA would deliver.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in this important process and to contribute to the Commission's work to safeguard California's ocean. A healthy ocean is fundamental to California's communities, economy, culture, and way of life, and further protecting it is an investment in our shared future. The Point Sal SMCA proposal presents a powerful opportunity to strengthen California's MPA network and the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary by protecting a place of exceptional ecological and cultural importance. We urge the Commission to seize this opportunity to advance meaningful, lasting ocean protection at Point Sal and to demonstrate California's continued leadership in caring for our ocean and the people who depend on it.

Sincerely,

Chairwoman Violet Sage Walker
Northern Chumash Tribal Council

Sandy Aylesworth, Pacific Director, Ocean Division
Natural Resources Defense Council

Outlook

Morro Bay and Point Sal Marine Protection Area Petitions- PLEASE REJECT

From Jim
Date Tue 08/11/2026 08:14 PM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Please reject the Morro Bay and Point Sal Marine Protection Area Petitions submitted by the Santa Ynez Board of Chumash Indians, the Chumash Tribal Council and the Natural Resource Defense Council.

Morro Bay- the petition calls for a ban on commercial and recreational fishing in the designated area, but allows fishing by the Chumash, and perhaps other, tribes.

This request is tantamount to theft. These fisheries and coastline belong to the State of California and as such should be managed to:

- Allow greater access to all Californians to these areas.

- Support ongoing commercial and recreational use of these fisheries.

- Manage the fisheries for environmental and recreational improvement.

The management of these fisheries should NOT be transferred in whole or part to private interests, especially as those interests want to exclude the use of these areas to all but their own members.

While the purported motivation of the Chumash is to promote environmental stewardship of these areas the question must be asked about the qualifications of the tribal members to do so? A more direct conclusion from this request would be that the Board of Chumash Indians is motivated to exclude the general population of California, both commercial and recreational, from these areas to allow for exploitation of the fisheries by the Chumash peoples themselves. What is the basis for creating a special class of people who can exclusively profit by their petition?

It is disappointing that at its core these proposals are both racist and exploitative. Would it not be better to propose usage of the fisheries for the benefit of ALL Californians, including those fishermen who have fished these areas commercially for generations? Instead these petitions seek to discriminate against the citizens of California and grant privilege to a specific racial group. Hardly a proposal worthy of the values of the United States of America.

The Chumash tribe has not been shy about pushing its privileges to build casinos for gambling on it’s lands, to profit from these commercial enterprises. As such, their motivations in pushing these proposals must be suspect!

Commercial fishermen from the area, fishermen who make simple livings, not multi-million dollar incomes from their fishing activities, are law abiding Californian citizens who abide by fishing regulations, state catch quotas, size limitations, and gear regulations, that make this area already one of the most regulated fisheries in the country. They have demonstrated their compliance with these regulations and should be trusted to continue to do so. The fishermen of these fisheries should certainly be active participants, if not majority participants in making plans for the future of these fisheries.

Comments in the San Luis Obispo Tribune by Ben Rothenberg, a member of the Cal Poly Center for Coastal Marine Science, suggest an argument for the petition, citing at the same time the difficulty of obtaining on the health of these fisheries, and suggesting designating these fisheries as no-fishing areas creates some sort of ‘insurance policy’ against the possibility that the fisheries are being mismanaged. This is naive. Lack of scientific information does not justify drastic action to stop fishing. And it does not address that the petition allows continued fishing by the Chumash tribes. To say, better to do nothing than to understand, scientifically, what is going on in the fisheries, is an affront to science.

For sensible reasons and for the goal of keeping these fisheries accessible to all Californians I support the Alternate Proposal of maintaining a State Marine Cultural Preservation Area that keeps these areas out of the hands of self interested parties.

Point Sal- the petition, proposed by the Chumash Tribal Council and the NRDC, eliminates commercial and recreational fishing in this fishery, with the exception of allowing fishing from shore by recreational fishermen. Being familiar with this area I know much of the land is under Federal control and not readily fishable from shore. This generous grant that allows recreational shore fishing seems disingenuous and again, self serving.

Claims that this area is home to sacred birds and celestial points infers religious claims on public lands. The country was founded upon the principle of separation of church and state and special dispensation granted on the basis of religion should not be encouraged. Doing so opens the door to a myriad of religious and cultural claims on public lands.

The argument that prior habitation of land creates an ongoing claim to ownership is wishful thinking. All peoples have suffered dislocation and change of governance. What is important is not the reparations of historical wrongs, be they real or imagined. What is important is the maintenance of a government that is inclusive of all people, not exclusive and arbitrary.

Decisions on petitions to limit access to state lands made by self-interested parties should be undertaken with considerable public input and time for reflection. You are under no obligation to make any decision at this time, and in considering these petitions I would recommend great caution and seek strong clarity in how any such proposal will serve ALL the 40 million citizens of California. In my estimation claims of wanting to protect the environment are mere window dressing for a much more self-serving motivation.

It is not prohibited that members of the California Fish and Game Commission investigate the qualifications of both the Chumash tribes and the NRDC, which, in my brief investigations has back some very controversial legislation that has put in at odds with other environmental groups.

I applaud efforts to promote fishery health and conservation. I also applaud actions that allow more California citizens to enjoy our state’s natural beauty and resources. I oppose policies that discriminate against the people of California for the benefit of small groups of supplicants.

Thank you,

James M. Bittner

Outlook

Proposed pt Sal MPA

From stella dyerly
Date Tue 08/18/2026 06:26 AM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

August 16th, 2026

Fish and Game Commission,

I am writing this letter in opposition to the proposed Pt Sal MPA proposal that is currently being reviewed, especially the point Sal closure. Harford pier out of port San Luis is a working pier with a long fishing history and has been for over a hundred years. A closure of this magnitude would significantly limit our ability to fish and earn a living. Already we are bound by closures to the north and to the south. To take point Sal away would take the last area of productive waters that we could reasonably reach by boat from Port San Luis.

I am a commercial fisherman with a small family fishing business. We fish for live rock fish and sell to the commercial buyer at Harford pier in port San Luis. In order to keep our fish alive we must fish structure in 100 feet of water or less. Point Sal has both the rocky structure that the fish prefer and shallow enough water for us to keep them alive. Each day we fish we wake up at 3:45 am, go to port San Luis, ready the boat and head for the fishing grounds about 40 minutes by boat, Point Sal. To close it would mean to shut down our family run fishing business and our means of income. We live on the central coast and we fish here. Our way of life and our financial stability would be completely destroyed by the Point Sal Closure.

Closing point Sal would not only affect commercial fishermen, but the entire fishing community would suffer. Anglers from all over central California come to port San Luis to fish. They launch from the hoist, Eat lunch at local restaurants and enjoy a day of recreational fishing. Point Sal is not the closest point to us, but it is the one most frequented as point Buschon, the closest point is already closed to fishing. Closing point Sal would put commercial live fisherman out of business as well as harm the tourism in the area. If people can not come here to fish in productive waters, they will not come.

I have listened to recent meetings, and at no time has a commercial fisherman been allowed to state opinions or even been asked how this closure would affect them. We have been told that “people” have been talked to, but those people do not represent the fishing community. So ask us. How would this

affect us? I will tell you that it will negatively impact our livelihood and hinder the fishing community. This closure will put the commercial fisherman from port San Luis out of business and possibly the sport fishing boats as well. Anglers would be forced to fish a concentrated area and that would wreak havoc on marine life and population. People will no longer come to the central coast for fishing as the restrictions would be too great and the take too meager.

I have heard a resident from Guadalupe ask you to come out for a two mile hike to visit the beach they want to fish from. I ask you to come for a boat ride and see how many people are actually on that beach. I would also ask you to look at that beach on the map in comparison to the closure. That small beach is only a small part of the proposed closure. Most of the closure would include areas that are not even reachable by land. I am not asking for you to close the beach to anybody. Let them come and enjoy fishing, but do not take away our ability to fish and to earn a living. They are suggesting that you remove our access as well as our ability to earn a living. We can peacefully coexist from the sea and the shore. Our fishing does not take anything away from shore anglers, and their fishing does not affect us from the sea. This should not be an us against them situation, but an opportunity to share resources and a love for fishing.

The fishing community would greatly suffer from any closure at this point as we are already greatly restricted by regulation and fishing grounds. I would ask you to deny the closure and allow commercial fishermen to continue to earn a living as well as recreational fishermen to enjoy their sport. Closing Point Sal would be an injustice to the entire fishing community.

Fishermen are not trying to take anything away from anybody. We are asking to be allowed to earn a living. Look into the history of Avila and you will find a rich fishing history. Don’t make fisherman another endangered species.

Respectfully,
Stella Dyerly
Commercial fisherman, avid angler

Outlook

Public Comment: Support for Approval of the Mishopshno and Point Sal MPA Petitions

From Teresa Romero <teresa@nativecoast.org>
Date Mon 09/21/2026 02:28 PM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

To the California Fish and Game Commission,

My name is Teresa Romero, President and Executive Director of the Native Coast Action Network, and former Southern California Tribal Representative to the Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team. I write to urge the Commission's approval of the Mishopshno and Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area petitions at its October 13-16, 2026 meeting.

These are Tribally-led petitions to protect living cultural landscapes where ecological integrity and cultural practice are inseparable. The Ocean Protection Council has recommended approval of both, recognizing the cultural significance of Point Sal and identifying Mishopshno as a living homeland connected to longstanding cultural relationships with the ocean.

I am concerned by discussion that has shifted toward alternatives such as State Marine Cultural Preservation Areas (SMCPAs) in place of these Tribal petitions. An SMCPA is designed to protect cultural objects, archaeological resources, and sites of historical or scientific interest — important protections, but not equivalent to recognizing and stewarding a living cultural landscape, which includes ongoing relationships among people, marine species, habitats, stewardship responsibilities, and intergenerational knowledge that continue today. I support co-management and government-to-government agreements, but these mechanisms should complement Tribal Marine Protected Areas, not substitute for them. An MOU is not equivalent to an MPA, and recognition without protection is not stewardship.

I also want to flag that Tribal access remains an unresolved issue throughout California's MPA Network, with both federally recognized and non-federally recognized Tribes continuing to face unequal access to traditional marine resources and inconsistent availability of Tribal take exemptions. While broader than the scope of these two petitions, it underscores the need for California to keep working toward equitable Tribal stewardship and access across the Network.

Tribal governments and their partners engaged in good faith through California's established adaptive management process, investing substantial time, expertise, and community effort into these petitions. Denying them in favor of non-regulatory alternatives would raise serious questions about what meaningful pathway exists for Tribal leadership within California's MPA framework.

My full comments, delivered to the Commission's Tribal Committee, are attached for the record and further detail the basis for this request.

Respectfully,

Teresa Romero
President and Executive Director, Native Coast Action Network
teresa@nativecoast.org

Full Combined Comment Draft

Teresa Romero
Executive Director & President, Native Coast Action Network

Haku and good afternoon.

My name is **Teresa Romero**, and I serve as the **Executive Director and President of the Native Coast Action Network**. I am also a former **Southern California Tribal Representative to the Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team** and a former member of the **Ocean Protection Council's Equity Advisory Committee** during the period that informed California's equity and justice efforts in ocean governance.

I am here today to express my strong support for approval of the proposed **Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area** and **Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area** petitions.

Having participated in California's MPA governance system for many years, I do not view these petitions as being outside the intent of California's MPA Network. Rather, I view them as an evolution of the network toward a more complete recognition of Tribal stewardship, cultural landscapes, and biocultural conservation.

Over the years, California agencies have repeatedly committed themselves to Tribal stewardship, environmental justice, Indigenous knowledge, government-to-government relationships, and meaningful Tribal engagement in ocean management. The question before us today is whether those commitments will be reflected in action.

These petitions are not simply proposals for additional marine protected areas. They are Tribally led efforts to protect places that function as living cultural landscapes, where ecological integrity, cultural practice, stewardship, ceremony, teaching, food systems, and intergenerational knowledge transmission remain inseparable.

The Ocean Protection Council recognized this in its recommendations and recommended approval of both petitions. OPC acknowledged their importance for Tribal stewardship, biodiversity protection, ecological connectivity, and biocultural conservation. OPC also recognized the cultural significance of Point Sal and identified Mishopshno as a living homeland and cultural landscape connected to longstanding cultural relationships with the ocean.

I am increasingly concerned by discussion that appears to shift away from the Tribal petitions themselves and toward alternatives such as memoranda of understanding, future agreements, separate co-management arrangements, or State Marine Cultural Preservation Areas.

I want to be clear that I support co-management.

I support government-to-government agreements.

I support collaborative stewardship.

But these mechanisms should complement Tribal Marine Protected Areas, not replace them.

I am particularly concerned about the recommendation to pursue State Marine Cultural Preservation Areas as an alternative to the Tribal MPAs that have been petitioned for.

As described in the CDFW evaluations, an SMCPA is intended to protect cultural objects, archaeological resources, and sites of historical, archaeological, or scientific interest in marine areas. Those protections are important, and I support them. However, they are not the same as recognizing and stewarding a living cultural landscape. [ADA_July 2...CDFW Eval | PDF], [ADA_July 2...DFW Eval 1 | PDF]

A cultural landscape is broader than an archaeological site.

A cultural landscape includes living relationships among people, marine species, habitats, cultural practices, stewardship responsibilities, teachings, harvesting traditions, and intergenerational knowledge that continue today.

The Mishopshno and Point Sal petitions are about protecting ongoing relationships with the ocean that exist today and will continue into the future.

I therefore urge the Committee and Commission to carefully consider whether the proposed SMCPA alternative protects the full cultural landscape envisioned by the pet, or whether it primarily focuses on protecting archaeological resources, cultural objects, and submerged sites. Those are not the same thing.

I also recognize that the Commission must consider socioeconomic impacts on commercial and recreational fishing communities. Those considerations are important and should remain part of the decision-making process.

At the same time, Tribal relationships to these places involve responsibilities and connections that are distinct from economic use alone.

For many Tribal communities, these waters are not simply places where resources are harvested. They are ancestral places tied to identity, stewardship, culture, ceremony, food systems, and intergenerational responsibility.

As California continues implementing its commitments to equity, justice, inclusion, diversity, and Tribal stewardship, I encourage the Commission to recognize both economic considerations and the unique relationships Tribal communities maintain with these living cultural landscapes.

I also want to acknowledge that Tribal access remains an unresolved issue throughout California's MPA Network. Through my own work engaging with Tribal communities across the state on the benefits and barriers associated with MPAs, I have consistently heard concerns from both federally recognized and non-federally recognized Tribes regarding access to traditional marine resources and the unequal availability of Tribal take exemptions.

While those broader issues extend beyond the scope of today's petitions, they highlight the need for California to continue working toward a more equitable approach to Tribal stewardship and Tribal access throughout the MPA Network.

The scientific literature supports this approach. Research on Indigenous peoples' rights and marine protected areas has concluded that marine protected areas can support both biodiversity conservation and Indigenous rights while advancing cultural conservation goals. Indigenous stewardship and marine conservation are not competing interests. They are often fundamentally aligned.

I am also concerned about the precedent that could be established by denying these petitions while offering non-regulatory alternatives. Tribal governments and their partners engaged in good faith through California's established adaptive management process. They invested substantial time, expertise, relationship-building, scientific support, and community effort into developing these petitions.

If Tribally led petitions that advance conservation, cultural protection, ecological resilience, and Tribal stewardship cannot succeed through this process, it raises important questions about what meaningful pathway exists for Tribal leadership within California's MPA framework.

An MOU is not equivalent to an MPA.

A future agreement is not equivalent to an MPA.

And recognition without protection is not stewardship.

California should not force Tribes to choose between recognition and protection.

These petitions deserve both.

Approval of Point Sal and Mishopshno would demonstrate that Tribal stewardship, cultural landscape protection, and marine conservation are not competing priorities, but mutually reinforcing responsibilities.

To the Tribal leaders and community members participating today, many of us have spent years advocating for greater recognition of Indigenous stewardship within California's coastal and ocean governance systems. This moment represents an opportunity to move beyond acknowledgment and toward action.

To the Commission and state agencies, I respectfully urge you to recognize what these petitions represent. They are not simply proposals for new marine protected areas. They are Tribally led visions for the stewardship and protection of living cultural landscapes that hold both ecological and cultural significance.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge support for approval of both the **Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area** and **Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area** petitions while continuing to pursue meaningful co-management and government-to-government partnerships with Tribes.

Thank you.

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0115

California Legislature

September 30, 2026

President Eric Sklar
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners:

We are writing to respectfully request your full and fair consideration of the proposals to strengthen California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) network, with particular attention to the recommendations provided by the Ocean Protection Council (OPC). Specifically, we appreciate the Commission's consideration of proposals affecting the Central Coast, including Point Sal (Petition 2023-28MPA), Mishopshno (Petition 2023-29MPA), Point Conception (Petition 2023-33MPA), and Anacapa Island (Petition 2023-27MPA).

California's MPA network is a cornerstone of our state's approach to ocean stewardship. When thoughtfully designed, MPAs protect biodiversity, strengthen ecosystem resilience, and support the long-term sustainability of our fisheries and coastal economy. Through California's 30x30 initiative, the state has committed to conserving 30 percent of its lands and coastal waters by 2030. Meaningful progress toward this goal will require opportunities to add effective protections that conserve biodiversity and strengthen the resilience of California's coastal waters, and the current MPA review provides an important opportunity to evaluate these objectives as part of the state's broader 30x30 efforts.

We also appreciate the Commission's ongoing efforts, through public hearings and engagement throughout the state, to hear from Tribal communities and consider opportunities for meaningful Tribal co-management and stewardship. The proposed Point Sal and Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Areas are particularly relevant to this ongoing conversation, providing an opportunity to consider Tribal stewardship alongside the ecological and conservation objectives of the MPA network.

At the same time, decisions regarding the MPA network have real impacts on coastal communities. Commercial and recreational fisheries remain an important part of the Central Coast's economy and heritage, and the perspectives of those whose livelihoods depend on these waters deserve continued consideration. California has invested decades in building a scientifically designed MPA network, and durable conservation outcomes depend on sound science, meaningful collaboration, and public trust.

For these reasons, we respectfully request your full and fair consideration of the proposals discussed above, including OPC's recommendations to strengthen California's MPA network. We appreciate the Commission's continued work to steward California's MPA network for future generations.

Sincerely,

Gregg Hart
Assemblymember
37th Assembly District

Monique Limón
Senate President pro Tempore
19th Senate District

Outlook

Agenda Item 32. Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 (New SMCA Near Point Sal, Tribally Co-Led)

From Aylesworth, Sandy [redacted]
Date Wed 09/30/2026 04:14 PM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>
Cc Violet Sage Walker [redacted]

Good afternoon,

Please find attached three submissions for the October FGC meeting on Agenda Item 32: Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 (New SMCA Near Point Sal, Tribally Co-Led):

1.) A letter from local and regional businesses in support of Petition 2023-28 designating a new MPA off Point Sal.

2.) A co-sponsors' letter in response to the CDFW and OPC recommendations. (This was sent after the deadline for the August FGC meeting, and is now being formally submitted.)

3.) A letter we submitted on April 23, 2026, that describes fishing effort at Point Sal in greater detail than our petition narrative. (We wanted to ensure this was on the official record.)

Here's a short synopsis of that letter's findings:

- The Point Sal SMCA overlaps with 4.4% of block 631's area, and 7.9% of block 632's area.
- The proposed SMCA contains just 3.86 square miles, or 0.4%, of the 939 square miles of fishable hard bottom substrate within the fishing grounds of vessels operating out of Avila/Port San Luis. (Hard-bottom substrates are among the most important habitats for groundfish).
- Spatial fishing data in this area from 2010-2022 for all commercial fisheries, using vessel monitoring system data, show that the vast majority of fishing took place outside of the proposed Point Sal SMCA's boundaries.
    - The spatial data instead show a hotspot for groundfish longline gear located south of the proposed MPA, just offshore from Point Arguello.

Thank you for your hard work to prepare for this long meeting!

-Sandy

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

September 30, 2026

President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

We, the undersigned businesses, write in strong support of protecting the waters around Point Sal in a new State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA).

As business owners who serve residents and visitors to the region, we deeply value the ocean and coastline for all that they contribute – from increased quality of life for our families and employees, to creating the backbone of a thriving coastal tourism industry.

The Central Coast's vibrant ocean and shores form the foundation of our strong ocean economy, which accounts for almost 10% of jobs in Santa Barbara County[1] and 8% of jobs in San Luis Obispo County.[2] Our world-famous coast is a biodiversity hotspot for marine life, and attracts visitors from around the world. In 2025, tourism brought a total of 4.7 billion dollars in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.[3] Taking action now to bolster ocean protections will help the marine habitats that support the ocean economy stay vibrant in the long run, ultimately supporting the many local businesses and tourism operations that depend on a healthy ocean.

The Point Sal SMCA would conserve important habitats that support this rich biodiversity, such as rocky reefs, tidepools, kelp forests, sandy beaches, a migratory whale corridor, an important nursery area for baby fish, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting this special place would have positive impacts that spread beyond its boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience at a time of unprecedented changes. We support this proposal to protect a healthy, undeveloped, and beloved stretch of California's coast.

We urge the Commission to take action for a healthier ocean and economy by approving petition 2023-29MPA-AM-1 to conserve the waters around Point Sal. Approving this petition will be good for the ocean, good for our local communities, and good for business.

Sincerely,

Acupuncture Center of Santa Maria, Inc.

Altergott Strategic Focus

App's Photography

[1] NOAA Coastal County Snapshot: Santa Barbara County. Accessed January 2024.
[2] NOAA Coastal County Snapshot: San Luis Obispo County. Accessed January 2024.
[3] Visit California, 2025 Economic Impact of Travel. Published April 20, 2026.

Blue Biome Advising

Blue Spark Strategies

California Surf Fishers

Central Coast Outdoors

Cosecha Guadalupe Farmers Market

East West Natural Medicine Center

Greater Santa Barbara Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Infinite Functions Inc.

New Frontiers Natural Marketplace

Patagonia

Open Water

August 10, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
Transmitted via email: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: Agenda Item 7: Bin 2 Marine Protected Area (MPA) Petitions: Evaluations and Recommendations for MPA Regulation Change Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 Point Sal SMCA

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Anderson, and Members of the California Fish and Game Commission,

This letter is written on behalf of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). We appreciate your significant investment of time and energy to the marine protection area (MPA) petition evaluation process. We offer these brief comments with the goal of providing an initial response to both the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) evaluations of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) proposal. We intend to follow this letter in the coming weeks with more details on the points below.

We strongly support OPC's recommendation that the Fish and Game Commission approve the Point Sal SMCA proposal as set out in our amended petition. The SMCA would safeguard the area's profound cultural importance to the Chumash people and protect a biodiversity hotspot that supports blue whales, seabirds, juvenile fish recruitment, and southern sea otters. Indeed, NCTC and NRDC believe that our Point Sal SMCA proposal offers the state a historic opportunity to protect sacred Chumash waters, respond to community requests to further protect the Point Sal headland and surrounding waters, and strengthen protections within the state's inventory of 30x30 areas.

We appreciate that CDFW has suggested that FGC consider multiple options relating to the proposal. However, as we currently understand it, only Option 4 – which most closely aligns with the OPC recommendation for full approval – has the potential to definitively confer the cultural and wildlife protections that NCTC and NRDC request in the proposal.

Below we briefly comment on all of the options CDFW offers, starting with Option 4, the option we support – depending on what CDFW suggests pursuant to its recommendation for alternative boundaries.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 4: "Grant in concept Point Sal SMCA: Establish a new SMCA at Point Sal as proposed in 2023-28MPA_AM2 that allows recreational take of fin fish by hook-and-line from shore (Moderate-low LOP) and request CDFW identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2."

The Point Sal SMCA would advance California's Tribal co-stewardship policies, conserve marine life, and support Guadalupe's aspiration to become an ecotourism destination. Further, it presents a unique possibility for the state to advance holistic, land-to-sea, seascape-level conservation, an objective OPC articulates in Pathways to 30x30: California - Accelerating Conservation of California's Nature. In addition to its ecological merits, the Point Sal SMCA proposal has broad and diverse community support. Lion Rock and the Point Sal headland are beloved local sites due to the spiritual, recreational, and mental health benefits they provide.

CDFW's Option 4 adopts our proposal with the exception of a recommendation for alternative boundaries. The boundaries in the October 2025 amendments to our petition, which were formally adopted at the April 2026 FGC meeting, reflect input from Chumash community members, subsistence and recreational fishers, and extensive discussion with Vandenberg Space Force Base. If there are minor adjustments to the northern and southern boundaries of the proposed MPA that would improve its enforceability, we are eager to work with CDFW to ensure that such boundaries better align with the Feasibility Guidelines.

With respect to the southern boundary of the proposed MPA, we note that the amended boundary reflects a balance between ensuring that the Point Sal SMCA would not conflict with mission-critical VSFB operations and maximizing protections for the area south of the Point Sal headland (i.e., the larval retention zone). In addition, in order for the southern boundary to align with an obvious physical feature, it corresponds roughly with the southern terminus of Point Sal State Beach. It is also an even line of latitude. However, we are open to the possibility that there may be a more prominent feature on the southern boundary that is more suitable for enforcement purposes. With respect to the northern boundary, it is intended to align with Mussel Point, a well-known and highly recognizable feature at the northern end of Paradise Beach. It is also an even line of latitude.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 1: "Support with Alternative Pathway: Request CDFW engage with the NCTC, other interested tribes, and California State Parks to explore designating the area as a State Marine Cultural Preservation Area (SMCPA) to acknowledge the cultural significance of the area, rather than establishing a new MPA."

A key goal of the Point Sal SMCA proposal is to meaningfully conserve the area's natural cultural resources for future generations – we see conserving them today as essential to carrying forth the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and other Chumash tribes' legacies. We are unfamiliar with the structure and regulatory options for an SMCPA, and are therefore unclear whether a Point Sal SMCPA would have the same potential to conserve living cultural resources as the SMCA would. If the SMCPA did not have the same take allowances we propose, it would not adequately protect the ecosystem's wildlife and habitats intended for conservation. Finally, as CDFW notes, there are no existing SMCPAs within California waters and such designations are typically under the purview of California State Parks. We are concerned that these two factors could potentially preclude or delay the establishment of the Point Sal MPA.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 2: "Grant with Alternative Pathway: Point Sal SMR or a SMCA with at least a Moderate-high LOP: Establish a new MPA at Point Sal and request CDFW

identify northern and southern boundaries that are better aligned with Feasibility Guidelines rather than the proposed boundaries in 2023-28MPA_AM2."

In their evaluation, CDFW concludes that the Point Sal SMCA proposal would only offer a moderate-low level of protection and would therefore have few ecological benefits. We appreciate CDFW's interest in ensuring that, if designated, the Point Sal SMCA would have a sufficiently high level of protection (LOP) for it to confer the intended conservation benefits. However, CDFW's assessment rests on a key assumption in the SAT Scientific Guidelines methodology to determine LOP – namely, that "any allowed activity could occur at high intensity" (p.17 of 2009 Methods Used to Evaluate Marine Protected Area Proposals in the MLPA South Coast Study Region). At Point Sal, this assumption does not reflect reality. CDFW's consideration of potential impacts from hook-and-line shore fishing within the Point Sal MPA proposal should account for the area's remoteness and the significant "access challenges" the shoreline presents.

Specifically, CDFW itself notes that accessing the southern boundary requires a 12-mile round trip hike over steep terrain. Accessing the northern boundary requires a roughly four-mile round trip walk on sand and a steep climb up Mussel Point. While local hook-and-line shore-based fishers make and treasure these trips to both Mussel Point and Point Sal itself, CDFW's application of the 2009 LOP Evaluation Framework's assumption of "maximum plausible intensity" to hook-and-line shore-fishing is incorrect in this instance. It is also significant that independent scientists have assessed the Point Sal SMCA proposal as offering a "high" level of protection per the level of protection evaluation process in the MPA Guide (as summarized in the January 2026 letter to FGC from the Marine Conservation Institute).

CDFW further argues that there is risk that future use may intensify the current low intensity of shore fishing activity. However, the adjacent lands are fully protected in various terrestrial conservation areas, meaning future coastal development of any kind is extremely unlikely. There is also no indication that vehicle access via Brown's Road – which was heavily damaged in storms in 1998 and has been closed for nearly 30 years – will be reestablished. While NCTC and NRDC have indicated our support for reopening the access road to Point Sal State Beach, we know there is a low likelihood that this would occur. The current level of access via Browns Road (sunrise to sunset access for pedestrians only, no bikes or vehicles) was the result of considerable coordination and compromise between Santa Barbara County Parks, Vandenberg Space Force Base, and Santa Barbara County. The agreement has been in place since 2008. Furthermore, should future shore-based fishing activity increase substantially despite these access limitations, the state could reassess the shore fishing allowance regulations accordingly.

The March 2025 amendment to allow for hook-and-line shore fishing was the result of feedback from many conversations with Tribal representatives and community members in Guadalupe. Our understanding, based on those conversations and the proposed MPA's proximity to the City of Guadalupe, is that many of the area's hook-and-line fishers are low-income and fish for subsistence. Given that scientists have assessed the Point Sal SMCA as being highly protected according to the MPA Guide, and the likelihood of shore-based fishing intensifying in the future is low, the petitioners feel strongly that it is important to retain the shore fishing allowance to honor the conversations we had with community members, including those representing non-federally recognized Tribes and low-income subsistence fishers.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 3. "Grant with Alternative Pathway, Special Closure Lion Rock: Establish a new Special Closure around Lion Rock for birds and pinnipeds. This alternative could be considered on its own or as an add-on to Options (1), (2), and (4)."

We appreciate CDFW's flexibility in suggesting a Special Closure as a tool that might help advance the objectives NCTC and NRDC put forth in the petition. However, CDFW misunderstands the petitioners' intent in requesting that the waters around Lion Rock receive additional protections. Due to its remoteness, the physical rock already serves as an undisturbed site for pinniped haulouts and for seabirds. Our proposal is focused instead on reducing other local stressors surrounding Lion Rock to ensure there is abundant prey availability for seabirds and marine mammals, such as harbor seals, and to maintain healthy ecosystem functioning of the environment surrounding this rare geologic feature on the Central Coast. Specifically, by eliminating most fishing pressure in the proposed SMCA, the many species for which Lion Rock is home would likely continue to benefit from abundant food in the area near their haul out, nesting, breeding, and roosting location.

A Special Closure alone would not achieve the biodiversity and cultural benefits that a nine-square mile SMCA would confer. In addition, we believe that pairing the Point Sal SMCA with a Special Closure is unnecessary and risks excluding recreational users from the area.

NCTC and NRDC comments re: CDFW Option 5. "Deny: Do not establish a new SMCA (or SMR or Special Closure) at Point Sal."

We oppose this option because it would deny California the significant cultural, ecosystem, and economic benefits scientists, tribes, elected officials, and members of the public anticipate the Point Sal SMCA would deliver.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in this important process and to contribute to the Commission's work to safeguard California's ocean. A healthy ocean is fundamental to California's communities, economy, culture, and way of life, and further protecting it is an investment in our shared future. The Point Sal SMCA proposal presents a powerful opportunity to strengthen California's MPA network and the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary by protecting a place of exceptional ecological and cultural importance. We urge the Commission to seize this opportunity to advance meaningful, lasting ocean protection at Point Sal and to demonstrate California's continued leadership in caring for our ocean and the people who depend on it.

Sincerely,

Chairwoman Violet Sage Walker
Northern Chumash Tribal Council

Sandy Aylesworth, Pacific Director, Ocean Division
Natural Resources Defense Council

April 23, 2026

Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Spatial extent of historical fishing activity in and around the proposed Point Sal SMCA (Petition 2023-28MPA)

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners:

We submit this letter and attached maps to provide you with additional data relating to fishing activity to help inform your decision-making around Petition 2023-28MPA, a proposal to designate a new State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) at Point Sal.

Data summarizing commercial fisheries landings in California are publicly available through the California Department of Fish & Wildlife's Marine Fisheries Data Explorer (MFDE).[1] Landings can be summarized spatially using a gridded system of fishing blocks, which is useful for understanding the relative importance of different areas by comparing landings and revenue derived from different blocks. However, these fishing blocks are very large (predominantly 10 minutes of latitude by 10 minutes of longitude, or approximately 130 square miles per block). As a result, landings data are reported at too large a spatial scale to be useful for understanding local fishing patterns, such as those needed to inform state marine protected area discussions.

Some who have expressed concerns with designating the proposed SMCA at Point Sal have cited MDFE landings data for the fishing blocks this protected area would overlap with (631 and 632). However, the proposed SMCA's boundaries cover a very small portion of fishing blocks 631 and 632 – just 4.4% of block 631's area, and 7.9% of block 632's area. To better understand the real potential impact of the proposed MPA on the area's fisheries, a finer-scale understanding of where fishing occurs within these fishing blocks is necessary.

To that end, spatial fishing effort estimated from vessel monitoring system (VMS) data can be useful. VMS is a spatial monitoring system that uses satellite and cellular-based communications from onboard transceiver units to track the geographic location of vessels. VMS is required for 1) all vessels with a Pacific Coast groundfish limited entry permit that fish in state or federal marine waters off the U.S. West Coast; 2) any vessel that uses non-groundfish trawl gear to fish in the EEZ (e.g., California halibut trawl gear); and 3) any vessel that uses open access gear (e.g., pots, traps, lines, longlines) to take and retain, or possess groundfish in the EEZ.[2] These vessels are required to operate the VMS transceiver during all fishing trips, regardless of whether in federal or state waters, or whether targeting fish species or using gear not covered by the VMS requirement (e.g., Dungeness crab or salmon). As a result, VMS not

[1] California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Marine Fisheries Data Explorer. https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Data-Management-Research/MFDE.
[2] 50 C.F.R. Part 660, Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, accessed March 31, 2026, https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-VI/part-660

only has nearly complete coverage for the West Coast groundfish fishery, but also covers to some extent other commercial fisheries in the region, including those that occur in the Point Sal area.[3]

The VMS data maps below are useful for investigating the spatial extent of fishing activity across different fisheries in and around the proposed Point Sal SMCA. These maps are sourced from two datasets that use similar methodologies to estimate fishing effort, but differ in timescale and gear types covered.

The first set of maps, from a publicly available VMS dataset provided by the Pacific Marine Fisheries Council, depicts estimated fishing activity in this area from 2010-2022 for all fisheries (Figure 1a), the Dungeness crab fishery (Figure 1b), and the salmon troll fishery (Figure 1c). These data show that fishing during this time period largely took place outside of the proposed Point Sal SMCA's boundaries, which are outlined in red.

The second set of maps, from a dataset provided by Wang et al. 2022, depicts estimated fishing activity for the entire U.S. West Coast from 2010-2017 for the following fisheries and gear types: open access (OA) CA halibut line gear, CA halibut trawl gear, OA groundfish longline gear, OA groundfish trap and pot gear, and OA groundfish line gear (Figures 2-6).[4] While the Wang et al. maps were generated to encompass a much larger spatial extent and therefore provide slightly lower resolution, they indicate very limited fishing activity for CA halibut line and trawl gear types occurring in the waters immediately surrounding Point Sal, and instead shows a hotspot located farther north, in the waters directly offshore from Avila/Port San Luis (Figures 2 and 3). Similarly, maps of fishing activity for groundfish show no OA longline fishing (Figure 4), no OA trap pot fishing (Figure 5), and lower levels of OA line gear fishing (0-25% of total, Figure 6) taking place in the waters immediately surrounding Point Sal, and instead show a noticeable hotspot for groundfish longline gear located south of the proposed MPA, just offshore from Point Arguello.

As an additional means of identifying potential conflicts with the groundfish fishing fleet based out of Avila/Port San Luis specifically, we used benthic data available from NOAA[5] to calculate the extent to which the proposed MPA would remove hard bottom substrate from this fleet's fishing grounds.[6] Although hard substrates are one of the less abundant benthic habitats off the

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[3] Wang, Yi-Hui, Benjamin I. Ruttenberg, Ryan K. Walter, et al. 2024. "High Resolution Assessment of Commercial Fisheries Activity along the US West Coast Using Vessel Monitoring System Data with a Case Study Using California Groundfish Fisheries." *PLOS ONE* 19 (6): e0298868. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0298868.

[4] Wang et al. 2022.

[5] NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, 2026: Benthic substrate type off California, https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/inport/item/39578.

[6] We set the offshore extent of Avila/Port San Luis's groundfish fishing grounds at the 2700 m isobath, the maximum depth for all groundfish fisheries except for midwater trawl (Wang et al. 2022). To define the latitudinal extent of this port's fishing grounds", we looked at MDFE landings data reported for Avila/Port San Luis from 2012-2022 and set the northern and southern limits of our spatial analysis at the edge of the northernmost and southernmost fishing blocks with reported landings (blocks 602-606, and 658-663). Note that while the MDFE data showed landings for this port come from as far south as the Channel Islands, we chose to define the southernmost extent of this analysis at Point Conception, to avoid underestimating the importance of habitat around Point Sal for smaller vessels that are more likely to be owned and operated by local fishermen, and that can't access the Channel Islands. We then clipped the benthic habitat dataset to these geographic parameters, removed the area found within existing state MPAs where fishing is currently prohibited, and calculated the total amount of hard substrate available to fishers, and the total amount contained within the boundaries of Point Sal.

U.S. West Coast, they are among the most important habitats for groundfish.[7] The proposed SMCA contains 3.86 square miles, or 0.4%, of the 939 square miles of fishable hard bottom substrate within the fishing grounds of vessels operating out of Avila/Port San Luis. This suggests that the specific area contained within the proposed protected area is likely to play a limited role for local groundfish fisheries, despite the high volume of landings reported for the much larger area of the fishing blocks it lies within.

Finally, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council has designated the rocky reef area just offshore of Point Sal as a Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) (Figure 7). HAPCs are areas that "represent high priority areas for conservation, management, or research and are necessary for healthy ecosystems and sustainable fisheries."[8] They are designated for one or more of the following factors: their unique contribution to ecological function, their sensitivity to human-caused degradation, their exposure to development and other stressors, and their rarity as a habitat.[9] Because this HAPC lies in state waters, it cannot be protected by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council.[10] The designation of a Point Sal marine protected area, however, provides the opportunity to protect this important habitat with benefits to the greater Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. Importantly, the proposed SMCA's boundaries would encompass some, but not all of the rocky reef HAPC – leaving a northern portion open to fishing, thereby facilitating the "spillover", or local-scale migration, of large, mature groundfish from within the MPA into adjacent, fishable reef habitat.

For the reasons detailed above, we anticipate the proposed SMCA at Point Sal would cause minimal displacement of commercial fishing, including for groundfish and Dungeness crab fisheries. We hope this additional data is helpful as you conduct your decision-making in the coming weeks. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Suatoni
Director of Fisheries
Deputy Director of Oceans
Natural Resources Defense Council

[7] Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. June 2025. https://www.pcouncil.org/documents/2022/08/pacific-coast-groundfish-fishery-management-plan.pdf/#page=117
[8] NOAA Fisheries, Habitat Areas of Particular Concern within Essential Fish Habitat. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/habitat-conservation/habitat-areas-particular-concern-within-essential-fish-habitat
[9] Id.
[10] NRDC 2021, A Safety Net for Ocean Fisheries: The Case for Stronger Protection of Essential Fish Habitat Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/safety-net-ocean-fisheries-report.pdf

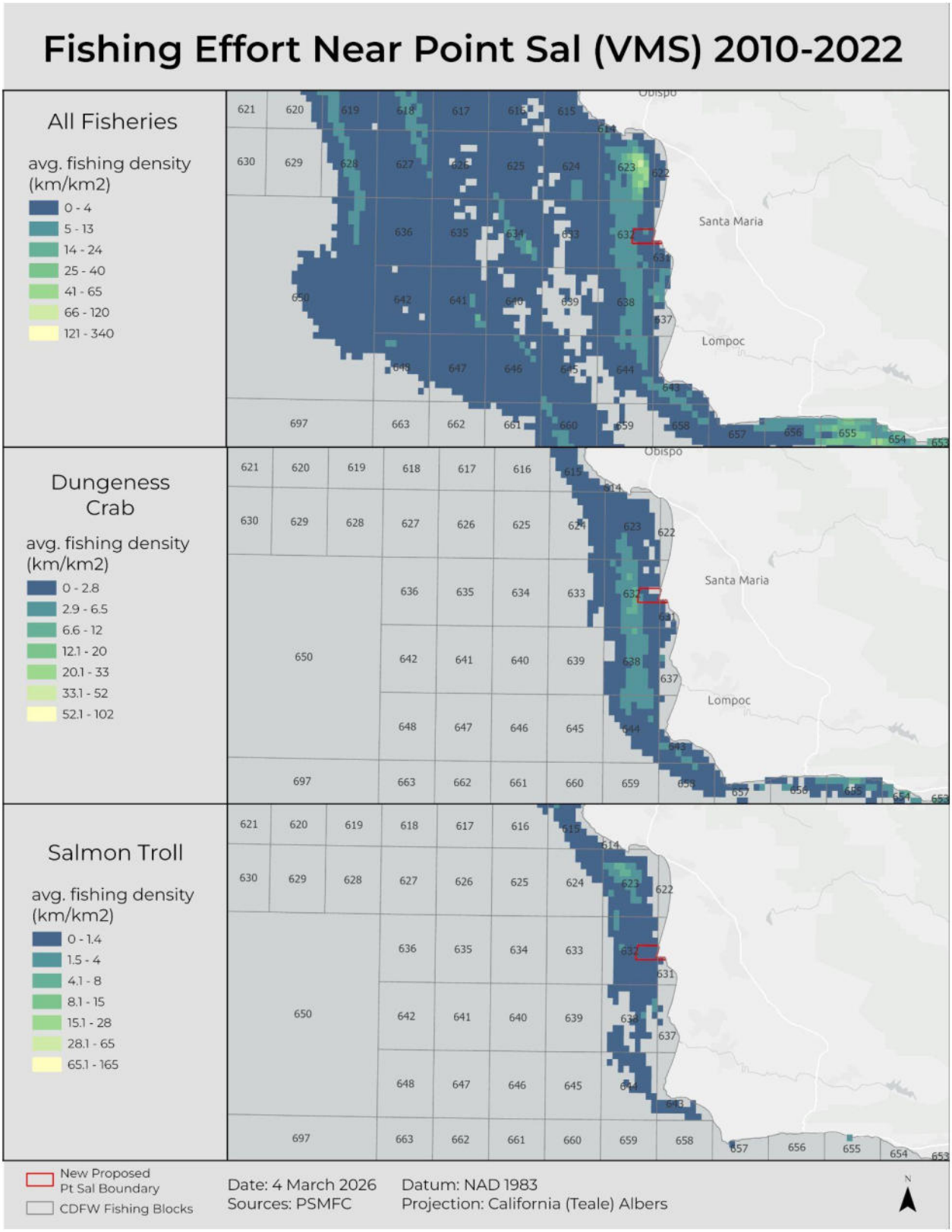

Figure 1: Estimated fishing activity from vessel monitoring system (VMS) data for 2010 to 2022, for all fisheries (top), the Dungeness crab fishery (middle), and the salmon troll fishery (bottom) in the waters surrounding Point Sal, California. Fishing activity within each pixel is depicted as average annual fishing density, or the average number of fishing tracks (km) per cell each year.

Data has been filtered for confidentiality, and only pixels with 3 or more unique vessels are included. Grey pixels indicate no data or confidential data. The boundaries of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area are outlined in red. Data source: [PSMFC/NOAA GeoPortal](#).

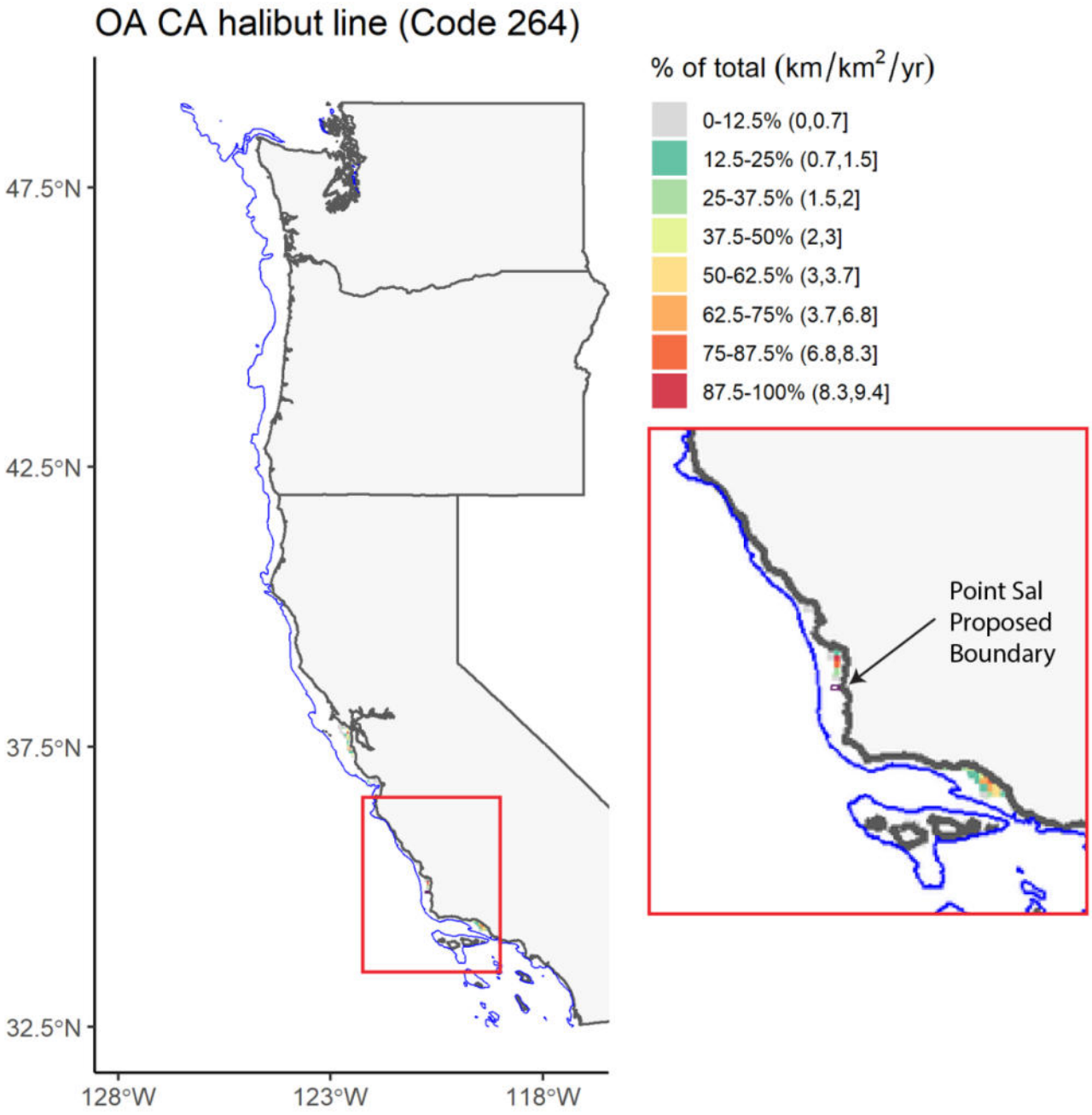

Figure 2: Annual-mean fishing effort per unit area (km fished/km2/yr) across lease blocks for open access California halibut line gear (Declaration Code 264). The approximate boundaries of the proposed SMCA are in purple in the map inset. The blue line is the 200 m isobath, representing the maximum biological depth for the target species. Source: Wang et al. 2022. A high-resolution map is available to download [here](#).

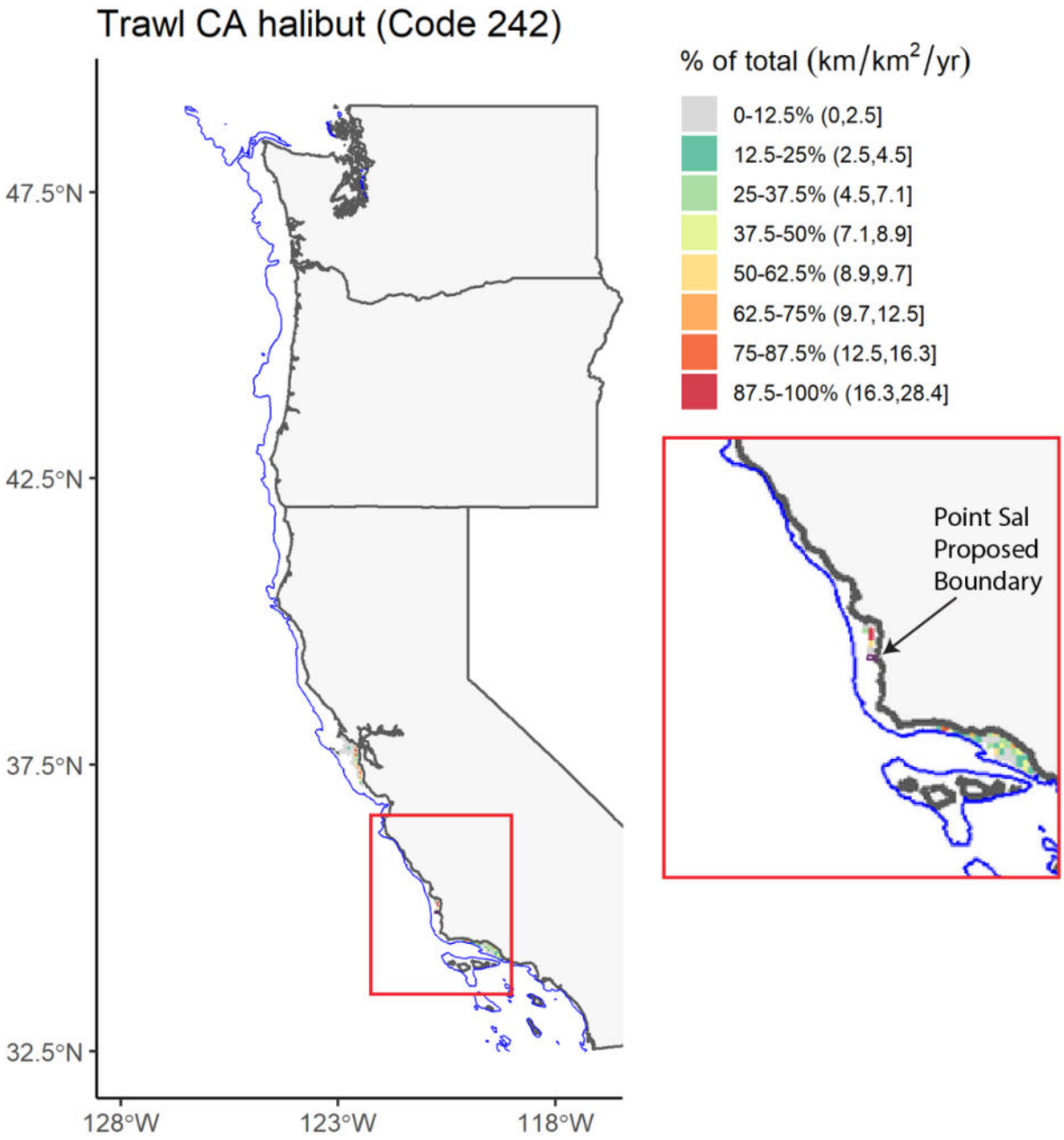

Figure 3: Annual-mean fishing effort per unit area (km fished/km2/yr) across lease blocks for non-groundfish trawl gear for California halibut (Declaration Code 242). The approximate boundaries of the proposed SMCA are in purple in the map inset. The blue line is the 200 m isobath, representing the maximum biological depth for the target species. Source: Wang et al., 2022. A high-resolution map is available to download here.

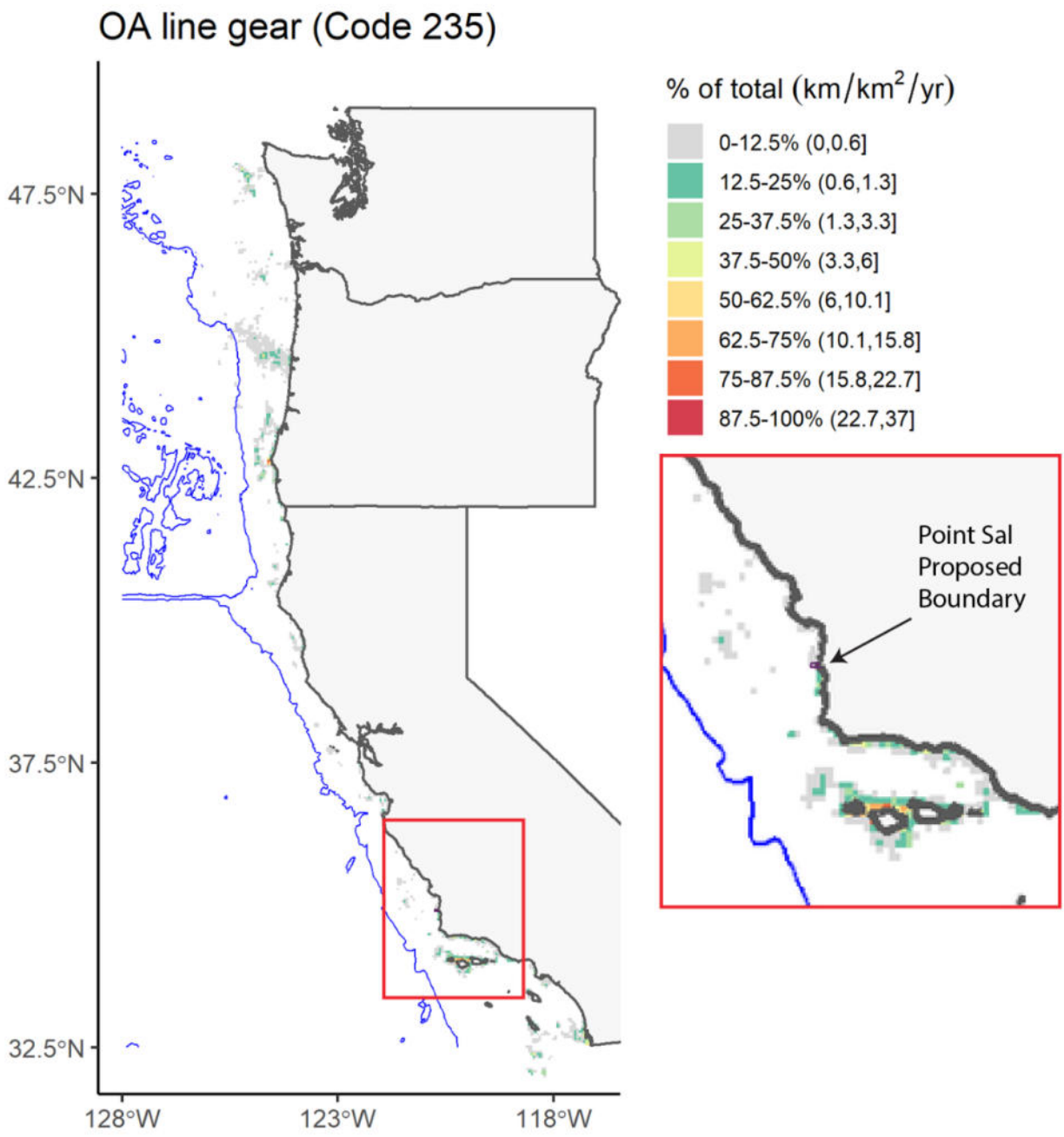

Figure 4: Annual-mean fishing effort per unit area (km fished/km2/yr) across lease blocks for open access (OA) line gear for groundfish (Declaration Code 235). The approximate boundaries of the proposed SMCA are in purple in the map inset. The blue line is the 2700 m isobath, representing the maximum depth for all groundfish fisheries except for midwater trawl. Source: Wang et al., 2022. A high-resolution map is available to download here.

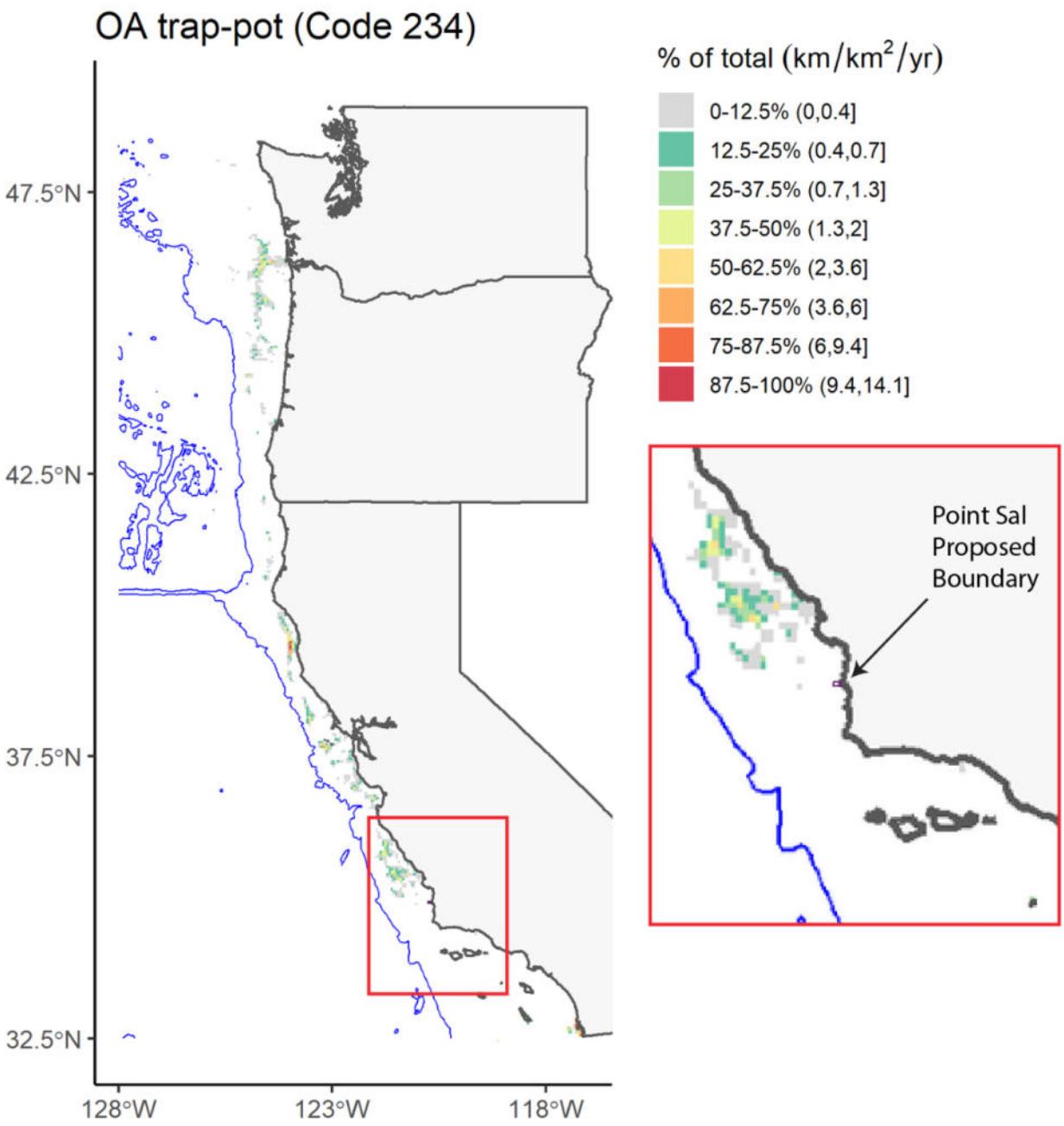

Figure 5: Annual-mean fishing effort per unit area (km fished/km2/yr) across lease blocks for open access (OA) groundfish trap or pot gear (Declaration Code 234). The approximate boundaries of the proposed SMCA are in purple in the map inset. The blue line is the 2700 m isobath, representing the maximum depth for all groundfish fisheries except for midwater trawl. Source: Wang et al. 2022. A high-resolution map is available to download here.

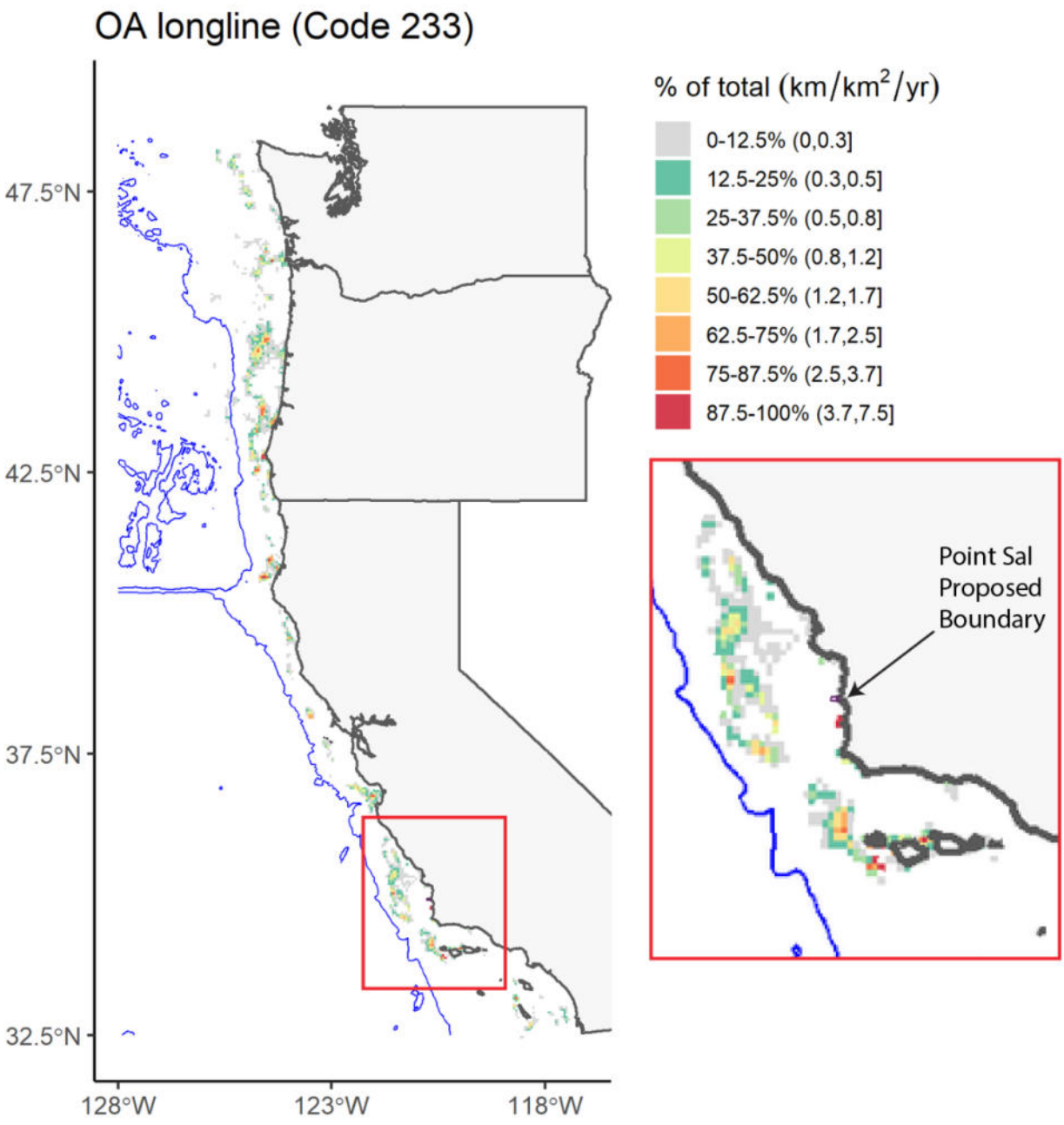

Figure 6: Annual-mean fishing effort per unit area (km fished/km2/yr) across lease blocks for open access (OA) longline gear for groundfish (Declaration Code 233). The approximate boundaries of the proposed SMCA are in purple in the map inset. The blue line is the 2700 m isobath, representing the maximum depth for all groundfish fisheries except for midwater trawl. Source: Wang et al. 2022. A high-resolution map is available to download here.

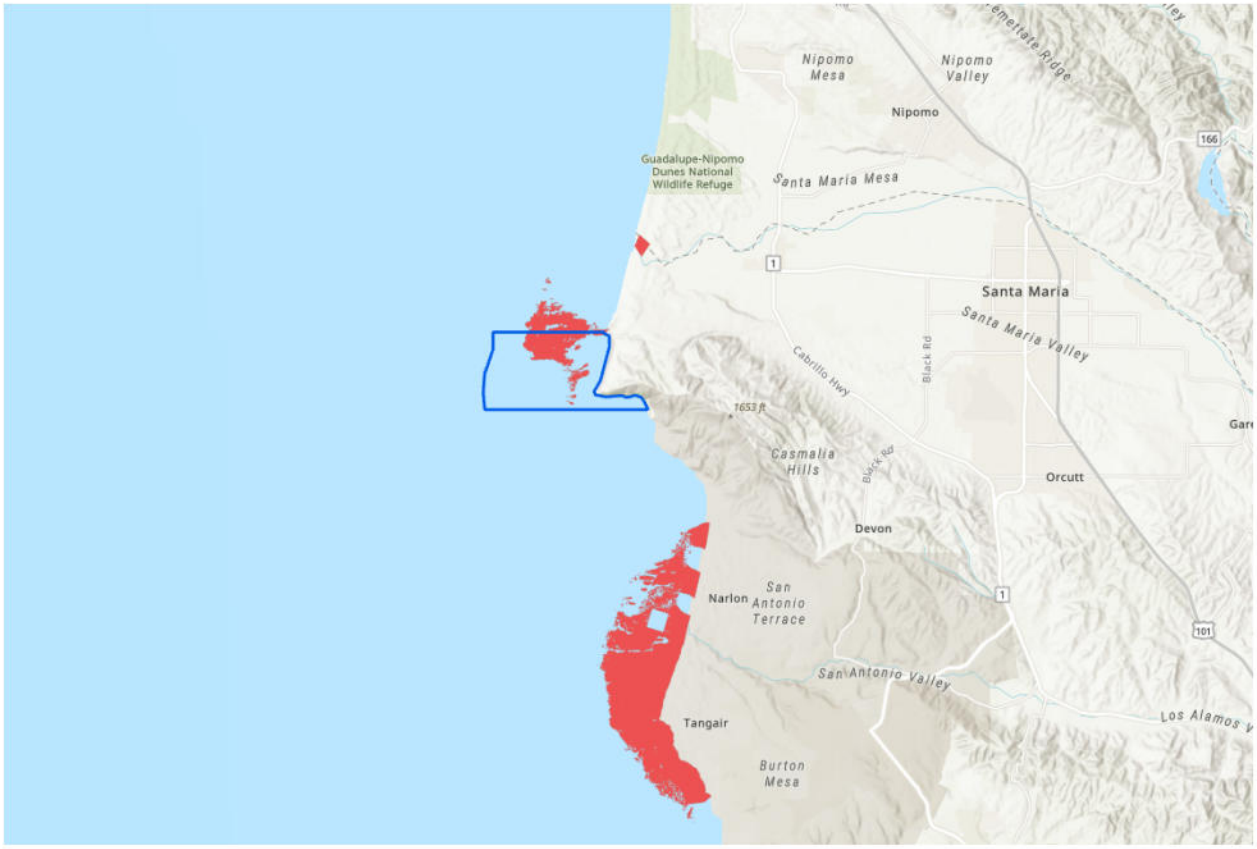

Figure 7: The boundaries of the proposed State Marine Conservation Area at Point Sal (outlined in blue) would protect a portion of the rocky reef Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) (in red). Importantly, fishing access to the northern portion of this HAPC would be retained, allowing fishermen to access and benefit from spillover. A larger rocky reef HAPC just south of Point Sal would also remain open to fishing. Source: NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation's Essential Fish Habitat Mapper.

Outlook

Petition 2023-29MPA; Petition 2023-28MPA Support Letter

From Brown, Margaret [redacted]
Date Wed 09/30/2026 11:31 AM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

Attached please find a letter from 11,211 people in support of the Mishopshno and Point Sal Marine Protected Area proposals.

Sincerely,
Margaret Brown
Natural Resources Defense Council

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

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

Submitted electronically to: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

Attached please find a letter from 11,211 people in support of the Mishopshno and Point Sal Marine Protected Area proposals.

Sincerely,
Margaret Brown
Natural Resources Defense Council

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

I am a California resident writing in strong support of the Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria and the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe.

For over a decade, California's world-leading network of MPAs has helped fish grow larger and more abundant, wildlife populations become healthier, and critical habitats thrive.

The Mishopshno SMCA would honor a sacred Chumash area, bolster ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change, enhance Santa Barbara County's local economies through tourism and ocean recreation, and help stressed fish populations and habitats thrive into the future.

Conserving Point Sal would support Chumash-led marine stewardship and protect a roosting site for vulnerable seabirds, an important breeding site for marine mammals, and a special area that provides a safe haven for fish and invertebrate populations.

Californians like me benefit from a thriving ocean. I urge you to approve these proposals and protect California's critical marine habitats.

Gene Arias
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

Sally Marone
Livermore, CA 94550

A. Srinivasan
Altadena, CA 91001

Elizabeth McNeil
Sacramento, CA 95823

Sandra McGrath
Goleta, CA 93117

Judy Madigan
Loyalton, CA 96118

Michele Halligan
Aptos, CA 95003

Jodie Hulden
San Diego, CA 92104

Janice E. Farry-Menke
Cambria, CA 93428

Sarah Sismondo
Duarte, CA 91010

Jill Mistretta
San Francisco, CA 94133

Bridgett Heinly
San Diego, CA 92207

Kathryn Spence
Moraga, CA 94556

Don Mcleod
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Sherry Freeman
San Anselmo, CA 94960

Susan Linney
Alameda, CA 94502

Page Fairfield
Valley Center, CA 92082

Jacoba Dolloff
La Mesa, CA 91941

Jane Paneitz
Healdsburg, CA 95448-1254

Elizabeth Edinger
North Hollywood, CA 91601

Lauri Heikkila
Tujunga, CA 01042

Elliot Gordon
Irvine, CA 92604

Monika Holm
Oakland, CA 94611

Agnes Gillespie MD
PLACERVILLE, CA 95667

Kerry Wright
Sacramento, CA 95819

Susan Calvert
Hesperia, CA 92345

Joe LeBlanc
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Casey Patrick
Van Nuys, CA 91406

Freyja Swan-Utsman
Atascadero, CA 93442

Bernadette de Barajas
San Fernando, CA 91340

Persephone Maywald
McKinleyville, CA 95519

Lara Luenebrink
Los Angeles, CA 90066

Ron Parsons
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Betty Winholtz
Morro Bay, CA 93442

Judy Schwartz
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Kent Koontz
Fresno, CA 93726

D Quan
Rosemead, CA 91770

Dennis Fritzinger
Berkeley, CA 94704

Claudia Bubeck
Lafayette, CA 94549-4420

Jill Slocum
Pacifica, CA 94044

Nicola McGillicuddy
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Victoria Rome
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Cara Vallot
Sacramento, CA 95818

Jon Holstein
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Rose-Marie Vigil
Santa Monica, CA 90405-5118

Francine Kubrin
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Deborah Johnson
Hayward, CA 94541

Cecilia Risquez
Oakland, CA 94619-1618

Lynn Pedersen
Porter Ranch, CA 91326

Monica Donovan
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

Judy Shively
San Diego, CA 92101

Lycke Edith
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Mia Clifton
Los Angeles, CA 91604

Carol Robertson
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Mike Hobbs
Hanford, CA 93230-2745

Anita Thomason
Culver City, CA 90230

Evette Andersen
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Peggy Luna
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Shannon Healey
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Lawrence Bernstein
Sacramento, CA 95819

Michael Hazelton
San Jose, CA 95112

Patric Kearns
Sonoma, CA 95476

Andrea Lee
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

Eileen Mitro
Ukiah, CA 95482

Tom Key
Montague, CA 96064

Timothy Thompson
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

N Kaluza
Richmond, CA 94803

Margaret Goodale
Pacifica, CA 94044

Mary Stanistreet
Ventura, CA 93003

Kristin Gilberti
Woodacre, CA 94973

Alison Bermant
Truckee, CA 96161

V West
SD, CA 92100

Jan Jones
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Patricia Sims
Greenbrae, CA 94904

Kat Hawkins
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Judy Northrop
Laguna Woods, CA 92637

Sarah Valentine
Saratoga, CA 95070

Julie Levenbach
Palo Alto, CA 94303

D. Brian Harrington
San Francisco, CA 94109

Ann Bein
Los Angeles, CA 90064

Amy Zink
Oakland, CA 94606

Karen Jacques
Sacramento, CA 95811

John Broom
San Diego, CA 92119

Anne Bradley
Ukiah, CA 95482

Melissa Adams-Hunt
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Julianna Onstad
San Diego, CA 92109

Priscilla Klemic
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Torunn Sivesind
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Susan Walker
Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352

Paulette Doulatshahi
Playa Del Rey, CA 90293

Mary Brooks
Frazier Park, CA 93225

Robin Resovich
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Nancy Vermeren
Santa Paula, CA 93060

Rachel Wolf
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Sonia Noemi Cross
Paradise, CA 95969

Robin Hamlin
McKinleyville, CA 95519

Diana Chen
Camarillo, CA 93010

Kathleen Garten
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91911

Carma Spence
95401

Mo Holt
92503

Tara Cabezud
94509

Lauren Gilbert
90814

Dylan Schmidt
92886

Shellie Magana
90250

Oliver Alvarez
95113

Jen Joe
95608

Isabella Spangher
94590

Carmen Recinos
91350

Lizzie Corson
91010

Maggie Chen
91107

Johnata Rodriguez
92551

Leanna Choong
92104

Maria Ortiz
95039

Davida Fair
95307

Marisa Nunes
90720

Crystal Soria
90814

Natalia Ramirez
92592

Daniel Chiang
95124

Victoria Walsh
91941

Roxas Haze
90069

Jyl Glover
94559

Alison Barcus
93534

Kelsey Haggerty
95610

Robert Johnson
91601

Isabel Ruiz
91331

Rei Viray
90292

Cameron Scott
92139

Amanda Salas
91104

Suzanne Smith
92075

Deb Shieh
90803

Andie Creager
95070

Hannah Powell
95382

Madeline Hero
94606

Susan Maddela
90025

Ida Friedman
94710

Nina Storm
90069

Victoria Stover
92861

Melissa Stromberger
93955

Rhonda Gasper-Heather

Virginia Cortez

Ronald Willis

Susan Sherod

Nancy Lazerson

John Walton

Rita Iversen

Tim Kuns

John A Rodriguez

Edie Weiss

Cat Newman

Alisa Martin

Kim Wasserman

Marquis Mason

Sophia Toomb

Jessica Ghitis

Bret Rossman

Alisha Slaughter

Daniela Tallman

Johanna James

Hudson Blunt

Calista Kerba

Logan Maxwell

Matthew Coachman

Brianna Ramos

Brenda Foster

Noah Goodrich

Morgan Hoffman

Olli Woodworth

James Benoit

Lauryn Cummins

Daniel Woodward

Jewell Raiden

Lena Kozyrev

Matthew Nagy

Riley Carlton

Kellen Cien

Ashton Vernon

Yago Casal-Jouaux

Tracy Ceasario

Clay Johnson

Ethan W

Sabrina Sleeger

Inika Adapala

Benjamin Lopez

Griffin Russell

Sasha J

Bella Mullin

Alondra Gutierrez

Lizz Ehrenpreis

Kelly Newton

Elyas Belayachi

Jenna Sierra

Jasmin Ishihama

Leilani Arroyo

Kiya Akhenaton

Aaron Harmon

Margaret MacDonald

Levi Smith

Giulia Del Priore

Nathan Zadkovsky

Avery Haas

Chloe Shelton

Dillon Wright

Sydni Mullen

Solomon Adams

Esdras Robles

Kaila Pena

Annette Olson

YuLing Chai

Fernando Dorantes

Isabella Robles

Amber Cassandro

Rebecca Sperling

Kate fenn Fenn

Luka Tyndale

Garrett Wegh

Nicole Petteys

Jocelyn Reynier

Saumitra Kelkar

Kendall Jensen

Michael García

Julia Finelt

Lincoln Reynolds

Anthony Delgado

Kylee Fernandez

Jake Garcia

Calvin Estella

Claire Hendsbee

Sandy Giese

Abraham Sucovsky

Roman Robledo

Julia Davila

Sydney Jozwiak

Chloe Benites

Belen de Schutter

Gabby Cortez

Mack Hope

Joanne Beanon

Charlene Nelson

Katherine Whetstone

Gina Dopp

Frances Slater

Heather McLane

Sara Paganelli

Lina Smunk

Jordan Mageo

J Y

Eliana Roaro

Marco Santana

Jennifer Call

Jan Moran

Gabi Scarpa

Stevie Kaplan

Meredith Erin

Ryan Loftis

Marilena McCarty

Shannon April

Lindsay Coony

Beth Bunjor

Kimberly Stanier

Kevin Guadamuz

Margaret Rayford

Minaxshi Odedra

Rose Boncich

Sierra Fish

Kristen Bell

Chelsea Wood

Mario Castillo

Chris Karalash

Kaylee Nadeau

Jess Lunasco

Kristen Mahlstedt

Emily Seitz

Crystal Cuadra-Cutler

Sophia Cardoza

Haley Reagan

Kathrin Laramore

Shawn Chapler

Yvonne Melling

Daniel Fookson

Caylin Frinchaboy

Michael Burns

Jasmine Kuzela

Karen Eppard

Veronica Tejeda

Ashley Scholar

Peyton Presas

Lorrie Isaacs

Amy Roberts Malpee

Jamie Balser

Marcy Moffat

Meghan Mahrholz

Laura Warecki

Jacque Romero

Camila Alvarado

Cara Davis

Chris Rodziewicz

Jobana Montes

Debi Sekerak

Anne Knebel

Michelle Lopez

Anne Melani

Taylor Schenkel

Melissa Lapidus

Kathryn Crawford

Paige Herschell

Rikke Christensen

Hope Frye

Charlene Bindernagel

Sara Carter-Fielding

John Hill

Geralynn Nixon

Sean Walton

L Michelle Clark

Ashley Garcia

Francesca Uy

Vanessa Sandoval

Amanda Foreman

Kathryn Phillips

Kathy Batt

Elisabeth Neary

Mariam Roberts

Madison Hays

Gordon DeMouth

Carolyn Jiang

Andrew Grover

Esther Mao

Paula Strawn

Becky Carey

Heather Abbott

Cailley Dischinger

Carrie Pearson

Sophie Carter-Fielding

Casey Meyere

Audriana Argueta

Angie Munson

Alexis Nieto

Juliet Martinez

Kim Garst

David Deming

Michele Gentry

Tim Freeman

Emily Weston

Leah Ayer

Traci Rivera

Lauren Hernandez

Alivia Wolfe

Greg Williams

Laurie Shimmin Zimmer

Liana Luna

Kate Villareale

Blake Fromkin

Katie Grage

Sheida Mizani

Madison Maldonado

Natalie Kocab

Raymond Santos

Madison Maldonado

Marion Vose

Aliyah Sanghvi

Shenea Dees

Jaqueline Sandoval

Barbara Brown

Kristen Galloway

Parisa Amiri

Gina Carbone

Nicholas Lumbreras

Richard Gonzalez

Meghan Thomsen

Liz Rose

Michele Mochrie

Jessica Cliver

Elizabeth Stapp

Emily Prater

Janell Flores

Allie G

Xela Tarnelli

Teri St. Clair

Susan Reyes

Elizabeth Lauber

Vivian M

Leslie Chavez

Lin Kivett

G Gernaat

Michelle McCay-Broyles

Andrea Smith

Caron Frasca

Kelly Katz

Suzanne Jewell

Lisa Sennott

Dorinda Beever

Aaron Byrd

Fernanda de Oliveira

Katrina Bresniker

Yureli Sanchez

Zachary Reusing

Christian Tanner

Xochitl Barroso

Michelle D'Antonio

Alexandra Soukeras

Carlie Kaltenbach

Monica Delaney Elsner

Jalika Conteh

Terri Bellante

Wendy Merrill

Kristi Nagao

Gianna Cafini

Sierra Dudas

Maya Knowles

Gale Kindberg

Kyra Ashcraft

Christina Carter

Janelle Leslie

Jamie Polster

Siena Thompson

Amanda Ackerman

Ursula Polo

Laura Blake

Megan Allegra

Rayna Alcantar

Kaitlyn Yang

Shanon Peckham

Noah Carl

Candace Larson

Donna Dudley

Bina Solanky

Christina Nowak

Jo Perron

Jennifer Deurer

Charissa Dionne

Michelle McCormick

Alexander Kodama

Rosemarie Morales

Sydney Buckley

Phyllis DeLuca

Natasha Abramowicz

Marilyn Trujillo

Hayley Doon

Serena Rodriguez

Ava B

Elva Guerrero

Victor Carrizalez

Doug Peckham

Lela Wenzel

Rayna Krohn

Diane Sanchez

Anna Andronicos

Sammarye Lewis

Nicole Rodriguez

Jessica Tolemy

Donna Wybenga

Marilyn Trujillo

Anai Gabriel

Marilyn Trujillo

Jasmine Menendez

Elijah Jamieson

Alissa Mathewson

Mary Grace

Jill Shadek

Mary Maggini

Megan Butler

Bryenne Turner

Sarah Gautiere

Breanna Ashley

Julian Sjeppy

Theresa Botsford Godinez

Leanna Keaser

Kathleen Groux

Tina Marie Del Rosario

Loretta Nemeh

Jodi Delaney

Vicki Patton-Saavedra

Julie Zhao

K S

Claudia Ordaz

Lindsay Huse

Catherine Jones

Paige Brunsen

Julie Olsen

Jake Cirrito

Gaitri Patel

Miquelle Notmeyer

Maria Ray

Courtney Terry

Natali Reyes

Jamie Howard

Mikaela Hazer

Temple Powers

Rebecca Barboza

Nikita Starichenko

Tommy Zevallos

Laura Pankiewicz

Drew Santos

Foster Poling

Shanon Hoffman

Sara Murphy

Sara Valancy

Lecia Elzig

Austin Geary

Sherry S

Audrey Harze

Beau Bouverat

Kari Collver

Maria Sarmento

Denise Denise M Welmering

Mason Garcia

Alysha Sarrade

Maddy Guizado

Amanda Ardessi

Kirstan Tenbrink

Kristen McCann

Kameron Tarlow

Melissa Cunningham

Sonia Till

Catherine Fowler

Cindi Newman

Lisa Pascoe

Sarah Kim

Alicia Parks

Angie Thaxton

Jessica Thomas

Joseph Hood

Elana Antolin-Wilczek

Tracey Gormley

Julisa Romero

Amanda Hall

James Quirk

Nichole Weiss

Leann Phelan

Dominique Flores

Dana Escamilla

Cindy Martinez

Nicole Ogden

Jen Klein

Trinity Baughn

Share Porri

Isena Garcia

Myeisha Brooks

Krissy McMahon

Crystal Clark

Tucker Green

Tracy Mills

Margaret Pryatel

Jessica Tims

Kathy Tarpley

Logan Milton

Marilyn Elrod

Chad Richmond

Kennedy Langerud

Aimee Aimee

Brandon Smith

Kalli Hitzeman

Kaitlyn Barstad

D Slawson

Sharon Belliveau

Bee Kenney

Vanesa Sabio pajela

Israel Leon

Shelly Martinez

Tyler Stevenson

Catie Huang

Heather Howland

Cynthia M Junken

Sandy Roland-Chase

A Hud

Miranda Tollman

Chelsey Magallon

Brie Buxton

C Quetzal

Caryn Komensky

Angela Tassinari

Cheryl Pelligra

Maggie Omana

Ruby Siero-Tanti

Linda Goldman

Harpreet Samra

Annette Eros

Kathy McLeod

Cheryl Rodriguez

Sheri Fresquez

Katja Alexander

David Hulett

Ana Cotton

Karen Zimmelman

Jazmine Gonzalez

Paola Jamis

Karen Baldwin

Madison Rhee

Natalia Castillo

Harjot Sandhu

Lynn Misher

Mike Tango

Christi Yager

Krista Wenzl

Charis Lord-Haines

Angie Parga

Terry Cooper

Shannon Rakich

Gayle Warfield

Bridgette Hanna

Amber Roy

Shannyn Bessette

Lorraine Russo-Harty

Loraine Labet

Teresa Gordillo

Kelly Freeman

Cheryl Insalaco

Elizabeth Falk Hutchings

Michael Sandoval

Kathleen Slaney

Marie Cubillas

Jess England

Daniella Santana

Kristan Trunzo

Heidi Montoya

Jessie Feliu

Ruby Neff

Ciara Byrne

Jenni Markham

Sara Nourazari

Aimee Van Havermaat

Terrah Smith

Teresa Navarro

Caitie Crews

Regina Ayon

Lily Edwards

Robert Nenninger

Shawn Froats

Amy Herzog

Deanne Rudman

Michelle Eberhart

Joanna Varga

Karissa Gleason

Jeanne Place

Zayn Garcia

Jackeline Trujillo

Gissel Segovia

Jen Escobar

Sarah Pisano

Isabel Rangel

Susan Rudick

Chelsea Short

Aaron Nicholson

Alis Weinberger

Gabrielle Alejandro

Claire Cetti

Sheila New

Kelly Mendesh

Erin Adams

Stephanie Ferris

David Herrera

Erika Mendoza

Julia Hensley

M Perry

Alexandra Simpson

Robin Browning Hardisty

DeAnna Rivera

Justine Lavelle

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Loren Duffy

Roberta Pio

Monica Franco

Madeson Claiborne

Kayley Teagle

Kelly Donaldson

Winsey Lam

Celina Wong

Wendy Babb

Erin Mascaro

Adriana Hardy

Chad Mochrie

Cheryl Raudelunas

Chelsey Cioli

Karen Kneavel

Griselda Sannis

Tiffany Nguyen

Itzel Cortes

JoAnn Doxakis

Anne Gard

Taylor Smith

Laura Mae Brown

Lisa Buchanan

Malia Maurer

Diana Rodgers

Nancy Roman

Ashley Welton

Mary Grinbergs

Stephanie Romano

Michael Williams

Devan Kennifer

Robin Bush

Kelly Hinds

Kristie Vogel

Michael Bagdasarian

Jodi Freedman

Gabrielle Heide

Emily Foley

Nicole Weaver

Ren Fuller-Wasserman

Sadie McDaniel

Rosie Stoneley

Lydia Daniller

Lisa Schmidt

Autumn Leiker

David Johnson

Louise Lindstrom

Roberta Alfaro

Bella Grinbergs

Annabelle Ioannides

Caspian Schwanke

Linda Tendler

Tyler Grinbergs

Vanessa Montesinos

Sonia Salar

Paula Gallo

Vanessa Cortes

Sarah Linn

Claudia Jones

Gabriela Gallardo

Haley Hartner

Peter Ly

Julia Naibaho

Genevieve Lewis

Natalie Mata

Jennifer Stackpole

Teresa Pugh

Sherri Robidoux

Brigit Pinamonti

Susan McMillan

Natalia Kelley

Anthony Monteleone

Karla Burgos

Melanie Ferrell

Rachel Grigelis

Ashley Villalta

Mayra Perez

Brooke Davis

Cody Umbach

Broome Tramp

Kit Cullinane

Christine Rivers

Yazmin Aguilar

Antoinette Moreno

Nikki Spalaris

Irene Yee

Madeline Metzger

Mara Werring

Megan Aiyana Gregori

Alexis Ireland

Kelly Sutton

Karin Toth

Sara Gibson

Linnea Beckett

Kathryn Pache

Ali Ziq

Lucia Giannattasio

Patricia Willis

Nathanael Read

Allison Brady

Debra Pedrosa

C J

Kayla O’Hare

Carrie Aquila

Isabel Duong

Jennifer Kime

Earlene Alexiou

Michelle Rudolph

Bernice Pierson

Julie Graham

Shane Breitenstein

Ilana Giannini

Sodavy Ou

Mai Howard

Michelle Young

Sodavy Ou

Lia Grant

Ryan Hall

Hayden Salfen

Barrie Fitzgerald

Christina Hoskins

Beth Sheets

Julia Hornbeck

Dayanis Rodriguez

Anna LeFebre-Johnson

Kaitlin Matthys

Lynn Werner

Jonni Garro

Genesis Acosta

Jamianne Verkade

Natali M

Cynthia Trevino

Estrella Loza

Kaelyn Freeman

Susannah King

Courtney Powers

Abhigyan Raj

Lizzie Lara

Lindsay Best

Amanda Sanchez

Rachel Zamora

Rose Torres

Virginia Meyer

Lindsay Shields

Kathryn Laymon

Kelly Meeks

Kathleen Reid

Angie Aliotti

Shauni Whittaker

Charissa Banton

Tara Markus

Brietta Linney

Lorena Ramirez

Rebecca Smythe

Kathleen Brandes

Heather Evans keliher

Elisa Terry

Christine Schnuck

Amanda Barnett

Mary Hanger

Amanda Greeme

Julie Langhorne

Claudia Duron Burke

Angelina Campos

Stacey Tyas

Valeria Phillips

Talen Galvan

Nicolette Guillen

Shannon Strenfel

Barbara Graham

Jen Florez

Athena Wolfe

Jacob Atkinson

Dian Crego

Kaycee Aull

V Granados

Barbara Oltman

Alexandra Poe

Carmen Trujillo

Tristynn Sleight

Carmen Trujillo

Raquel Figueroa

McKenzie Rickard

Janice Rivera

Daniel Cramer

Breana Morales

Diane Ray

Lisa Moore	Michelle Kuehn
Lindsey Ackerman	Krystal Rifkin
Michelle Leake	Ashley Leyva
Christina Arellanes	Sandy Foley
Virginia Espinoza	Franc Leo
Jamie Blanke	Erin Oxenford
Johanna Machado	Emily Hernandez
Colin Page	Molly Fallon
Jennifer Alarcon	Julie Fallon
A Magee	Candace Bautista
Kristy Reynolds	Yadira Sanchez
Candace Moore	Dessie Larson
Misty Brown	Shenny Cruces
Veronica Kovach	Erika Tano
Sarah Emery	Katherine Gumb
Paige Fockler	Stevie Rigdon
Joanna Gorski	Stevie Rigdon
Emily MacMullen	Stevie Rigdon
Monica Leung	Cole Bentley
Patricia Hoekman	Stevie Rigdon
Dulce Innocenzi	Stevie Rigdon
Taylor Adaros	Stevie Rigdon
Gillian Bowler	Stevie Rigdon
Pat Perez	Stevie Rigdon
Nate Townsell	Stevie Rigdon

Lara Scheunemann

Nancy Brown

Charatza Bionson

Chris Haag

Isabel Ward

Mandy Pollak

Karina Orlando

Samm Hurst

Ariana Cerna

Matteo Grossi

Kerri McCoy

Sarah Irani

Dani Janssen

Adriana R

Karen Poter

Emily Silk

Jennifer Cartwright

Juan Santillan

Deborah Lowe

Helena Wong

Christine Issa

Heather Erwin

Freddie Erwin

Natalia Perez

Mallory Pankretz

Heidi Thompson

Catherine McAfee

Anna McDermott McDermott

Mariana Phillips

Mason Van Bibber

Tanja Dehne

Suzie Lara

Kailey Rauda

Angelic Ingram

Erica Lenart

Susan McKinney

Mary Sanders

Lori Lovejoy

Shania Vahidi

Alicia Lemler

Kaitlin Van Benthuysen

Robyn Hardesty

Sabrina Cruz

Kristine Peaslee

Julie Marolt

Maria Salazar

Doug Murphy

Sarah Reiwitch

Elle Nelson

Anna Durej

Jessica Alluin

Julia St John

Brei Tyler

Sarai Manfredi

Sarai Manfredi

Megan Bishop

Jennifer Hargreaves

Aleeza Hendershot

Veronica Hawkins

Jeromey Green

Ashley Spicer

Ashley Spicer

Edina Gerrits

Michelle Drennan

Kim Miller

Rachel Meraz

Greg Pierson

V Simpson

Deanna Madrid

Jennifer Wolff

Stephanie Ward

Jean Hardwicke

Eva Vorce

Jamie Johnson

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Kasey McCoy

Aisling Sinclair

Adrianne Talbot

Deborah Mohammad

Eric Liddle

Christine Morrison

Deborah Ramirez’s

Jenny Saucedo

Jessica Smith Smith

Christina Ausmus

Jane Andrew

Sharon Hoffmann

Abby Zilch

Cynthia Egan

Claudia Rubio

Erin Bookey

Marcela Padilla

Cheryl Willis

Cecilia Ferguson

Barbara Dooley

Leia Davison

Jacque Adams

Allison Weintraub

Andrea Abenoza-Filardi

Tina Scopacasa

Amanda Spitulnik

Carissa Casares

Bonnie Ratzloff

Ellen Galindo

Erin Jackson

Ariel Kirchner

Josh Block

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Loretta McCormick

Stef Tousignant

Torrey Hosey-Juarez

Kelly Fordham

Jennifer Olds

Ryan Reyes

Karen Adelmann

Tracy Duong

Jenny Mizom

Florence Shephard

Danika DeLauer-Louk

Julie Starrett

Ruben Hernandez Hernandez

Jacob Sarmiento

Cynthia Duesberg

Karen Hayes

Karen KittyB

Brenna Lew

Cindy Ricalde

Erica Murach

Mary Coffin

Molly Keating

Ashely Ludwig

Tina Adams

Chauntel Lemus

Katrina Middleton

Lauren Uhlenburg

Anneke Blair

Delia Nieves

Arcady Darter

Lyndee Luetjen Luetjen

Jessica Diaz

Rashmi Ramachandra

Michelle Linker

Ramon DeSouza

Bree Tuft

Brianna Johnston

Sarah Ponte

Brian Bruning

Donielle Shepard

Maniko Beach

Bobby Rodriguez

Laura Day

Natalie Poynton

Richelle Bein

Vera Pye

Diane Thao

Stacie Byrne

Nick Izzarelli

Nicole Jaracz

Lilly Snibley

Deirdre Weil

Karen Hedberg

Tanya Del Vecchio

Mary Fisher

Ronni Laird

Jane Snook

Sarah Hankins

Madyson Martinez

Honora Shipe

Melinda Duits

Karen Powley

Kerry Harrington

Rajneesh Dail

Marnie Jackson

Judy Lamb

Julie Spector

Jessica Young

Daysi Centeno

Valerie Alford

Amanda Cioli

Robert Leitner

Taylor G

Keely Pace

Kayla Joncich

Arianna Camacho

Lina Vargas

Tracy Patterson

Kelleigh Guerrero-Martin

Jessica Lopez

Betty Benson

Olga Hernandez

Lorna Berliner

Amaya Davis

Maria Croumlich

Joy Tani

Cassidy Goodson

Cam

Jaclyn Thomas

Kelly Marvin

Abby Robles

Aliya Edwards

Jazmin Serrano

Lauren Tanner

Christina Wall

Jennifer Byrne

Isabelle Romero

Jodi Palmer

Elizabeth Powers

Mackenzie Govett

Isabella Kinkelaar

Jillian Langerman

Ivan Anguiano

Carlos Anguiano

Kamille Mas

Stephanie Costagliola

Leah Sullivan

Danielle Desiga

Briggette Jimenez

Alyssa Gorton

Zenaida Siojo

Nathan Aguirre

Leslie Olozagaste

Cynthia Dresner

Cecilia Ascione

Sylvia Mannino

Joeangel Colorado

Laurie He

Carla Hurt

Armine Galukyan

Armine Galukyan

Margaret Hime

Lacey Carias

Ethan Scroggs

Carolina Marin

Isaiah Bowes

Paige Walker

Sheena Corning

Cedar Lebron

Rocio Quiroga

Rosalind Willis

Brittany Howell

Sandra Obrien

Wendy Rogel

Meghan Perez

Arianna Ramirez

Heidi Bisel

Bao Ho

Danielle Baskette

Harold Berreondo

Mary Roth

Ross Wilson

Danielle Dayton

Derek Loughran

Karen Camp

Diane Banas

Jeremy Brownstein

Kathy Stenson

Gustavo Cisneros Martinez

Frida Ortiz

Karina Gonzalez

Leota Olson

Tom Bowen

Skyla Hamilton Holderman

Anne Turk

Anne Fry

Altagracia Vargas

Jason Compton

Lori Demers

Brandy Barnes

Angelica Munoz

Chermaine Mariano

April Batson

Janice Hammerstrom

Lidia Nunez

Jamie Perez

Jessie Allen

Miranda Jackson

Lainey Atwood

Zach Andrews

Bill Hogarty

Luke Whiting

Julia Irvin

Jennifer Yniguez

Denise Mohsenin

Carolina Bolivar

Chris Cabatit

Todd's iPhone Johnson

Marie McKenzie

Jenny Call

Jill Nordquist

Aaron Nordquist

Kelly Schell

Swan Trass

Alexis Burt

Srividya Maganti

Taylor Gillis

Valerie Groth

Abdiaziz Dekon Hakar

Alexandra Filer

Susan Norrbom

Alberto Rodriguez Santiago

Evelyn Gastelum

Brianna Martin

Sara Muniz

Gregory Azbell

Lauren Quiros

Christina Beahm

Simon Johnson

Samantha Robles

Gabriela Garcia

Stephanie Fonseca

Anne Heller

Luis Garcia

Amanda Tejeda

Teresa Taylor

Amanda Pineda

Cortland McCullum

Henry Hercules

Tanya Pakhuta

Jessica Doyle

Laura Roberts

Pamela Meyer

Dominic Salazar

Ana Freitas

Steve Sprague

Vivi Luo

Karla Mercado

Klarissa Robles

Josh Block

Annie Godin

Dominic Bendinelli

Efrida Uli

Haley Pratt

LaTonya Jennings

Cynthia James

Kristel Mercado

Djuna Passman

Brett Cooper

Benjamin Juster

Caitlin Ryan

Terri Mikkelsen

Kelly Govenar

Angela Jones

Christiana Prekopa

Grace Arreola

Jamie Arneson

Carlos Diaz

Stephanie B

Emily Manning

Chloe Morales

Gila Leibovitch

John Perez

Alex Filardo

Elizabeth Diane

Lisa Murdoch

Chad Brinkerhuff

Olivia Butters

Sebastian Leal

Elizabeth Sanchez

Susan Moore

Jill McCarthy

David Scharf

Emilio Moreno

Emma Hale

Mason Woods

Wendy Joos

Diana Cuevas

Josiah Elenes

Josiah Elenes

Terri Heitzman

Aliyah Latham

Cristina Korzon

Miriam Gonzalez

Sydney Jozwiak

Alejandra Buznego

Cassandra Speidel

Karina Winter

Erma Deleon

Taylor Shutts

An Garr

Mariana La Roche

Sydney Zepeda

David Taylor

Hannah Juang

Townsend Brar

Gail Chambers

Eduviges Victor

Avery Saelee

Jenna Ebert

Penny Reynolds

Sady Rivas

Gillian Nelson

Elizabeth Lowry Burton

Brittany Richardson

Liv Sather

Wendy Martinez

Gech Horng Huy

Jordan Hughes

Abbie Idleman

Krystal Marroquin

Tzitlalic Davalos

Makayla Hernandez

Kelsea Cox-Bain

Tori Fiedor

Daniella George

Vidya Iyer

Darrell Standring

Nina Camera

Katie Kelly

Jhade La Paz

Lisa Proctor

Yesenia A

Tiana LaCross

Samantha Cruz

Alyssa Maeder

Kenia Valdovinos

Helen Murphy

Ella Tadmor

Alyssa Schroer

Grace Carasco

Leslie Cruz

Rachel Klein

Olivia Schoeder

Angeline Brady

Aly Navarro

Maddie Qualls

Gigi Vera

Jessica Anaya

Elisa Kim

Taylor DeVictoria

Maria Padilla

Luna Gomez

Anna Keshishyan

Dominique Orozco

Birgitta Hultberg

Joseline Prieto

Kayla Pham

Yoana Cisneros

Haley Klingenberg

Denisse Perez

Stephanie Prieto

Eliza Flores

Isabella Rios

Vongphachanh Mymala

Yazmin Garcia

Amanda Rice

Heydi Valdovinos

Allison Sherry

Isabella Rubio

Jade Sigmund

Robert Callente

Natalie Perkins

Kasara Weaver

Joshua Nunez

Jaquelyn Flores

Destiny Callente

Catherine Mendez

Emily McSwain

Tegan Bialek

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Daniela Marquez

Kathleen Whiteside

Jose Villagrana

Marsalis Logan

Melissa Monterroso

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Judith Valdovinos

Crizal Moreno

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Daenna Jimenez

Emma Harvey

Levon Arvanitopoulos

Emily Garcia

Olivia Janku

Sue no Thompson

Daisy Valdovinos

Henry Alva Alva

Selene Talbot

Wendy Machuca

Briana Waite

Bobbie Muela

K S

Hector Carrillo

Andres Umana

Maricela Velazquez

Guadalupe Marquez

Jennifer Toor

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Emily Loun

Amalia Alduenda

Vicki McLees McLees

Katherine McMahon

Eric Valdivia

Sara Perez

Julia Guarascio

Elysa Roman

Reda Rackley-Smith

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Cydney Shepherd

Kylie Rector

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Sydnee Perez

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Smita Abraham

Lauren Ross

Sidney Rodriguez

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Aylin Gonzalez

Doreen Pirouz

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Leah Boydston

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Melissa Chapman

Leslie Ericksen

Destiny Calderon

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Monique Ordaz

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Noah Spahn

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Ashley Garcia

Ashley Garcia

Gina York

Arceli Pimentel

Sophia Macias

Lindsey Beckerman

Kellen Lewis

Kathleen OMalley

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E L

Elizabeth Garcia

Mitchell Steinhauser

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Monze Rebollar

Nooshin Paidar

Abigail Ramirez

Lila Connie

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Kamryn Herft

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Morgan Montalvo

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Janelle Kluz

Mariana Jimenez

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Tania Gatica

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Demi Barrientos

Sierra Brouwer

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Evan Ratner

Sinai Diaz

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Nora K

Natalie Levine

Phoebe Walker

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Chancee Phensuk

Isabel Angus

Julie Hernandez

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Zoee Garcia

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Rebecca Knox

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Gary Klauenburch

Nicole Modic

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Emmett Abatecola

Jessica Hernandez

Jacqueline Maldonado

Candice Archer

Marina Ramos

Andrea Ocampo

Stacey Yin

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Sabrina Cavazos

Roel Seeber

Sierra Leavenworth

Rebekkah Griggs

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Kylie Yanez

Lexie Davila

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Katrin Martinez

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Emely Tobar

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Cody Mills

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David Nimatuj

David Waltman

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Jen Begeman

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Tyler Olcese

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Lucy Quion

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Serene Clements

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Ashley Rodriguez

Cece Schneider

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Audrey Kelly

Savannah Lilly

Nick Stratos

Samantha Zhen

Rachel Leong

Lianna Piccetti

Manasi Rao Chandu

Pabel Aguilar

Laura King

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Penny Jordan

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Anitza Valles

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Kaitlyn Melgoza

David Amaya

Coleman Miller

Manuel Miranda

Sara Adelman

Jasmine Matar

Kaitlyn Melgoza

Hector Martinez

Dan Payne

Litzy Guzman

Christian Onuigbo

Maddy Lee

Z Sch

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Elena Giron

Neliza Ramirez

Nancy Ortiz

Evelyn Bella

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Delilah Yick

Zach Tebb

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Argel Rojo Vazquez

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Ayline Chavira

Lonnie Johannesen

Jazmin Jimenez

Melissa Garcia

Solomon Sloan

Lennox Freyre

Marie Aleksanyan

Arsenii Panteleev

Morgan Sarno

Melissa Zuno Garcia

Carlos Acosta

Heath Quiel

Morgan K

Linda Loveng

Chantalle Ceja

Linda Hernandez

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John Victor

Alexis Otellini

Annette McCall

Julie Givens

Laurie Harris

Morgan Connolly

Jennifer Hilty

Amanda d'Almeida

Monique Gonzalez

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Rebecca Taft

Alexis Martinez

Marlo Nordvik

Terra Futura

Michaela Teefy

Marina McCann

Jennifer Kennedy

Agustin Martinez

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Gabi Batt

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Megan Chen

Kellen Brown

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Shay Stoy

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Karen Sanchez

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Allura Gorden

Cooper Harris

Sophia Lewis-Mussa

Stacey King

Alexandra Ramos Lopez

Cassie Pinkney

Melinda Lee

Tara, Phelan

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Cynthia Delgado

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Amauri Tapia

Lupe Reyes

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Yandon Barrales

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Katherine Felix

Adrienne Lara

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Deseree Gonzalez

Carla Guerrero

River Hernandez

Gaby Mestas

Andrea Martino

Tiffany Sanders

Natalie Banuelos

Mariah Walsh

Jaqueline Ramirez

Lilian Mora

Danielle Harris

Jorge G

Karla Campos

Eliza Estrella

Elizabeth Flores

Bianca Morrow

Cynthia Delgado

Jessica Perrette

Sariah Laranang

Denisse Garcia

Olivia Jiang

Keely Hemp

Oliver Wady

Leyna Jaster

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Steven Romero

Shogher Aleksanyan

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Claudia Juarez

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Deisy Velasco

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Martha Utley

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Rebekah Kammer

Alexandra Herrera

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Becca English

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Lyndsey Townsend

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Deanna Moreno

Ella Candelora

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Anabell Martinez

Lillian Waddell

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Saul Chavez

Stephania Zavala

Lisa Milardovich

Akira Saito

Christina Mamaradlo

Michael Ibarra

Audrey Hernandez

Sarah Lecount

Guiselle Aguilar

Nikole Lopez

Renee Pienta

Allison Hamilton

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Marlen Marin-Baena

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Marilyn Liu

Nydia Ruiz

Leonardo Ballesteros

Ana Quezada

Samantha Buford

Alyssa Lopez

Berenice Gut

Eva Aguayo

Lidia Nunez

Kasey Ernst

Cindy Altan

Marisol Rubio

Fatima Lemus

Samantha C

Roxana Gough Eschrich

Evelin Torres

Roxana Gough Eschrich

Adriana Olivares

Berta Galindo

Madison George

Barbara Delaune Warren

Juliesa Meza

Byron Bailey

Elizabeth Marchan

Samantha Escobar

Jose Rivas

Katherine Lopez

Julia Martinez

Veronica P

Cristina Tindall

Jessica Martinez

Susana Barragan

Christy De La Rosa

Margaret Vega

India Allen

Maria Sarabia

Cecilia Lem

Rosie Sahagun

A. Fordyce

Diana Rodriguez

David Hernandez

Karen Ticas

Edgar Rodriguez

Molly Brennan

Michelle Felix

Clara Porter

Jaxon Mangum

Gabriella Espinoza

Ashlie Ibrahim

Amber Villatoro

Melody Shahsavarani

Marian Vaitai

Angie Parga

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Brenda Ward

Andrea Briseno

Malissa Denney

Penelope Campos

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James Rodriguez

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Vivian Ford

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Jazmin Perez

Stephanie Byers

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Celeste Ramos

Bryanda Sanchez

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Grace Graham

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Estivalis Gonzalez

Paulina Palma

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Leslie Lazo

Delaney Lisowski

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Samantha Miller

Ian Hammond

Araceli Aguilar

Ana Escandon

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Stephanie Villalobos

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Mateo Gloria

Naomi Leeka

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Jennifer Guzman

Carmen Youpa

Kathleen Garcia

Nora Cooke

Alma Daraeikhah

Alma Meraz

Daniela Domínguez

Nathaniel Rose

Ashley Borja-Wells

Gabriela Avalos

Jose Hernandez

Guillermina Ramirez

Cindy Varhas

Fernando Alberto-Prudente

Julia Plascencia

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Nadia Ram

Cindy Lopez

Adriana Mitre

Leslie Servin

Guadalupe Guadalupe Gomez

Rosendo Loza

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Shinobu Kajimoto

Kristine Vargas

Yunuen Munoz

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Jasmine Ortiz

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Jaselle Lopez

Marlyn Munguia

Andrea Rodriguez

Cynthia Mendes

Tamar S

Karin Kulseth

Elise Gill

Alejandro Garcia

Brianna Moreno

Roxana Topete

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Camelia De

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Catherine Osborn

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Diana Juarez

Monica Rivera

Ash S

August Helpling

Connie Moreno

Erum Khan

Emely Hernandez

Iris Sanchez

Emelia Michel

Amber Tovar

Gina Frazier

Veronica Ramirez

Kellie Charette

Winifred Pitrone

Devyn Negrete

Anthony Morales

Monica cervantez-Sandez

Alma Hernandez

Chelsea Oemcke

Alexandra Meyer

Jessica Armenta

Celia Haro

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Martell Gomez

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Nicol Watanabe

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Lisa Lugar

Melissa Aguirre

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Cynthia Yao

Alyssa Alvarez

Shyann Hull

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Ayden Madsen

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Patricia Sayula

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Kiersten Rodrigues-Parraga

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Lissa Tsu

Angelica Perez

Alanna Cazares

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Jessica Ortega

Alejandra Carranza

Lily Vanz

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Benett Hurtado

Mariah Anderson

Sabrina Figueroa

Rosario Casares

Nuria Diaz

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Corin Chavez

Kyle Guerrero

Maricruz Pool-Chan

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M Freedman

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Elizabeth Jimenez

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Laura Zaragoza

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Amanda Payne

Katya Hawkins

Beatriz Quiroz

Stephanie Gimpel

Jacqueline Flores

Gibson Ramirez

Julia Castillon

Angela Figueroa

Alexis Romero

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Anyssa Flores

Mariella Meza

Eulalia Martinez

Aleksander Zebooloon

Sana Coss

Carissa McQueen

Pauline Duran

Mayra Rabadan

Frances Ticas

Isabella Hernandes

Kathy Garcia-Gonzalez

Meghan Zavala

Ana Toro

Ashley Sandoval

David Raygoza

Michael Friedman

Maria Colmenero

Maddie Koers

Manpreet Gil

Amanda Gallegos

Vanessa Lopez

Cassidy Bernard

Jessica Sanchez

Marisa Hill

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Codi Nashcoulon

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Marian Urias

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Jorge Rancano

Ben Torres

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Jasmin Reyes

Aremi Guillen

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Abby H

M Sellers

Angelly Cabrera

Magaly Castaneda Ramirez

Angelica Ramirez

Viviana Maduena

Krystal Fosnight

Ariel Mendoza

Jacqueline Pastor

Justus Keeney

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Elena Coto-McKenna

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Adalys Rodriguez

Amanda Wu

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Gene Gabriana

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Scarlett Navarrete

Angela Hernandez

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Kyla de Vera

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Eileen Rubalcava

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Denise Garcia

Danette Chudzinski

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Moth Alvarez

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Kanani Brown

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Patricia Gamboa

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Maya Dembitsky

Jaiden Garza

Alli Takido

Grace HW

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Cassandra Green

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Sage OMaley

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Alexis Hurtado

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Cherrish Eslinger

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Erika Hernandez

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Javier Adon

Yesenia Villasenor

Alicia Thompson

Diana Lorenzo

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Abigail Donjuan

Nicole Goltra

Carter Garcia

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Joanna Erhardt

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Veronica Sanchez

Veronica Sanchez

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Becky Casas

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Geraldine Salazar

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Rebecca Kamran

Melissa Beltran

Adamary Sanchez

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Kris Torres

Annika W

Briyana Trujillo

Alexis De La Cruz

Vanessa Rodriguez

Jazlyn Landaverde

Maris Garcia

Anna Yang

Cora Castro

Athen Breves

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Jesenia Marroquín

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Florentina Larios

Silver Holmes

Leo Hernandez

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William Lopez

Isela Godinez morales

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Javier Ramirez

Makayla Wolff

Maria M

Tommy Dunlap

Adrienne Davis-Matthews

Mia Waota

Teresa Dean Teresa Dean

Ralph Almeria

Tanner Czerny

Jessica Savin

Alondra Roque

Joni Vasquez

Maria Aguirre

Andrea L

Anna Rose Pitts

Danielle Sorel

Monica Gonzalez

Mari Napoles

Samantha Martinez

Marie Chicovsky

Monica Varguez

Nyellow Trujillo

Lydia Carrasco

Ludivina Velarde

Marco Parra

Brisa Garzon

Illiana Gurule

Damian Moreno

Cher Aguilar

Isabella Carrillo

Leah Boydston

V N

Kevin Cardoza

Ariyanna Martinez

Jack Devita

Daniel Bowik

Lorena Duran

Jocelyn Garcia

Julissa Lara

Myron Melendez

Charlotte Swenberg

Marcy Simpson

Grace Morenko

Junber Toreno

Stephanie Yee

Alvina Hurtado

Ashley Vizcarra

Molly Solomon

Josue Hernandez

Kelly Noble

Celeste Ridlen

Jessica Lopez

María Carlin

Giselle Jimenez

Stephanie Facio

Farrah C

Rebecca Elowen

Noemi Velasquez

Joanna Volavka

Matt Dickson

Alyssa Rodriguez

Dana Mendoza

Alexa Serrano

Anna Gamino

Marvin Rodriguez

Rose Magallanes

Joselyn Mayoral

Moxxie Quilantan

Sierra Redding

Mazie Mayer

Shanann Gargan

Kimberly Castillo

Iyanna Earls

Isabel Rodriguez

Kelly Mendesh

Laura Crowell

Jamie Edwards

Deanna Mendoza

Liliana Huck

Connie Wojtyna

Gabi Linares

Isaac Vargas

Isabel Gurtis

Sneha Korat

Maddie Fernandez

Daphne Ann

Jessica Gutierrez

Austin Trask

Gloria Villa

Meagan Sanders

Nicki Donathan

Catalina Sutter

Laura Barajas

Alek Corpuz

Hannah Brinkman

Felicity Vandermark

Ky Polanco

Valeria Montes

Danithza Magana

Sandra Torres

Libby Williams-Cabral

Monique Verdugo

Terri Bennett

Laura Leon

Avery G

Ritika Dhakal

Oscar Noyola

Jack Wolf

Patzy Barajas

Maria Ortiz

Claire Woolson

Kayla Sipherd

CJ Andrews

Hugh Harsh

Astrid Molina

Dj Snowdale

Katherine Bucio

Gwen Miller

Kimberly Rojas

Tzitzijanik Serrano

Sonia Guerrero

Jamie Franklin

Isabel Parada

Vincent Cuevas

Isabella Khanverdi

Brian Bowens

Lilliana Gonzalez

Tiffany Baleigh

Catalina Omeany

Yaren Rodriguez

Alexis Walker

Maricela Ramirez

Taylor Solorzano

Sandra Espinoza

Andi Choi

Ari Funk

Leslie Rincon

Ashley Cooke

Daniella Gavriel

Leilany Rodriguez

Sabrina Carmona

Gaby Leid

Camille Boykin

Gabriela Rios

Emi Perez

Natalie R

Rikki Chouinard

Belinda Medina

Shaelynn Cruz

Vanessa Soto

Alyssa Lopez

Savannah Jarratt

Marie Vara

Lizzie Loundagin

Gina Castellanos

Constanza Otero

Deborah Colocho

Lisa Tellefson

Samuel Cubias

Stacy Liu

Haylie Miller

Everlyn Cervantes

Erika Smith

Jennifer Sanchez

Leoni Brandon

Elizabeth Reingardt

Chante Waters

Andrea Raymundo

Mitchell Fredricosn

Leila Chara

Melissa Gomez

Sad'e Henderson

Eden Wendler

Emmy Humber

Emely Gonzalez

Juan Ramirez

Alexa Gazzaruso

Michelle Sigala

Julian Alcala

Karina Martinez

Mia Sorak

Vera Santos

Brenda Hern

Elizabeth Karamihalis-Black

Lalli Cortes

Roxana Arevalo

Gio Hern

David Hernandez

Alexis Madrigal

Yvette Sandoval

Jocelyn Briones

Adela Chavez

Kiany Moreno

Kate Vu

Vanessa Morales

Alisia Aguilar

Isa Wu

Everett Puglisi

Rachelle Martinez

Cynthia M Junken

Mary Hernadez

Jasmine Rojas

Jonah Hixson

Amytha Willard

Gabriel Fychok

Laura Torres

Stephanie Hernandez

Gus Orozco

Claudia Uribe

Anaïs Irizarry

Gris Agui

Sofia Diaz

Ariel Muirhead

Matthew Lowry

Maria Pantoja

Paulina Becerra

Ayzhanae DeBose

Corrin Nielsen

Cynthia Gonzalez

Tara Rose Timberman

Sophie Van Houtte

Jordan Liou-Mandujank

Elena Picinich

Hayley G

Analia Cortes

Mac Reed

Gracie Watson

Isabela Juarez

Alyzah Lopez

Shayla Palmer

Judith Bielo

Luz Nevarez

Aradia Latham

Kathleen Edison

Amber Zepeda

Desi La Bounty

Leslie Chairez Jimenez

Carolyn Schanz

Jaden Tomisaka

Dalene Briseno

Lana Valenzuela

Kristin Martinez

Logan Benz

Evelyn Menera

Colleen Ha

Audrey Boyce

Daniele Moody

Isabella Brinkman

Giselle Aguirre

Lesley Valencia

Priscilla Bradley

Luke Aronson

Cynthia Vazquez Rivera

Lili Bagatti

Nijea Wyatt

Emily Corona

Yasmine Cruz

Eryn Prior

Celina Ruiz

Aida Gomez

Camille Freeman

Jamie Jenson

Angelina Ganiere

Reza Iman

Glorie Romero

Nina Liaw

Diana Parra

Karina Sawicki

Natalie Stalmach

Lynnette Williams

Jennifer Hall

Carmen Vargas-Sullivan

Ursula Noto

Samantha B. Stamey

L Arena

Michelle Mustard

Meg Fascendini

Jennifer Fenwick

Ace Contreras

Sandra Liu

Malcolm Amado

Lisa Berry

Felicia McDaneld

Evan Huges

Janet Bortot

Jennifer Geiger

Karly Wagner

Devon Kimball

Shawn Hazen

Shannon Fowler

Jennifer Bentzel

Sheree Sims

Karen Mellor

Cynthia Bomaster

Kirie Ventura

Judith Stewart-Jones

Tina Haynie

Darcy Segura

Elizabeth Baker

Kirsten Dudley

Sonia Till

Jessica Moore

Priscilla Hernandez

Carrie Merrihew

Kelly Hof

Melissa Marks

Liz Thomas

Maggie T

Josephine Elliott

Kaede Lapis

Carrie Spear

Heather Taskinen

Alanyz Villalobos

Mary Wells

Laura Mastromatteo

Yvanna Herrera

Meredith Tansey

Talia Simon

Carmela Coyle

Gloria Flores

Rain Stradley

Sahil Gill

Isadora Moustata

Ariella Chen

Glorry Gutierrez

Rikki Lehn

Manuel Lozada

Kimberly Herring

Analy Vasquez

Kristen Foreman

Dina Friedman

Elena Rauh

Amber McColl

TJ Sallows

Dana Reece

Heather Erwin

Natalie Rooks

TaeKeira Jackson

Nichole Magliocco

Lorena Delgado

Allison Sweeney

Juliet Mosby

Rachael Hammond

Rochelle Moore

Michelle Fern

Grace Archer

Ilene Costello

Manda Robinson

Susan Blatchford

Jill Fraser

Serena Mason

MJ Brown

Renee Backstrom

Sharon Barton

Ava Soto

Maria Vail

Pat Knittel

Haven Eastom

Finn Sessions

Sherrie Klein

Leonor Lopez

Rocio Reyes

Hannah Rivera

Sarah Brindle

Shannen Love

Leah Everitt

Albert Flores

Brynn Rabinowitz

Ahlia Kim

Anthony So

Patricia Miller-Jones

Lara Duke

Maura Vega

Jennie Stott

Michelle Lucero

Cassandra Okutani

Kelly White

Vanessa Park

Tiffany Nunes

Ariel Eisel

Jennifer Ryan

Jackie Cooper

Lidia Salazar

Amber Mueller

Jazzy Pereyra

Laura Huffman

Jessica Caro

Emily Ratliff

Lisa Brause

Sybil Holiday

Connie Clark

Amanda Toms

Leslie Chase

Jen Telander

Kim Kendrick

Michele Halvorsen

Sarah Muir

Dalissa Salinas

Deann Stratton

Jamie Duerr

Leah Sapp

Candace Shellnutt

Courtney Lewis

Ashley Werts

Jemimah Guardado

Sandra Joben

Juanita Bradley

Rodrigo Garcia

Emily Braile

Tilly Hahm

Lissette Ramirez

Delenia Garcia

Gavin DeVries

Christina Fagan

Mariam Soufi

Margeaux Emery

Elaine Zuniga

Jennifer Reed

Andrea Sifontes

Melanie Telebrico

Callisto Rojas

Alexis Espinoza

Kathryn Loving

Janetpm. Hollinger

Danyelle Okamoto

Diana Clermont

Nathalie Rivera

Jesusita Briseno

Alison Arias

Lauren Monzon

Catherine Fowler

Kendra Mow

Jules Pangborn-Harley

Lisa Meyerhof Jones

Paris Thornton

Taylor Dale-Benson

Korina Heller

Stephanie Garci

Lauren Burley

Laura Mora

Dulce Astorga

Esme Pena

Laura Duran

Karla La Luz Rivera

Mikayla Jarvis

Tori Divincenzo

Stefanie Kiteley

Natalia Castillo

Zuri Gonzalez

Gail Chambers

Michelle Bradley

Danielle Edlund

Keely Gleason

Remy Bessolo

Esperanza Gutierrez

Elizabeth Dunaway

Chiar Tellini

Mary Stanford

Caitlin Richards

Kaleb Boultinghouse

Lisa Love

Amanda Gerner

Kristin Cox

Gabriela Reyes

Jeana Lawson

Michelle Aquino

Jenny Hernandez

Bianca Hinman

Heather van der Heide

Litzy Guzman

Theresa Nguyen

Berenice Tirado

Kelly Gerlach

Heidi Spanish

Whitney Haluza

Jordan Collins

Brianna Alexander

Kaylin Tran

Joseph Ballas

Elena La

Brent Kim

Xenia Z

Jessica Michelle Nicole Eaton

Dani Garcia

Trinitee Manuel

Amanda Kazemi

Lorelei Auld

Samantha Iribe

Tanya Bui

Monica Catalano

Holly Prokop

Andrea Colocho

Anderson Khalil

Kobe Herrera

Cristian Landaverde

Jessie Fernandez

Kristin Bartlett

Pauline Griset

Shawn Brice

Sandra Vazquez

Mathilde Tjepkema

Sabrina Martin

Joseline Martinez

Jessica Olide

Joshua Hueth

Jessica M

Selena Perez

Trinity Casola

Sondra Campbell

B Yonts

Emily Louden

Camilla Salazar

Coach Autumn Garcia

Gillian Mantchev

Tala Kurup

Jaime Madrigal

Michelle Mendoza

Holly Villella

Jessica Gonzalez

Aeson Salcedo

Ayva Larocque

Mandy Rubio

Beth Ann Lico

Emilia Smith

Jordan Fernandez

Sarah Higgins

Briana Chavez

Sheri Trust

Michael Diamant

Kelley Cusack

Jared Silveria

Donna Davidson

Marnie Northrop

Paul Washington

Leslie Phompong

Lore Marquez

Ajani Jackson

Aidan Ferreria

Angelyn Escalera

Maria Castro

Benjamin A

James Kellis

Vivian Tarin

M D

Gianie Ruiz

Zitlally Rico

Emma Bessey

Virginia DelValle

Emily Huynh

Rosmely Fabianna Gil Figueroa

Andrea Venegas

Gabriela Garcia

Olivia Gleason

Kara Dinh

Eda Mežnar

Eve Potschka

Joanne Geanoules

Wendy C

Anna Bratton

Ashlyn Pham

Brittany-Anne Leason

Amy Ward

Tamara Garcia

Suzanne Kennedy

Kayla Omalley

J Clark

Kelly Sartore

Emely Ubiera

KP Winslow

Eva Loren

Chelsy Hernandez

Carissa Barinoff

Lesley Wofford

Virginia Caviola

Debra Peterson

Ava Vazquez

Debbie Brown

Corinna Dalcolletto

Samantha Chea

Elizabeth Roberson

Maeve Andrews

Annie Gillingham

Alexandra Mellish

Ryan Brennan

Stephanie Yi

Leticia Hernandez

Nicole Descartes

Michelle Ortega

Gerardo Llamas

Jacin Meehan

Stephanie Savasta

Maggie Kervick

Natalie Warren

Nicole Bray

Marina Morales

Shanon Lancas

Deb Gahr

Kayla Rock

Rochelle Goddard

Luisa Moya

Victoria O

Cheryl Kamolz

Nancy Soucek

Ariana López

Ramona Gallegos

Yvonne Andrade

Valerie Williford

Alycia Sneary

Elaine Hayes

Christina Smith-Reid

Theresa Domhan Adams Domhan-Adams

Mary Clements

Maritza Segura

Brian Hernadez

Sofiella Faure-Goda

Catherine Arreguin

Byron Cruz

Kate Rauk

Morgan Schmader

Asha Bardoliwalla

Dyani Garcia

Io Ayriss

Hailey Sohl

Proud American

Rebekka Farquharson

Erin Wallace

Meghan Wagner

Yaretzi Rodriguez Guardado

Emma Evans

Kristin Neer

Max Reiser

Stephanie Boumediene

Tara Oliwa

Sophia Ferguson

Hannah Garcia

Jonelle RunningEnemy

Marina Duey

Jamie Kneebusch

Darlene Cortes

Lizzie U

Ryan Perkins

Jeannette Rodriguez

Charly Oliver

Jasmine Jones

Melissa Zamora

Giselle Torres

Brenda Stephens

Kathleen Cerra

Mary Ciriello

Valerie Lopez

Alexandra Bandeian

Jacque Blossfield

Bella Bullock-Ruiz

Jorja Barron

Brenda Lopez

Nayeli Luna

Courtney Drazich

Isaac Hyslop

Rebecca De jesus

Gabriela Acuna

Nancy Hoover

Cori Johnson

Arely Soriano

Theresa Outman

Brianna Chenevey

Kim Roos

Sandra Hernandez

Leonardo Martinez

Jada Gomes

Jessica Mutschler

Jen Calenzani

Melissa Hui

Nicole Capitulo

Tevya Arnan

Catherine Bass

Janice Morrow

Carissa Dismachek

Stell Astin

Hailey Alles

Daniel Pine

Mariana Lupian

Taylor Adaros

Ana Serrano

Alicia Anaya

Mia Gonzales

Brittany DeMario

Sharon Lee

Nathaly Ortiz

Serina T

Janette Garcia

Karina Barron

Alicia Freeman

Trinity Petersen

Karin Smerker Smerker

Stacey Howard

Savannah Fibrow

Magdalena Fritch

Miranda Saunders

Jennifer Alexander

Lakisha Murray-Houston

Sarah Nishikawa

Bailey Nafarrate

Roger Craft

Alexandria Rodriguez

Carolina Rodriguez

Blanca Arambula

Daniel Vargas

Farzan Saied

Declan Crocker

Sarah Blaine

Jessica Renick

Frances Eckberg

Ashlee Cowell

AnneMarie Anderson

Leann Yap Leann Yap

Julisa Morales

Laura Lee

Krisha Algoso

Shivani Dalal

Elizabeth G

Cassandra Bellomo

Justin Velasco

Isaac Avila

Antonise Wilkinson

Donna McKinney

Fran Sacchi

Elijah Mcdonald

Gillian Ferguson

Alexandria Perry

Ashleigh Miller

Sarah Boyd

Kat Valadez

Mia Sun

Sofia Cortez

Mia Houle

Madeline Pasillas

Camryn Taub

Rosy Cubias

Cameryn Rowe

Jill Poller

Christina Grove

Elizabeth Bowker

Jack Zsenyuk

Emma Decourt

Amirissa Mina

Harmony Ross

Frankie Gvertz

Sheila Barry

Jill Su

Anna Streufert

Marta Toledo

Janet Almaraz

Alisah Corona

Brenna Oneil

Katherine Monterosas

Yesha DeGraw

Katherine Sawyer

Jammie Aguilar

Joseph Bennett

Stephanie Hatour

L Alejandre

Mia Sun

Lisa Braithwaite

Marisol Oseguera

Katia Hernandez

Chelsea Herrera

Nicole Sutton

Isabel Serna

Fatima Sanchez Avila

Avni Mandloi

Avery O'Mara

Mason Taylor Long

SIobhan Stankievich

Alexis Ramos-Garibay

David Smith

Cat Sanchez

Coco Lang

Amanda Dragone

Cassidy Rawlinson

Miranda Guerrero

Victoria Martinez

Elizabeth Barcenas

Judith McClain

Eehwa Ung

Zenobia Russi Barrett

Rebecca Newman

Luna McRoberts

Jessica Perrette

Louise Ansell

Evonne Chang

Alexa Ortiz

Melissa De Yoe

Karissa Karissa Barboza

Tiffany Comtois-dion

Lucia Arcineda

Xitlaly Ocampo

Diana Leon

Cyan Florkowski

Alejandro Regalado

Katija Baldock

Julian Haro

Sara Stuckey

Brooklynn Porter

E Gomez

Julie Baez

Mariana Jimenez

Krystal Wellen

George Soliman

Dami Selene

Clarissa G

Miguel Arroyo Perez

Amy Clemans

Jesse Favela

Mary Aratoni

Charlene Will

Guadalupe Marquez

Swan Palermo

Noah Hobbs

Alexia Scofield

Mary Edwards

Kathryn Selman

Iris Marchant

Kiran Bunger

Kylie O'Brien

Patti Foss

Nathan Taft

Ayden Keefer

Kitty Izzo

Madison Villegas

Gracie Anderson

Henry Guevara

Amanda Cao

Mandi Turner

Gilberto Quiroz-Rea

Gail Prater

Maria Diaz

Damaris Rivera

Margaret Renner

Giselle Morales

Sean Alcala

Tiffany Ramirez

Jennifer Rees

Rebecca White

Lisa Khajavi

Jamaica Solite

Lisa Cedillo

Ester Arreola

Daniela Montes

Chloe Bahr

Natalia El-Sheikh

Autumn Henderson

Itzel Gallegos

Taylor Even ma

Lily Anderson

Mikayla Larsen

Morris Bean

Cecilia Juarez

Taylor Mullen

Stephanie Vazquez

Kiersten Gouge

Melanna Nunez Steele

Jackie Caceres

Judy Lopez

Maritza Magallanes

Madison Rodriguez

Jilley Anderson

Gayle Collins

Patti Busic

Jamesen Martone

Trishica Robertson

Marlin Hortillo

Myy Westersund

Damian Garcia

Elizabeth Espinoza

Alleah Gutierrez

Ivette Ramirez

Ashley Horiuchi

Kate Leo

Lila Funge

Aliana Nunez

Ray Pappas

Melissa Rocha

Jessi Jha

Lisa Caruso

Monica Valdez

Adele Charlton

Oscar Mateo

Victoria Pogue

Diana Morales

Ana Garcia

Amy Brugnano

Audrey Hamblin

Nicole Ramirez

Caitlin DiCarlo

Cynthia Coria

Angela Llaverias

Kalena Garcia

Melanee O’Hagan

Jaime Araujo

Margaret Boyle

Adrienne McColl

E L

Andrea Crisostomo

Maria Barrera

Matthew Martinez

Cielo Hollingsworth

Lauren Conroy

Kat Palotay

Leann Phelan

Diana Cabrera

Lily B

Estefany Con

Melissa Roman

Julie Criswell

Jackie Mossiah

Glenda Vasquez

Sandra Vasquez-Lloyd

Shelly T

Isabella Cavlan

Madeline Duffy

Devin Murray

Lulu Victoria-Lacy

Canela F.M.

Christian Bautista

Carla Ramirez

Tanya Bauer

Emily Candini

Danielle Vartanian

Sonja Beaz

Katherine Pastrana

Daniel Moore

Angela Alam

Liv Valdes

Pablo Ertze

Teresa Ramirez

Sana Radwan

Giada Villani

Michael Nuno

Sarah Wechsler

Jasmine Wu

Esme Sandoval Garcia

William Wilson

Christian Contreras

Jasmine Buendia

Deepti Sithu

Laura Martinez

Megan Jelovich

Jacqueline Molina

Christine Pham

Katherine Bucio

Alejandra Ortiz

Sophia Arellano

Samantha Rivas

Lili Andrade

Stephanie Gamboa

Angel Rivas-Lua

Sabrina Quivey

Elizabeth Ochoa

Jamie Kp

Evan Harris

Ricky Salvador

Tanya Kok

Lia Brown

Lucas Rupprecht

Evan Mejia

Gia Patel

Ash Vasquez

Nathaniel Chandler

Anastasia Boissier

Jessica Rios

Jackeline Chaparro

Jackeline Chaparro

Denise Cardoso

Kelly Finn

Rita Jimenez - Leon

Sherry Tan

Trisha Csira

Erin Lokitz

Kathleen Juarez

Ana Cardoso

Isra Malabeh

Jewel Romero

Brenda Sanchez

Rolando Cabrera

Anallely Orozco Orozco

Stephanie Loyola

Alynna Garcia

Nicolette Parra

Rebecca Moreno

Brian Romero

Victoria Wiktorski

Kala Roth

Kathryn Dorsey

Mia Weir

Kaylie Winchel

Arianna Marquez

Lori Mcbroome

Victoria Ruiz-Jaime

Johanna Watson

Lindsey Sciuto

LaGreta Toney

Holly Avecilla

Jubidane Maraton

Peter Mccallum

Charlene Rogers

Alexis Guttierrez

Yanai Jett

Kurt Harris

Pepe Martinez

Nana Montgomery

Sara Antonacci

Jill Prince

Alma Iribe

Paul Roth

Annabel Harwell

A’magine Goddard

Heather Grigsby

Varsenig Keshishyan

Carol Melendez

Jeanette Rodriguez

J Del Rio

Maggie Trumbo

Leah Burroughs

Roche Lamorie

Melissa Delgado

Eli Ramirez

Melissa Beanes

Katherine Spencer

Molly Lewis

Susan Watson

Lucy Vaughn

Leslie Quijada

Moira Meijaard

Ainsley Burke

Terrilyn Little

Alyssa Hewson

Chloe Vang

Virginia Rodriguez

Chelsea Corbin

Bella Petersen

Leslie Cazarez

Vanathi Sundararaman

Jackline Medina

Zoe Hutcheson

Juli Schulz

James Klinger

Ariana Galindo

Leonardo Miranda

Kenilee Brown

Cherish Macomb

Sarah Hughes

Michael Hernandez

Jessica Leal Leal

Lauren Yarbrough

Ken Dahl

Anthony Pulido

Courrney Doody

Rick Farber

Melisa Sanchez

Cynthia Ruiz

Araceli Martinez

Emilio Fuentes

Karen Huang

Jasmine Delgado

Karen Nguyen

Ryan Hall

Lola O'Donnell

Santiago Ponce

Krystin Moberg

Holland Rugebregt

Ella Molina

Alexandria Diaz

Divyank Vyas

Anne Bayne

Samantha Maher

Mariana Gale

Julia Hanafee

Melisa Suesue

Asia Loperena

Cassie Hough

Cloey Ponce-Gomez

Marcella P

Aster Hernandez

Anthony Zuniga

Danielle Boese

Maybelle Cagaanan

Gerard Allen Paredes

Monica Barcenas

Clarissa Aquino

Olivia Sinaniz

Kelly Ramos

Sarah Reid

Jacqueline Rosales

Spencer Edmonds

Milan Hitch

Taylor Graham

Jon Reid

Chetkagnchana Keo

Hector Barahona

Lauren Shane

Sofia Gray

Elizabeth Hardy

Helen Veyna

Sarah Scullion

Roxanna Jones

Leilee Lollar

Jelena Lauritsen

Christina Domanico

Cynthia Perez

Robert Brito

Sabrianna Kanihan

Sherry Brajcich

Monica Barajas

Daniela Zamora

Tara Mini

Lucy Piedra

Emely Baisa

Xavier Anderson-Villaluz

Fallon Olivo

Rachel Paprocki

Christina Veloz

Alina Arellano

Cierra Guerra

Whitney Wirtz

Claire Bickers

Abigale Jacobson

Kayla Henkel

Summer Mellott

Carol Dalton

Mayra Arias

Grace Parini

Jenifer Ontiveros Aguilar

Steena Tapia

Jocy Miranda

Mary Jimenez

Sandra Angulo

Estefany Chavez

Mya Singleton

Laila Romero

Samantha Smith

Celeste Hernández

Melissa Rissman

Jane Schneider

Viviana Martinez Reynaga

Jennifer Saucedo

Sidney Manka

Martha Sepulveda Martha Sepulveda

Daisy Smith

Felicitas Nunez

Jade Garcia

Nicole Sevaston

Luke Cymbor

Andy Chan

Stephanie Strickland

Cari Callen

Juana Anguiano

Ruth Cebreros

Christian Pizarro

Julia Crane

Rodie Cota

Jose Martinez

Karey Fogle

Gail Williams

Hannah Winger

Estella Aguirre

Courtney Griffith

Sandra Lujan

Beck Jasper

Lily Toscanini

Jaimie Poole

Shaylyn Conroy

Dana Kelsey

Alexa Cruz

Adrienne Acosta

Elizabeth Owen

Bianca Villalobos

Cecilia Garcia

Mia Frederiksen

Samuel Ponce

Mariya Lopez

Rachel Macias

Ingrid Pinetta

Ana Cotton

Carol Lacey

Annemarie Glomson

Avery Johnson

Lena Hidalgo

Zach Shapiro

Joseph Rodrigues

Amy Brandan

Devin Johnson

Crystal Alvarez

Taylor Stommel

Gabriel Bonilla

Amanda Ammerman

Noemi Canomerideth

Madeline Merideth

Secia Mischke

Leah Ayala

Katy Wilbur

James McKenna

Matthew Lim

Valerie Chen

Alexis Rosanes

Benjamin Garcia

Michelle Michelle

Rach Ford

Anaivette Davila

Katie Loeber

Nicole Galvez

Rowan Silverman

Lamia Mazegue

Jazmine Gabriel

Aleah Campbell

Emily Quintas montes

Joselin Galindo

Kathy Martinez

Amber Elizondo

Kathleen Churchill

Seetha Raj

Jasmine Orozco

Nakisha Vanderhoeven

Yvonne Burns

Chelsea Brown

Ashley Robles

Courtney Kirian

Sergio Salcedo

Jessica Romero

Jonatham Binamo

Jeremy Mangubat

Sean Hudson

Nancy McHenry

Brisa Santiago

Hugo Enriquez

V Ayala

Carolina Nolasco

Ellaica Grace Lepiten

Ana Tellez-Witrago

Tracy Lazaro

Brighton Matus

Tiffany Dunlap

Cynthia P

Alecxa Rodriguez

Victoria Caldera

Bennett Bowman

Alexa Sandoval

Evan G

John Pat

Kaitlin Napolillo

J Langdon

Maile Yoshida

Amanda Rodrigues

Ashley Diggs

Emily Altomare

Cindy Endersen

Brook Power

Odaliz Willkomm

Avery Garhart

Salim Tolano

Lucia G

Lucie Gonzalez

Leticia Cerezo

Kathryn Brackmann

Katherne Green

Mayra Arias

Alex Sperounes

Elizabeth Ramirez

Charlotte Butcher

Hannah Nemnich

Lia Takata

Karol Balbuena

Bridget OConnell

Melissa Rios

Toby Brooks

Juan Aldrete

Jordy Castil

Sarah Wasnick

Emily Anderson

Sanaa Loiseau

Samantha Cruz

Eddie Perez

Claire King

Ajani Jackson

Madisyn Hein

Saniya Batts

Theresa Clelland

Steve Marr

Mayra Rodriguez

Susan Morrissey

Briana Hernandez

Tim Reeves

Larine Stevens

Breanna Miller

Paige Thionnet

Nicole Wilson

Abigail Walden

Analeigh Gomez

Gia Boehrig

Yaretzi Limon

Nitya Doddapaneni

Danny Nguyen

Clara Tacher

Gisselle Becerra Murillo

Molly Cosgrove-Lewandowski

Luis Orenos-Mendoza

Yazmin Ammirata

Kristian Candie

Cassie Hodges

Tenisha Andrade

Ellen Lu

Iajahna Meadows

Hope Ninmann

Lucille Rondeau

Aaliyah Bailey

Denise Martinez

Evelyn Recillas

Isabel LaRue

Ian Cook

Hailey Socha

Suzanne Martins

Elisa Padilla

Gloria Castillo

Joanne Lepe

April M

Idalia Gonzalez

Ernest Walker

Jennifer DeBraal

Marie Gomez

Tiphani Aguila

S R

Johanna Salamandra

Joel Moreno

Silvia Mirabella

Aimee Kerr

Tara Hookano

Ally Castro

Leticia Arellano

Benjamin Arce

Denise Valdivia

Lindsey Glass

Gabriela Chavira

Kat Sy

Raquel Salmeron

Anazii AceFire

Danita Serrano

Colin Moore

Lindsay Neill

Charlotte Brown

Caelan Struble

Laylah Murray

Charles Silva

Marco Garza

Dyannen Palmer

Katrina Kyvik

Dario Cruz

Marielle Underwood

Nettie Niles

Dana Wold

Jason Tran

Elizabeth Gonzalez

Cristina Martinez

Adel R

Tyrone Olson

Michael Eccles

Wyatt Butler

Alyssa Musico

Edric Perez

Rudy regalado Regalado

Jean Brusher

Norma Villanueva

Liz Alfred

Annelise Sexton

Rhea Corona

Alber Kohanzadeh

Merrissa Cervantes

Josie Rios

Jessica Madrigal

Devon Lewis

Wesli Keisling-Limberg

Angela Greene

Debra Bur

Beatrice Ruiz

Yvette Mandujano

Tiffany Ribeiro

Gregory Richardson

Kimberly Cuchilla

Kate Gutierrez

Jordan Watson

Hannah Golden

Natalie Besser

Ashlyn Cook

Gabby Arredondo

Eric Serna

Jillian Langerman

Angie Inda

Aubrey Krause

Alexandra Jefson

Steven Erwin

Jackline Medina

Charlene Meza

Lidia DAmico

Dylan Barnett

Hayden Bixby

Maya Gardner

Lauren Herkewitz

Tristan Menchaca

Christina Kilburg

Catheryn Ballew

Cece Bella

Milena Demers

Avery Lowe

Valentina Cordoba

Janet Swann

Jake Costa

Jake Costa

Donna Banegas

Michelle Yeager

Khang Nguyen

Alexis Scott

Jenae Parlier-Ned

Daniela Zubiate

Kimberly Garcia

Wendely Naranjo

Megan Smith

Julia Howe

Yennitza Zuniga

Alison Long

Stephanie Arriaga

Kirsten Dw

Brianna Lopez

Christian Onuigbo

Nancy Trejo

Jameson Hearn

Stephanie Wagner

Traci Williams

Emily Elwell

Karyna Vallejo

Saida Rodriguez

Wendy Chen

William Kramer

M C

Bella Truong

Jocelyn Salinas

Suzanne Wohl

Natalia Aragon

Nancy Argueta

Natalia Moreno

Kristen Huang

Eliana Perez bartlett

Andrea Toscano

Isaac Garcia

Annie Thach

Jennifer Nash

Mason Davis

Yaretzi Garcia

Isaiah Rosenthal

Adam Druckman

Anahi Méndez Lozano

Kelli Rendon

Carol Aizawa

Nazly Alvarez

Sandie Galan

Gracie Garcia

Stephen Pappas

Julia Chaplin

Lauren Arias

Lisa Cortez Barry

April Huerta

Alison Mangano

Bridget Rios

Melanie Mcchesney

Nikki Roach

Bryce Lourie

Dev Cuny

Darnell Powell

Ava B

Josephine Ravenscroft

Jemma Williams

Moes Flores

Cheri Ebright

Ariel Rivero

Bat Vardeh

Sariah Laranang

Theresa Huse

Tori Cast

Jocelyn Rodriguez

Cesar Alfaro

Beck Sawyer

Joseph Morgan

Cynthia G

Ryan Burciaga

Deborah Munday

Veronica Castro

Devon Avrigian-Jones

Taylor Kiefer

Kelly Malouin

Candice Wicks-Davis

Abigail Levy

Austin Duffy

Madeline Bolish

Suparna Jasuja

Cassie Greenwood

Annabelle Bishop

Holly Hillman

Rachel Kline

Andrra Mager

Dawn Smith

Charles Allen

Suzie Rush

Samar Khalife

Ellie Leon

Daisy Becerril

Logan Holmes

Zoe Keller

Kathie Kurt

Gabrielle Graham

Gina Kodel

Kujtesa Destani

Shanna Carlile Roy

Kimberly De La Cruz

Nuhi Destani

Kathee Doppelhammer

Mary Marquardt

Laura Kim

Blanca Ruiz

Zak Beltz

Rose M Pacheco

Veronica Espinoza

Susan Bryson-Miranda

Mark Freres

Dean Wilde

Suzanne Kincaid

Polly Gomez

Utaw Cuseo-White

Jazmine Jackson

Aubrey Koenig

Natalie Hammon

Ana Salas

Raquel Collazo

Tracy Echon

Elizabeth Razo

Rachel Cohen

Molly Burns

Sean Kobayashi

Liz Wexler

Aanya Iyer

Synda Schroder

Janie Huang

Mahnaz Chavoshian

Kim Poe

Teresa Alvelais

Grace Rosanova

Genoveva Zesati

Karolina Gómez

Aubrey Koenig

Michaem Queen

R. Maestas

Magali Lopez

Juan Enriquez

Katheryn Fiedler

Kathleen Laman

Maya Reyes

Destiny Gryder

Sandra Bill

Mia Blankenship

Jovie Whitten

Tara Romero

Anthony Arrow

Sharona Cheung

Hannah Burhorn

Rosa Perez

Lucy P

Ean Cortez

Lizbeth Flores Hernandez

Jourdan Jackson

Aria Cole

Katie Reed

Makyela Gressmen

Erica Olsen

Thea Boyne Boyne

Kodi Hoss

Cain Arellys

David Eads

Sarah Branco

Robin Gehman

Noelle Kells

Kevin Volz

Julian Gomez

Alice King

Tegan Faust

Jennifer Lott

Sw C

Zachariah Shutt

Lex Psimer

Rylee Leisinger

Nicole Marcal

Tamara Hill

Melia Olson

Reagan Drake

Alexander Surovyxh

Erynn Pascual

Noga Ohayon

Dymon Cheeks

Thomas Mills

Anela Grathwol

Kayla Spindler

Hannah Munguia

Amanda Vitacco

Jill Jazyk

Dylan White-Stolfus

Jahzara Coleman

Molly Oelke

Everette Eton

Dawn Jole

Cody Campbell

Ariel McDonald

Piper Williams

Sara Oelke

Sydney York

Finn McGreevy

Yair Ruiz

Sara Heiselt

Alexander Galdamez

Olivia Hamilton

Jenna Kohut

Seemah Umar

Kendall Lidy

Addie Hauler

Cali Gaspar

Lauren Charney

Mika Perry

Mattie Owens

Miette Thomas

Elizabeth Bobrek

Ellie Webb

Charlie Pellegrin

Sydney Cooperman

Nicole Vetzmadian

Cynthia Callejas

Kassandra Austin

Julie Hanson

Dominic Hernandez

Sophia Wright

Crystal Reece

Julia Colello

Brooke Johnson

Ashley Noto

Emma Phillips

Gayatri Somarapu

Arysha Madhani

Nada Bayonyshev

Carla Sanchez

Kayli McElhany

Jean Ferretti

Alex Pitchford

April Loper

Ellie Meeks

David Redmiles

Juno Jole

Kai Owosu

Kenzie Hohensee

Drew Cohen

Patti Smith

Autumn Payne

Anya Skillin

Eva Spytek

Ashley Hobson

Emma Dallas

Taylor Mesa

David Ramirez

Cade Hulet

Sam Byers

Brigid Ahern

Fernando Reyes

Curtis Yee

Tana Woodham

Carson Lenore

Johnpaul Martinez

Mia Castillo

Kristin Pascual

Madeline Sack

Martha Titus

Jackie Valdez

Seth Ballif

Naomi McKinney

Jessica Davis

Izabella Marks

Tom Darak

Bonnie Barnes

Axol Starbeam

Abdul Kabir

Gail Chambers

Gail Chambers

Madison Wood

Lauren C

Keelie Bays

Amanda Martin

Karina West

Julia Ricciardi

Zoie Moilanen

Alexandra Butler

Joy Bowerman

Kliela Stump

Robert Berridge

Kambriel Walker

Kaelyn Freeman

Abby Pratt

Joceline Martinez

Ryan Mercury

Kirra Medcalf

Mary Jo Dickerson

Bethany Bruns

Emma Comstock

Katie Johnson

Evvy Astin

Katarina Yuan

Evanina Sizemore

Kayla Teo

Tania Solis Serna

Noor-ul-huda Javaid

Layla Alexander

Khara Gillock

Anon Anon

Julianne Brenenstuhl

Shanni Zamora

Rachel Jones

Maya Handelman

Doh Jung

Jessica Turner

Hao Lin Leong

Eliana Roof

Rhys Cheek

Talia Levy

Christine Long

Taylor Rice

Peter Cooper

Wendy Ferguson

Samantha Blasi-Mason

Maria Alvarez

Tiffany Graves

Vincent Garner

Coriander Stevenson

Marilyn Willis

Bellina Jones

Charli Fletcher

Kaylee Latimer

Matthew Meyers

Teresa Jimenez

Nora Jolowsky

Sondra Lagnad

Sandra Lujan

Sean Hooper

Hannah Sima

Lauren Harsma

Audrey Webostad

Wes Damgo

Michelle Tan

Carla Menjivar

Monet Rattner

Jessica Roussos

Samantha Rousseau

Krista Butler

Erin S

BriAna Reef

Maggie Schopflin

Jordayne Deleon

Marlena Bergara

Raquel Montalvo

Denise Acuna

Kaidence Hickson

Maggie Ory

Maryn Biddy

Van Mitchell

L. Sarto

Andrew Bouffiou

Tate Padgett

Emmie Millington

Alexander Obrien

Jayden Matura

Briana Berdel

Eowyn Denison

Julia Hanafee

Mike Michael boxer

Jed Chun

Veronica Elia

Barbara Vaughn

Denae Nuzzolese

Silvano Perry

Nathan Tanemori

Link Gleeson

Victoria Hinsch

Peter Zalazinski

Amanda Greeme

Kate Ar

Jordi Thurtell

Samantha Wax

Naomi Willnauer

Abriquella Beebe

Leo Jonsson

Cole Williams

Cienna Szeles

Zaria Williams

Kenna Neff

Van Mitchell

Scotty Robinson

Kaelis Ramirez

Miracle Lewis

Kayla Freeman

Izabella Marcano

Joshua Brown

Autumn Chomas

Doreen Rodarte

Nadeen Saad

Sarah Atkinson

Akshat Joshi

Annelyse Dailey

Ronee Shea-Tyler

Laelynn Hill

Samerah Adams

Eva Gutierrez

Mckynna Ramsey

Emily Velasquez

Jezabel Santos

Janina Averion

Keven Leon

Elise Piatkowski

Myles Kelly

Grace Nosack

Sophie Magruder

Alecia Sharp

Kathy Tran

Ber Shep

Madison Morgan

Maggy Mulhern

Natalie Hernandez

Morgan S.

Valery Pintor-Lopez

Jenna Harris

Emma Perez

Emma Perez

Natalia Campos

Sophia Young

Vanesa Ponce

Hannah King

Shannon Viehmann

Autumn Marchand

Viviana Maduena

Judith Montenegro

Madison Lewis

Lauren Robinson

Chloe Brown

Janna Feliciano

Avery Christian

Alecia Finley

Isabel Ortiz

Joselin Galindo

Samantha Sanchez

Julianne Carosella

Julian Zoet

Em Powell

Alyssa Forman

Ellis Allen

Seraphina Bracy

Rayna O'Nan

Angela Tsang

Linda Hernandez

Jess Nelson

Ernesti Holm

Alisa Tollin

Angela Desmond

Shannon Cordell

Seraphima Stevens

Jonathan Bugarin

Morgan Livesay

Heather Insley

Natalie Rodriguez Cora

Glenna Bridges

Lilly Lugenbeel

Jennifer Sandoval

Evelyn Bracamontes

Theseus Williams

Mikayla Altman

Sophie Howell

Jenna Gonzales

Dana Hesch

Lacey Gentry

Madison Saunders

Jade Gipson

Kelsey Myers

Chloee Ruckman

Ellen Langford

Natalie Johnson

Nahum Gonzalez

Jessica Joe

Sebastian Rivera

Isabella Law

Rosie Pinedo

Nicklas Eriksson

Kirsten Jones

Ariana Brock

Trisha Paytas

Kaden Nixon

Marwin Toledo

Elias Conley

Riley Schloss

Cait C

Jaielle Galbreath

Erik Caufield

Willa Hickman

Nery Suarez

Senna Joshi

Evan Klairter

Ruby Lipari

Mary Prochaska

Michelle Ocampo

Kelly McCauley

Tiffany Horvath

Luis (lunar) Gonzalez

Cara S.

Toni Heisler

Dakota VanDeusen

Alex Durkin

Julie Martinez

Natalia Maya

Athzel Ambrocio Avila

Jessi Behrens

Joy Hinton

Eleanor Washburn

Zack B

Nancy Gonzalez

Ezra Robin Starr

Xie Selena

Yyra Hill

Kleo Redd

Courtney Venia

Mabel Che

Aspen Brower

Gina Duda

Nicole Hernandez

Elicia Stern

Julie Rocha

Kelsey Delgado

Ricardo Reyes

Suzy Gonzalez

Julianna Jernigan

Jen B

Samantha Stephenson

Sondose Yusuf

Paige Schultz

Riley Shiel

Alejandro Caminos

Sarah Pham

Lexie Cypert

Katherine Kunkel

Amanda Greeme

Krista Sensale

Allison Crane

Olivia Gifford

Patricia Mezza

Paula Canasto

Marisol Carbajal Marisol Carbajal

Maya Gomez

Kasey Cummings

Carly Hardma

Shannon Williams

Della Della Hodge

Karmen Sexton

Jasmine Gomez

Angelina Arreygue

Olivia Manriquez

Naomi Caccam

Paris Smart

Maddie Golden

Molly Mcgregor

Morgan Carter

Giovanni Trementozzi

Olivia Morales

Brittney Clark

Miles Johnstone

Azalia Michael

Devyn Allmon

Renata Phillippi

Desirae Ramirez

Kevin Antoine

Jen Holland

Kelli Walters

Dimond Garcia

Fatima Habib

Macy Caron

Cheyenne Smith

Rebecca Watje

Autumn Cameron

Melanie Vinazza

Ilianna Ulibarri

Ruby Mangum

Kamden Dorsey

Jordis Gregory-Holt

Irene R

Erica Smith

Pauline Duran

Isla Brown

Katherine Burfoot

Ashley Neat

Harkeerith Vij

Kassandra Gonzalez

Daniela Hernandez

Kassandra Gonzalez

Venus Dickens

Kristen Murphy

Kae Jackim

Crystal Cornejo

Sabrina Smith

Charlie McIntyre

Jerry Camacho

Giselle Guerra

Maya C

Kristen Paulius

Estefanie Ramirez

Kathia Maldonado

Zoe Katzman

Katherine Porter

Katie Regan

Dana Mendoza

Marilyn Silva

Bobbie Muela

V Khazan

Ilyane Cazares

Em Coenen

Melinda Pope

Kimberly Correa

Nirali Patel

Mel Lopez

Kabir Chaudhuri

Richard Lehman

Katherine Owen

Emily Eggemeyer

Phoenix Chaney

James McGettigan

Shivani Dalal

Kaytee Taylor

Kaitlyn Thompson

Alexia Ibarra

Madeline Hwang

Joseph Atempa

Julia Groman

Neal Harvey

Blake Chan-lemley

Adriana Gonzalez

Francesca Valenzuela

Anahi Bolanos

Cassie Cyr

Laura Kramer

Julia Perry

Corinne Villanueva

Cynthia G

Judith Ortez

Jessica Escutia

Julian Lombana

Adora Chen

Rebecca Reiss

J M

Heidi Hughes

Joanna Fox

Nikki Baldwin

Erick Lopez

Kuestin Wines

Kacie Le

Jasmin Lewis

Patricia Lovera

Michelle Thoma

Brandon Hernandez

Amy Mat

Anita Ramirez

Ellie Jordan

Josephine Reynes

Christine Vargas

Emily Stager

Iveth Borja

Sofia Pena

Rachel Jones

Natalie Steblay

Amber Chan

Kristie Tam

D H

Jane M jaquez

Perla Vazquez

Kathryne Hallquist

Vanessa Martinez

Rebeca Sandes

Kathleen Paradis

Angela Figueroa

Alexandria Rivette

Zachary Schwarz

Sinai Diaz

Misael Lozano

Adeline Claire

Valeria Lopez

Valeria Lopez

Alberto Martinez

Kaytlin Denney

Jael Garcia

Shane Ahrens

Isabella Lugo

Sam Franco

August Kreuzer

Karina Mendoza

Kelly League

Sienna Coronado

Lindsay Carr

Kameron Kerger

Stacie Martinez

Maricela Tenorio

Annemarie Roth

Kasey Cross

Charlene Rivera

Leigh DiMisa

Evelyn Amador

Kelsey Canizales

Maggie Herndon

Ceri Fountain

Dario Cruz

Erika Kirk

Ailyn Trejo

Stephany Jimenez

Perla Piedra

Malaki McAdams

Molly Frost

Barbara Dalzell

Cecilia Jones

Lexy Peralta

Kya Poy Wing

Megan Murray

Trinity Williams

Karissa Thein

Therissa Thein

Frida Barranco

Jewel Musich

Shantal Sutherland

Omar Villegas

Michelle Mora

Roberto Mercado

Kalena Kwan

Diana Jimenez

Amber Sack

Jasmine Tolman

Jose Moreno

Martha Ibarra

Andrea Venegas

Haven Blair

Emily Skorstad

Taylor Gibbs

Dylan Hupp

Alyssa Dominguez

Isary Gutierrez

Kai Cleveland

Erin Krause

Jordan Delgado

Sam Barney-Gibbs

Jonetta Yenter

Daniel Alas

Beylin Cruz

Jessica Anderson

Anna Piecuch

Bailee Briel

Monica Rodriguez

Jacquie Kizer

Catalina Rodriguez

Lilly Mcalpine

Kathie Mashni

Ilissa Graham

Kimberly Sharp

Macayla Riddle

Ari Adduci

Maggie Jense

Jessica Rivas

Miranda Lohr

Kaitlyn Castillo

Crystal Morales

Asia Wong

Joy Vogt

Nicholas Cheney

Josh Block

Sara Maxwell

Ciara Milliken

Maria Bergquist

Cat Niland

Marcelle Nicolas

Amanda Botts

Danielle Ramos

Mariah Aguayo

Anung Vilay

Cracker Hummus

Kai Diaz

Kelly Ramos

Norah Kyassa

Noah Lowenstein

Kristina Anderson

Arlette Carmona

Sydney Ko

Delilah Ochoa

Lorrin Squatritto

Sara Cisneros

B Rios

Audrey Pazmino

Yuni Guerrero

Renee Boissier

Kristina Johnson

Julia Pierce

Will Jenkins

Ciera Teets

Jerry Brown

Quentin Pryce

Jace Thorpe

Maddy Barney-Gibbs

Samantha Lambert

Elena Simeone

Luz Cisneros

Andrea (Anna) Mangus

Samantha Clark

Rebecca Forth

Carina Alvarado

Ankita Shah

Montana Tobler

Michelle Chew

Noemi Bravo

Hunter Alvarez

Paton Ratliff

Jean Chang

Karina Andrade

Jessica Alonso

Cecilia Garcia

Joel Berger

Mara Tahira

Teresa Gade

Bridget Nelson

Julia Owens

Jazmine Bos

Maria Donaire

Dillon Bonner

Kyle Liang

Ash Now

Lukas S

Miuyi He

Niomi Birdwell

Emily Frady

Michaela Langley

Corina Queja

Olivia Biro

Grace Nguyen

Jenna Jariabek

Sahra Perez

Angela Rahgozar

Tiffanie Snyder

Lauren Wolters

Abby Fiore

Grecia Salgado

Kaci Epley

Sierra Ekmalian

Naza Jaff

Hope Sites

Parrish Noce

Cristina Alcantar

Christianne Clemente

Jocelyn Cortes

Mimosa Tran

Matthew Valdez

Sarah van Rosevelt

Christina Blake

Mariah Stops

Lucy Shelley

Juliscia Sanchez

Ariana Gutierrez

Stephanie Chillas

Zachary Medjoubi

David Oliver Brown

Jessica Lutz

Donna Melendez

Andrea G

Diana Morales

Jody Lombardi

Amy Pollock

Sarah Hughes

Brandon Lau

Divine Munguia

Susan Davis

Harley Jones

Lindybeth Falfan

Aida Gomez

Kimberly Padilla

Hope Nelson

Joseph Bennett

Hannah Cowles

Michelle Campbell

Alex Costin

Narin Chung

Samantha Loveless

Cassandra Strawderman

Ava Balao

Maricruez Garcia

Daniela Garcia

Ronnie Saenz

Brittany Carter

Izabella Barcatta

Olivia Marin

Joel Fernandez

Jahzeel Flores Morales

Christopher Thoams

Sarah Corven

Alice Thornton

Matilda Pilch Williamson

Shawne Oswald

Veronica Cowles

Yssabella Chavero

Carroll Gelberg

Mari C

Catalina Cervantes

Christine Bright

Nick Massa

Jessica Hewitt

Fernando Cisneros

Gisely Ruiz

Deana Haya

Claudia Standard

Rocki Abelmann

Araceli Ramos

Diane Bilse

Savannah Diaz

Lauren Schild

Melissa Montes

Jennifer Martinez

Kay Mulvaney

Jason Prachar

Penn Trichilo

Cynthia Stella

Frida Pareja-Paez

Sylvia Garner

Evelyn Reese

Victoria Torres

Cesilia Gonzalez

Susana Santelices

Kira Elarton-Selig

Ronita Pollowy

Richard Lee

Mirella Lopez

Araceli Ramos

Jessica Lee

Jolinde Verbaandert

Christina Rattanasith

Kyuri Bielesz

Vale Mann

Tramanh Mai

Jon Reainhart

Cat Hamilton

Angela Standifer

Aryonna Epps

Leigh Stanton

Cynthia DeBenedetto

Olivia Murphy

Nita Greenough

Enrique Harrison

Ashley Valencia

Maricruz Gutierrez

Cheryl Wood

Julia Sicat

Katherine Johnson

Brody Kuhn

Stephen Darr

Hayley Wood

Anita French

Valery Cucalon

Amy Laue

Lydia Carrasco

Eva Andrade

Mari Vasquez

Brendee Harrower

Nynnah Liray

Mitchell Roemer

Olivia Cornejo

Nick Stratos

Bella M

Jacquelyn Bovee

Bryant Denison

Corina Braun

Emma Patrick

Caitlin Aispuro

Maeve Cardwell

David Celis

Mel Kavonian

Kelly Ward

Sarah Husted

Emma Lopez

Calla Eras

Cailean Stiberth

Jacob Hernandez

Katherine Hildreth

Jacob Mier

Carla Wiking

Deirdre Lyons Pape

Will Williamson

Megan Smith

Amber Huizar

Candice Archer

Toby Streck

Michelle Medina

Shannon Miller

Anna Catton

Denisse Sanchez Magana

Giovanni D'Aiuto

Rachel Stoczko

Steven Jackson

Bianca Rody

Carol Paprotna

Andrea Mercado

Diego Martinez

Dario Cruz

Alex Merle

Kathryn Kelly

Julie Carlton

Vyanca Mazariego

Melody Villamil

G M

Elizabeth Valentine

Olyver Thew

Marcella Marquez

Char Morgan

Daisy Rodarte

Viethoa Kwon

Kati Echeverria

Sophia Ackerman

Vicente Duran

Kaylyn Zamago

Tyler Melendez

Gina Young

Melissa Beaugrand

Michelle Tidwell

Hanna Scherer

Joshua Hernandez

Evamaria Gutierrez

Deborah Whalen

Zoe La Clair

Benjamin Rose

Summer McClelland

Jennifer V

Maria Aceves

Yuki Reid

Hailey Frechette

Yuridia Zuniga Avila

Luis Martinez

Abigail Roden

Christopher Ward

Logan Yeager-Jardine

Katarina Myers

Danika Risher

Kere Blair

Gabrielle Lefeber

Marissa Kirwin

Karla Shelton

Brian Dykstra

Morgan Kitson

Jan V

Carson Moore

Anayely Flores

Milo Delaney

Haarmony Riddick

Amy Kearns

Mili Gale

Olivia Biro

Kristin Bolen

Quincey Rodriguez

Alex Myers

Esther Bristol

Bradley Marcus

Kerrie Shende

Mirella Eichler Jonsson

Kailey Kegney

Haley Morris

Charlee Bonilla

Lauren Prizlow

Gavin Earley

Joseph Andrews-philippy

Sophie Tran

Ally Munson

Sofia Areizaga

Farzan Saied

Claude Mazullo

Brianna Avila

Jesse Favela

Majik Pablico

Kristina Lee

Renee French

MaKenna LovittHamm

Nancy Smith

Kenna Wright

Iris Marchant

Jensen Mahecha

Yesenia Ramos

Alexa Saulsbury

Elizabeth Rodriguez

Tara Markus

Ashley Smith

Kayla Mckeown

Pilar Rodriguez

Jeremiah McKeown

Georgia Orvis

Liz Landacre

Lauren Johnson

Amelia B

Sarahi Villanueva

Kole Cox

Sunny Suhy-Gregoire

Shauna Tsai

Fernando Contreras

Laini Scholl

Ivette Bautista

Jesslyne Tran

Arlene Salcedo

Madison Rhodes

Kyle Rhodes

Henry Liu

Eileen Yoo

Drew Harris

Tabby Schwarzwalder

Amber Pucci

S P

Heather Lamb

Samantha Rich

Emry McJannet

Sophie Hammar

Holly Marvidikis

John M

Sam Rao

Griselda Sainez

Jordan Collins

Kasey Chung

Diego Mejia

Annie Barker

Grace Rupper

Zachary Daniels

Gavin Flynn

Sophie Wang

Jeremy Edgerson Norman

Jennifer Nessary

Jehiry De Haro

Shanik Morales-Tapia

Ava Brinjak

Sara McPhillips

Eva Katcher

Blair Lahola

Hannah Gellert

Washma S

Jackie Loesch

Carol Dalton

Edid Linares

Bonnie Cho

Lucy Yang

Jenn Bandy

Jessica Fox

Sarah Hernandez-Damron

Erika Aldana

Camila Gonzalez

Quinn Rice

Nicole Lindell

Denisa Catruc

Megan Novice

Delanee Badgero

Kaia Barefoot

Z Allen

Dominika Śmigrodzka

Abby Man

Kristin Miller

Gina Paoletti

Sofia Castaing

Matthew Espiro Jaeger

Gabriela Rodriguez

Emily Oliver

James Shah

Krystal Ramsay

Frankie Talbert

Joey Roseberry

Jason Constant

Stephanie Hood

Jack Passanisi

Hannia Moscaira

Caitlin Quinn

Ocean Brownell

Kristi Wu

Taylor Dean

Katie Regan

Angel Rodriguez

Meg Farrell

Belen Doroteo

Sonia Carmona

Shannon Larsuel

Jocelyn Llamas

Jordan Townsend

Hiely Huynh

Stephanie Hauptman

Briana Brooks

Marrina Fisher

Michelle Kao

Alice Muir (she/her)

Eve Gulley

Gary Shum

Freddy Fernandez

Markie Sanchez

Carol Pinkston

Joy Augusto

Aidan Gil

Megan Dillon

Christopher Tetreault

Martha Angel

Lydia Liu

Savannah Hastings

Nora Buckley

Cajen Tilton

Rattnak Sokhom

April Alley

Elise Ruiz

Jessica Navarro

Abby Hall

Gordon Eick

Mel Mendivil

Julie Harguindeguy

Shelby Richart

Hannah Guthrie

Sophia Rivera

Agatha Okobi

Chase Craig

Eleanor Joung

Victoria Huynh

Victoria Huynh

Milo Delaney

Kristen Lindstrom

Tamana Hamidi

Emily Green

Marcy Brown

Zoe Phillips

Shannon Eccles

Jenny Chevez

Katelyn Lim

Kimberley Noah

Roxana Gonzalez

Sarah Martinez

Tania Cervantes

Mahal Tran

Sonomah Cardona

Elizabeth Alvarez

Evalina Hansen

Veronica Casas

Victoria Aguilar

Bentley Walters

Emily Anderson

Sine Chan-Golston

Winley Chase

Sumhitha Malladi

Cassie Time

Amber Nuetzel

Lauren Kyes

Laura Matista

Margaret McClement

Alexya See

Margarita Alcala

Kathryn Ryan

Lily Cavanaugh

Susana Marcelo

M Freedman

Laura Merica

Dora Li

Sarah Gamblin

Hazel Nelson

Ariel Wilson

Dawn Burley Hill

Alexis Elias

Melissa Hurtado

Tasha Schauer

Kristina Bergen

Kaylen Garcia Brito

Heidy Romero

Joe Hodge

Becca Walker

Julia Ravella

Esthefanie Rodriguez

Jessica Kurry

Virginia Villar

Ariana Chavez

Claudia Ghazanfary

Sophie Thompson

Karina Cortez

Karina Cortez

Josie Ochoa

Alma Reyes

Alea Peister

Varuni Edussuriya

Sarah Heffelfinger

Gabrielle Schleppenbach

Sindy Chavez

Suzie Tygart

Lynne Martinez

Haydin Hunter

Nicole Ching

Trisha Nguyen-Vu

Rosr Shelly

Tammy Cardona-Zambeis

Ki Agrawal

Kaylee Allensworth

Christian Ponce

Daniella Gavriel

Ashley Perez

Elisha Mujeeb

Nicole Saul

Melissa Crick

Kristina Yin

Becky Chen

Sarah Hamed

Alvaro Desni

Margaret Harty

Hope Boulingui

Paris Major

Adelyna Hernandez

Kyli Lepper

Leticia Torres

Charlotte Lamar

Alex Muckey

Kelsie Lapp

Samantha Ulloa

Judith Trujillo

Sarah Lopez

Charlie Mackenzie

Hennessy Jones

Amber Davis

Yen Chang

Casey Contreras

Keira Darling

Dayna Norman

Maren Butler

Karen Bahena Bahena

Joshua Soriano

Amanda Sulkerhall

Gina Wencel

Marissa Mahoney

Gloria Hua

Gabriel Forbes

Amanda Garcia

Char Zerouni

Austin Zambito-Valente

Gabriela Acuna

Kaya Bozinovic Bozinovic

Ashley Wysocki

Amber Boothby

Rachel Lynn Hernandez

Audrey White

Kassiani Peppes

Grady Tenny

John Pat

Gia Caruso

Saffron Wang

Cassandra Smith

Elliot Tucker

Blake Skelton

Ogilvie Wentworth

Nicole Leogrande

Nate Hovav

Kathy Lang

Ella Beverage

Sebastian Chavez

Angela Rosa

Maya Castaneda

Shelby Lowe

Morgan Lowe

Melanie Hawkins

Madelyn Arnold

Imogen Parks

Yuriana Chavarin

Sharon W

Danica Thach

Cynthia Munoz

Niyati A.

Jasmine Neireiter

Grace Teaman

Trisha Loveless

Ana Ahedo Bremer

Lexy Luna

Katie Mundy

Isabelle Hugoniot

Juliette Vanek

Zakiyah Clark

Rebecca Resendiz

Lauren Reid

Margot Rajkovic

Katelin Jeffries

April Rios

Kalia Spaulding

Matteo Grossi

Mia Alvarez

Karen Villaseñor Poumian

Sheena Limbert

Colleen Aquino

Sara Katz-Scher

Emma Sherman

Jean-Luc Dupreez

Ahana Raj

Adrianna Gonzalez

Francis Glen Castillo

Allie Saluti

Ayden Keefer

China Villalta

Viethoa Kwon

Debbie Weiss Klein

Lupita Gonzalez

Janice French

Angula Rodrigues

Elisabeth Hamburger

Srilalitha Mullaguru

Ananya Vadivelan

Eva Bedolla

Hailey Humphrey

Emily Yarcusko

Laura Dapic

Caneron Bielawa

Marley Keys

Nadine Linares

Katelin Jeffries

Krista Hamby

Nathan Nunez

Shannon Rieger

Kathleen Gervais

Julieta Benoit

Brooklynn Porter

Daniela Husted

Karina J

Anastasia Knight

Duncan Mullin

Khloe Harrison

Paige Kwon

Jadyn Mathews

Emiliah Albanese

Mielina Gonzalez

Katherine Readmond

Lisanne Carmel

Cassidy Hausmann-Mason

Amara Maxwell

Cami Young

Madylynn Wright

Gabrielle Ledee

Liam Follett

Celine Park

George Williams

Kelly Hansen

Joseph Scharli

Lina So

Annalea Gilchrist

Ash Bridges

Melba Rodriguez

Brooklyn Talley

Daniela Bonillas

Nikole Lopez

Rylee Gahagan

AJ Sumiyoshi

Omsu Nguyen

Ilda Mendoza

Kensley Tucker

Noel Mendoza

Aaron Ramirez

Quentin Roberson

Kathleen Gervais

Evora Cherry

Izalina Bittencourt

Elsa Larsson

Kristy Ho

Tori Dew

Matthew Vargas

Kaelyn Gulcharan

Michelle Menou

Lily A Kaplan

Gurshran Gill

Kaitlyn Lenahan

Asphene XD

Daniel D

Phoebe Denning

Melissa Denning

Emily Basco

Samantha Schertel

Thomas Fortunak

Zoey Wright

Catherine Obidienzo

Hannah Frankel

Gwen Houlihan

Hunter Ahuero-Hess

Doug Everson Everson

Mohammed Abuelenain

Kamila Waller

Axel Liston

Cari Callen

Eliana Green

Constanza Otero

Sauni-Star Rodgers-Hansen

Catherine Sorensen

Jake Huizing

Vincent Sawyer

Kasey Ramirez

Taylor C

Nora Elabdallaoui

Cadi Long

Mars Jordan

Aviaja Rossen

Samantha Ibarreche

Ana Cardoso

Quinn Heaney

Meghan Trotter

Roen Price

Sarah Heffelfinger

James Feng

James Feng

Michael Pugh

Alice Hawn

Oliver Potter

Jigyasa Agarwal

Catherine Chang

Lila Yeh

Samantha Warren

Iga Kazmierczak

Na X

Sloane Davis

Jordan Ortega

Dylann Laufenberg

Sung-Ji Schmidt

David Jones

Emmerson Kellom

Azahn Billins

Daniel Ocampo

Marie Rodriguez

Emily Santiago

Veronica Magana

Hannah Struble

Michelle Sigala

Priscilla Soria

Angelica Benitez

Ian Contreras

Kamilah Montes de Oca

Leslie Ericksen

Sarah Mo Zhen

Breniyah Foster

Deanna Dippre

Frances Emery

Cheyenne Mandrigues

Kimberly Poon

Maya Barbosa

Amena Alvi

Aj Den

Julie Ratajczak

Valerie Buonasera

Jenna Sanders

Alexis Seal

Aubrey Christensen

Tristan Williamson

Kaz Davila

Evelyn Clasquin

Elena Rivera

Aliya Gonzales

Arely Castillo

Jean-Luc Dupreez

Neidia Vazquez

Kira H.

Jennifer Velazquez

Cyrus Flores

Maureen Collins

Cassius Rivas

Katherine McCarthy

Haleena Kaur

Megan Granera

Bella Truong

Alex Newcombe

Charles Godschaw

Kadie Moonitz

Renae McCullough

Avani Flanagan

Lilah Radvany

Kennedy King

Alicia Burkeen

Hannah Bustos

Dezerae Orosco

Dezerae Orosco

Mia Schlapfer

Griffin Kubitz

Cassandra Tellez

Najat C

Amaya Kelly

Olive Henderson

Ava G

Henrik Hartvig

Robin Graham

Irene Chen

Milan Bui

Charlie B

Bianca Saucedo

Georgie Wingate

Nayeli Farias

Miley McCane

Erika Barrios

Rose Howton

Lucy Manetti I

Angela Flores

Adrian Perono

Mary Lambert

Carolyn Grijalva

Estefanie Ramirez

Rory Fenton

Meher Rawlley

Mia Garcia

Levi Langford

Jeffry Figueroa

Cathy Moya

Deborah Yu

Imani Mitchell

Keko Parque

Sydney Elliott

Charlene Woodward

Kiernan Newman

Ella Slavin

Jacob Tubbs

Neena Semone

Mel Tesfaye

Marceline Verduzco

Adva Harel

Terrilyn Little

Ella Thiele

Peyton Sparks

Bailey Matlock

Andrea Chavez

Natasha Kromka

Audrey Stevens

Kels D

Nik Eccles

Katija Baldock

Lelia Gallup

Sam Schmid

Francesca Beto

Katie Krukowski

Marina Tacker

Arianna Worcester

Honour M

Abraham Lee

Angela Prince

Sandra Rodriguez

Karin Jaffie

Josie Swoboda

Sienna Aceves

Savanna Chavez

Daniel Cruz

Stephanie Felix

Bridget Biggar

Nicole Montañez

Sarah Herskowitz

Sophia Buerk

Elva Dorsey

Mayra Acosta

Brigitte S

Ari Davidson

Alyssa Jameson

Alyssa Jameson

Noah Nechemia

Angelina Lazar

Alexander Acosta

Bailey Douglass

Kori Santos

Jacqueline Torres

Simon McGuire

Salina Xoi

Conrad Zhou

Madilyn Saenz

Lily Adkins

Izabelle Gomez

Gabriel Uribe

Emily Thompson

Carla Lerma

Cherie Guthrie

Kimsheri Milstid

Collin Hicks

Meleah Simmons

Christopher Gauthier hopkins

Carly Loevseth

Valerie Kravchenko

Courtney Briggs

Bella Hooper

Kay Den

Tania Jimenez

Nora Ramsdell

Sydney Hwang

Jacob Clayback

Erica Travinsky

John Anderson

Tonantzin Montejo

Madeline Patterson

Caitlin Quinn

Sparrow B.

Melissa Garcia

Vane Yanara

Saige Mair

Armyni Amador

Brian Castillo

Candace Davidson

Lena S

Tanvi C

Sophie Siegert

Emma Pham

Rain Weismantel

Kael Stelz

Carina Ahn

Mara Galeai

Julian Fuhrer

Julian Fuhrer

Everett Simone

Everett Simone

Christa Spriensma

Samantha Grijalva

J C

Leon Marshall

S Z

Samantha Jean

Alexis Feliciano

Brianna Denis

Stephany Hernandez

Cynthia Marrero

Noah Hakansson

Violet Fenlon

Bob Joe

Elle Walstrom

Sean Bracy

Michelle Huinac

Nyxia Hartman

Elexus Goebel

Kylee Brouwer

Maria Pinon

Leslie Sheridan

Hillary Kwan

Muireann Forsythe

T T

Christina Aguirre-Kolb

Regan Bobich

Ariana Flores

Jessica Romero

Vincent Sanchez

Erika Gomez

Perla Amador

Maria Serafin

Maria Weis

Angel Aguilar

Ramin Gibson

Yaro Bilaniuk

Nevaeh Rose-DeHate

Madeline Pitkin

Alyssa Fire

Maegan Donohue

Emily Smith

Nathalia Medina

Tatianna Green

Samantha Valle

Emily Hampton

Abby McRae

Jessica Chiu

Elsa Astrom

Nancy Flores

Joe Lundy

Brynlee Snyder

Lizet Carrillo

Lila Kim

Truman Tipton

Hans Kejserlig

Alexi Zuzga

Patricia Williams

Mikiyah Rucker

Alexa Saavedra

Carolyn Dorricott

Tika Tabak

Kaitlynn Bauman

Diego Esparza

Alison Sandness

Shyanne Conover

Amelia Yant-Courtright

Elizabeth Black

Jeniffer Gayosso

Jenna Ayers

Daniel Rivera

Haleena Kaur

Alejandro Melendez

Daniel Rodriguez

Jose Dominguez

Cristina Cervantes

Bianka Jaramillo

Cierra Rivera

Elizabeth Molina

Cece Brower

Emily Aquino

Evelyn Reid

Mireya Leveron

Scarlett Sinay

Elsa Jerde

Abbie Holland

Omar Alajji

Elissar Al najjar

Elissar Al najjar

Claire Tuzon

Kiara Simonsen

Kevin Hanlin

Shayda Mulder

Tom Wu

Christine Zayas

Hudson Findley

Athena Schauner

Leo Wong

Crystal Weatherwax

Francesca Redlich

Moncerat Cruz

Quinn Fell

Tiffany Nguyen

Astghik Harutyunyan

Brianna Mitchell

Monica Salamanca

Emily Wang

Bryan Godinez

Kaylee Duroy

Maya Lopez

Hailie Zakel

Lilian Climaco

Jennifer Arredondo

Mumina Sadullozoda

Ellen Falkdal

Alisson Tepepa

Guadalupe Barajas

Leyla Zamani

Travis Mckay

Junie June

Zion Angilau

Gio Dz

Itzel Favela

Natalia Villarreal

Tanya Nguyen

Sophia L

Gibreal Ahmed

Elizabeth Ochoa

Kylie Scott

Izzy Andrew

Delilah Rosado

Victoria Perez

Ziva Flores

A S

Mhairi Taylor

Sonya Johnson

Aiden Sandoval

Emma Fain

Penelope Ruth

Rosanna Jiang

Cortez Cortez

Tony Teetet

Alicia McCracken

Ana Ceballos

Celina Mueller

Brayan Mejia

Devon Slawson

Marisela Garcia

Samuel Benitez

Thorn P

Caitlyn Morgan

Dalia Yanez

Dalia Yanez

Anna Costa

Gloria Friend

Angelina Rossi

Lilian GJ

Alexis Patton

Aaron Patron

Anna Siefke

Jordan Valverde

Analiese Gudeman

Dana Worrell

Jennifer Berg

Emily Cieplik

Belle CS

Damaris Ramirez

Maria Arana

Uma Diez

Melanie Coleman

Ayva Gomez

Emma Johnson

Autumn Nick

E. Babe Fulks

Liz Wexler

Hannah Weitzman

Mia Caringi

Isabella Klos

Emmy Humber

Sierra Rae

Charlie H

Lexi Wilson

Isaac Michael Ybarra

Amanda Soto

Carmen Lozano

Clarisse Chung

Leila Davis

Leila Davis

Annudeep Kaur

Kathleen Smith

Brittany Cruz

Lincoln Mendell

Ksenija Soldat

Elena Peiris

Jose R

Tayler Morgan

Misha Prato

Alexandra de Peyster

Luke Collins

Elizabeth Nielsen

Sloane Vankka

Magda Pawelkiewicz

Brian Nazareth

Stephanie Williams

Daisy Rios

Katherine Oberson

Isabella DeMarco

Denisa Catruc

Angel Cuello

Isabel Diaz

Dimitri Aleman

Mia Santiago

Josefa Landaverde

Ariam Briones Serrano

McKinley Seaver

Willow Waterson

Brianna Ruggles

Meredith Webb

Natalie Miranda

Lauren Ellis

Lina Sinopoli

Daphne Angelis

Natalie Bautista

Ashima Gandhi

Tess Mihaliak

Cruz Romero

Alejandro Gutierrez-Veliz

Martine Kushner

Pat Kinzer

Rulee Villalobos

Sophia Dimieri

Jimena Agustin

Brittney Camacho

Sophia L

Angela Mena

Liliana Farrow

Kai Comtois

Lylia Valentine Urtz

Laura Kray

H V

Laura Johnson

Michael Casavant

Camila Sandoval

Croe Schweitzer

Zander Neville

Henry Oberst

Lexi Villagomez

Natalia Cuahutle

Gabriel Rios

Halley Myers

Isabel Mejia

Abby Purrenhage

Morgan Gillio

Løøna ŕăİňê

Emilee Linares

Leon Mays

Elainy Tercero

Intisa Afra

Erika Mondragon

Miley Reyes

Isabella Frias

Isabella Frias

Isabel Gutowski

Marcela De los Rios

Alissa Alissa

Prisila Bravo

Paoula Navarro

Ryan Dragun

Ray Salazar

Jaelyn McBroom

Jazmine Guereca

Mallory Hector

Gabriel Rocha

Kelly Carmichael

Citlali Matildes

Crystal Holmes

Logan Connery

Conner Vermaaten

Emily Erezuma

Selena Staken

Sage Luka

Alyssa Gutierrez

Barb Hartsock

Addison Butler

Rut Bansal

Leslie Benitez Ruiz

Willow Moore

Kathy Cruz

Fernanda Carbajal

Lillian Flowers-Pasquith

Rosalie Gutierrez

Natalie Huynh

Athena Smith

Caitlynn Lim

Naidelyn Vidal

Angel Caro

Daisy Cruz Rodriguez

Zoey Riter

Giovanni Menotti

Mizuki Teague

Dj Beeson

Joy Le

Josaphine Valdez

Sarah Martinez

Sarahi Prieto

Isabel Macias

Alexis Blake

Nathaniel Azevedo

Emmi Wong

Alyssa Comstock

Fernando Vega

Brian Choi

Izzy Pittman

Emily Martinez

Szayben Beacham

Alexandra Armendariz

Grace Anderson

Caylie Principe

Emily Messer

Ari Davidson

Sam Wisman

Ellery Meehan

Kinlie Hemming

Victoria Acevedo

Kimberly Magana

Mayra Lopez

Jackie Rodriguez

Kyrielle Aker

Sophia O

Keeth Mandle

Isaac Bargas

Zahir Hernandez

Deborah Whalen

Finnegan Stemple

James O’Neill Houck

Diego Rodriguez

Demi Bergouignan

Ashley Gutierrez

Morgan Doose

Kaitlyn Clemmons

Michelle Weng

Zack Hernandez

Jolie Anderson

Megan Klees

Jaymie Lamb

Jess Vb

Naidelyn Sanchez

Joshua Davoodzadeh

Sabra Ouertani

Sahil Gill

Ava Vazquez

Cristina Fuentes

Nancy Eaton

Valen Arena

Ashlynn S

Samuel Hart

Saeed Parker

Sopha Richardson

Sopha Richardson

Vic Holland

Kyla Kemp

Erin Kelly

Sawyer Stribley

Marie Niedermaier

Emery Goldstein

Marissa Nunez

Lisa Patanzo

Yulissa Bueno

E B

AJ Dizon

Madalin Radu

Daisy Orduna

Prateeksha Patel

BeccaRose Wenzel

Ed Orti

Alonso Neri Canegalli

Nicol Hernandez

Yulia K

Naomi Juarez

Erica Warner

James Warner

Ellie Lopez

Jillian Velazquez

Jillian Velazquez

Megan Lester

Lucy Naismotj

Syenia Jones

Khielsey Antonio

Marybeth Simler

Natalie Ospina

Zach Milan

Blanca Beggs

Emily Smith

Islaiani Albino

Krys Langlois

Lorraine Marchan

Gabriel Vazquez

Anya Mottram

Islaiani Albino

Fernanda Aguirre

Azahara Gonzalez

Claire Lachel

Maximus Medin

Mia Slowinski-Krall

Indiana Kay

Julian Williams

Nikos O’Keefe

Hugo Moore

Bao Lam

Paloma Muniz-Ochoa

Abe Houseago

Madisyn Hein

Yonna Greene

Ferris Hoffman

Elizabeth Cashbaugh

Michelle Leonard

Morgan Livesay

Anya Wilson

Christina Baum

Matt Ocheltree

Lindsey O'Brien

Breanna Vester

Martha Barajas

Myy Westersund

Thia Karlsson

Stacey Warden

Marinella Vettenranta

Sumehra Rahman

Nik Aguirre

Sam Schuck

Lauren Zentner

Matthew Macias

April McVey

Celeste Carrillo

Lauren Johnson

Terri Williams

Estefania Martinez

Reileigh Ziolo

Ximena Porras

Kelsi Lee

Lisa Quintero

Athena Monroy

Kaitlin Giffin

Justine Mattiussi

Alyssa Racette

Jennifer Torres

Karyn H

Perrey Walker

Mary Tsankashvili

Mia Sidhu

Elizabeth Hoeksema

Leiah Carlisle

Consuelo McIntosh

Taylor Sherman

Kaitlin McInnes

Chris Wu

Melissa Flores

Kelly Ryback

Destiny Castillo

Marissa Goldstein

Chris Shobe

Hasini Dissanayaka

Izzi Fashing

Joanna Luo

Jazmin Hernandez

Matti Randolph

Emanuel Rivera

Ely Jethani

Hanna Hodges

Ellie Hayes

Jayden Kreilich

Natalie Castro

Jessica Cronn

Anthony Constanza

Kenji Hongo

Misty Sisco Misty Sisco

Yatta Preston

Ariel Alvarez

Alex Stanjevich

Mayerling Rodriguez

Tyreen Tingcang

Taylor Gulbrandson

Abbey Terracina

Kate Worcester

Jasmin Ortiz

Kaylee Grau

Daniella Garcia

Allison Hartz

Albina Smalkp

Murat Amidi

Sarah Johnson

Angula Rodrigues

Angelly Cabrera

Lena Scofield

Syd Johnson

Johanna Aguilar

Moss Sparrow

Maya Mullarkey

Rianne Laplante

Andromeda Nunez

Sophia Bautista

Ava Arends

Sprout Yerke-Robins

Naeco Varghese

Maximilian Sierra

Alyssa Chan

Cecilia Rowland

Dennyce Martinez

Deandra Lopez

Indiana Ebdon-walker

Tatiana Smith

Gustavo Nunes-Ueno

Alayna Garcia

Sebas C

Bjorn Birkeland

Rebekah Sandy

Grace Baidas

Marysol Toribio

Amora Garcia

Cruz Romero

Milena Weinberg

Joshua Cortez

Casey Conway

Lloyd Nery

Ethan Rodriguez

Sophia Guivas

Sophia Guivas

Olivia Fountain

Nathalie Bustillo

Grace Nguyen

Mckayla Nuckols

Lucas Doull

Sebas C

Jessalyn Asche

Lindsey Baker

El Clay

Seth Kirkland

Kathryn Lehnerer

Joia Sw

Peter Hollen

Wyatt Murphy

Aubrey Winter

Medeski Murphy

Camila Barroso

Alondra Alvarenga

Valerie Salinas

Liza Zacarias

I I

Masato Takekawa

Sophia Doe

Jordan Gonzalez

Jordan Gonzalez

Luc Dubray

Nikola Porczak

Jada Hughes

Nadia Gary

Kristina Holland

Joy Armah

Danika Brabec

Kendall Calderon

Allie Cortese

Akiya Zawacki

Emma Cole

Jade Dudley

Liz Gregory

Sophia Bach

Ad Davis

Julia Dunn

Cynthia Pillay

Alexis Ayala

Destiny Bundy

Madison Boyd

Samuel Ramirez

Julian Chavez

Valissity Thomas

Linda Valdez

Igor Karaklajic

Joelle Debarros

Jonathan Strang

Riley McQueen

Lily Listiak

Anthony Lara

Leigh Ervin

Jackson Zee

Jade Brown

Charlotte Frost

Anastasia Hernandez

Kenny Nguyen

Olivia Nguyen

Zuzanna Urban

Marin Cupples

Carlos Ortiz

Itzel Quintana

Imelda Wilby

Joe Jenkins

Samantha Gindi

Katie P

Yolanda Alvarez

Arianna Villasenor

Sabine Stewart

Adriana Ocean

Julia Vilardi

Vincent Garner

Carolina Pollack

Juan Baez

Tamara Lopez

Kelsea Cox-Bain

Kayla Bence

Lauren Messer

Sophia L

Carter Chiu

Chrystial Correa-Alvarez

Candace Johnson

Laura Jimenez

Aidan Cumming

Alia Gordon

Sofia Rojasova

Samantha Carnevale

Jazzy Mai

Aarna Vegivada

Joseph Bracker

Kat Chung

Katie Lamb

David Valdez

Lila Andrusiak

Holland Merrill

Lucy Oman

Kristina Bongianni

Avadin Rodis

Jennifer Gonzalez

Aviendha Andreoli

Joe Williams

McKenzie Boyce

April Mendoza

Isabella Navarro

Nicholas Rice

Lillian Valdez

Christie Wendling

E L

Nicole Wilson

Mayra Munoz

Della Illingworth

Cristina Johnson

Sarah Shutes

Lauren Gould

Elise Hsieh

Ashleigh Pokorny

Tracy Keener

Yvonne Chavez

Marisa Quinonez

Brianna Bertrand

Beth Hager

Dora Meza

Jennifer Hornbeck

Emile Toufighian

Blaize Buckley

Patricia Ramos-Rizzo

Amber Kliger

Kara Buss

Sheena Steinbrook

Laura Zeller

Jessica Anhalt

Angie Thomsen

Chris Oneto

Ash V

Alicia Garcia

Keely Gleason

Karen Bustamante

Paige Moore

Monica Iskandar

K Cousino

Tina Corrigan

Alana Abbott

J VonAlroth

Isabel Labra

Jessica Alcaraz

Hilary Hibbeln

Joanne Forman

Hannah Russell

Karine Leirvik

C K

Mary Wollin

Lynne Bannon

Rachel Boylan

Leona O’Connell

Isabella Garcia

Denisse Solorio-Nateras

Taylor McAmis

Tara Joe

Jocelyn Valdivia

Callie Heyes

M Garcia

Scarlett Hodge

Kiley Ragland

Autumn Lee

McKenzie Kirby

Joy Blohm

Yasmin De La Cruz

Darrien Rickman

Jessie Oaks

Afiq Faisal

Nevaeh Hooks

Diana Linares

Sharon Imbriani

Kathy Moll

Cynthia Whitfield

Julie Shelton

Bianca Montoya

Bill Robinson

Anne Blandin

Nicole Unger

Diana Henderson

Long Tran

Gregory Alper

Janie Burkhart

Elizabeth Reiter

Indigo Chai

Danielle Korban

Shaina Garci

Lorelei DiAngelo

Callie Losby

Bri Willits

Asella Byamungu

Home Address

Lorelei DiAngelo

Nevaeh Martinez

Nancy Davies

Erika Agnew

Stacy Karacostas

Daniel Conrad

Kathleen Fuller

Jamie Rekow

Andrea Tanny

Christina Brackett

Lisa Kucera

Lisa Hamlin

Julie Sims

Dani Pogachefsky

Alanna Roff

Alejandra Castro

David Rivas

Cheyanne Adkins

Cass Howlett

Alaina Hawley

ZiaDawn Coble

Sarah Antunes

Holly Killen

Jeorgia Barr

Madelyn Smith

Jillian DeLorme

Mary Guinness

Allison Castellon

Theresa Cusson

Vivian Lau

Joseph Van Halbeek

Nancy West

Barbara Wasserman

Brenda Haig

Brenda Haig

Erh-Yen T.

Reed Fenton

Gã©Rard Couchoud

Randy Gerlach

Sarah Gordon

Raquel Narvios

Aimee Halligan

H M

Larry Kronish

Shirley Fukuhara

Deanna Johnson

Elise Adibi

Susi Atkinson

Ashlyn Oneil

Frances Tinney

Raquel Narvios

Shirley Fukuhara

Larry Kronish

Lauren Haggerty

Sarah Marks

Matt Reola

Jennifer Devine

Tito Galdo

Sheree Courtney

Trina Malone

Bianca DeLeon

Jan Gabrielle Galinanes

Nicole McGill

Mayda Ortiz

Shantall Harster

Mike Ross

William Paxton

Brianna Kuchler

Amira Shaer

Mara Fernandez

Mike Ross

Cassandra Chancey

Amy Lansdown

Pam Ayres

Hayley Maier

Le Truong

Karen Del Campo

Jennifer Vaca

Carlos Meza

Tomas Escobar

Savanna Gualtieri

Gabriela Correa

Elena Chancellor

Brianna Roberts

Bianca DeLeon

Le Truong

Jes Stanelun

Barbara Yaeger

Arina Mueller

Donna Brock

Luca Pellegri

Zeenat Ahmed

Raemus LaBranche

K Winston

Carissa Cabrera

Eliza Ilano

Westerly Gardner

Mona Eisa

Callista Hawkins

Briana Perez

Sarah Wilson

Mary Goodman

Joan Thomas

Sarah Petersen

Addison Roberg

Claire Bettington

Amy Rafiee

David Santiago

Jill Casey

Kelly Lewis

Thomas Klopcic

Rachel Erdmann

Jill Niland

Bonnie Cimo

Aislee Klups

Jon Brown

Heather Horsley

Patricia Lewis

Laura DeAngelis

Nicole Michel Rivera

Jehan Miller Godfrey

Ryan McIntyre

Alex Morrison

Rebecca Culp

Mary Carlson

Zach Leitzke

Vanessa Pop

Kaitlin Wilkerson

Laura Prout

Rhonda Clower

Hollie Houtzer

Marisa Perkins

Logan Vineyard

Eduardo Cortes

Jo Feldman

Jo Feldman

Shannon Tuttle

Melissa Rowe

Michael Anderson

Michael Chatelain

Tony Yang

Nam Soo Park

Sasha Lohan

Sasha Lohan

Elena Tillman

Kyle Wade

M C

Carol Biondi

Lisa Haines

Angela Benson

Alene LaRosa

Lauren Powers

Makayla Robinson

Jen Martini

Isabelle Ruesch

Timothy Dow

Jen Martini

Nam Soo Park

Tony Yang

Sasha Lohan

Margaret Ramadhar

Sharon Hernandez

Kellie Braun

Jillian Schweitzer

Alicia Rodríguez

Katie Ennis

Stacy Thibert

Tonya Gladu

Eli Edgecomb

Ava Hesslau

Laurie Macpherson

Tara Panther

Mona Chatterji

Faithlee Mills

Karen Grady

Julie Bowles

Marcia Maxwell

Alex Karakuc

Kelly Boekhout

Vicki Kardynal

Autumn Bell

Diane Levasseur

Laura Schuller

Shannon Erickson

Zachary Martin

Elizabeth Sazama

Jamie Kulff

Sophie Nelson

Michael Moe

Emilia Patino

Sam Lunser

Alexa Landis

Kt Hertfelder

Debbie Cox

Sean Burd

AnaVictoria Garcia Medina

AnaVictoria Garcia Medina

Piper Ruwe

Paul Perez

Tyler Cobb

Jordan Stevens

Katelyn Harnden

Anya Pearson

Michele Roma

Melissa Parham

Cristina Virsida

Valerie Hubbard	Katherine Wulwick
Alyssa Garbien	Sarah Curtis
Zoe Wells	Jaka Doherty
Greysen Motley	Denise Lytle
Julie Finn	Camille Howard
Lily Reed	Megan Pioch
Elizabeth Schultz	Denise Lytle
Lily Reed	Alyssa Lopez
Maya Tyler	Melinda Meeks
Gwen Carl	Blue McRight
Lillee Poisel	Shastina Free
Bianca Huertas	Ximena Mendoza
Tori Bamford	Kelly Eckel
Robyn Dibble	Crystal Cuellar
Kay Bernard	Michael Gutierrez
Denise Belsky	Haley Frey
Gary Dundon	Michele DePuy
Marie DAnna	Martha Bunch
Sofia Teuscher Magallanes	Haley Frey
Carissa Baker	Lucelly Ahern
Pranoti Waghmare	Chelsey Collins
Patrick Monahan	Madelyn Carrillo
Sofia Teuscher Magallanes	Alisa Shuster
Daria Kim-Percy	Tamara Lukachy
Angelina Castaldo	Sophia Wolczko

Julie Ries

Cynthia Lewis

Jessica Maida

Andrew Tabbert

Karen Greene

Crystal Catalano

Dina Friedman

Annabel Whalen

Moss Cleary

Patricia Olsen

Laura Ladner

Wayne Slaughter

Margaret Smith

Grace Jennings

Chelsea Rodriguez

Marz Cooke

Regina McCormack

Abigail Wise

Bonnie Bakay

Isabella White

Moss Cleary

Patrick Miller

Maureen French

Denver Oakes

Jennifer Greenwood

Michael Junkin

Nan Mager

Selena Crowther

Anne Allen

Susanna Harris

Jordan Morton

Daisha Spicer

Olivia Frabel

Teresa Schleicher

Arushi Narasimhan

Larry Brown

Claudia Hasenhuttl

Jack Dodson

Gerard Ridella

Jennifer Abernathy

Steven Weinberg

Ryan Fuchs

Tess Hoffman

Amy Larson

Mia Youngs

Janae Twisselman

Aylex Warmbier

Jackson Jazwinski

Luna Bartleson

Aspen DeVillier

Gina Greenlaw	Cory Bullock
Kim Bicknell	Danielle Becker
Mara Reynolds	Cassie Costello
James Haugh	Alexa Potamianos
Shelley Pierson	Cassie Costello
Tracey Kleber	Cassie Costello
Levi Opsatnic	Rich Panter
Jami Murdoch	Crystal Smith
Penelope Floor	Trss Heidelberger
Alejandro Sanchez	Adrianna Aylard
Chelsea Popovich	Lizzi Huskey
Colette Kemmerling	Karleigh White
Ingrid Guthrie	Sandy Banks
Tracey Emrey	Sandy Banks
Eleanor Leranian	Sophie Perrins
Amanda Sutton	Christine Cartwright
Julianne Meehan	Samayia Floud
Julianne Meehan	Zoe Morton
Keith Wiilkinson	Elizabeth Owen
Danielle Firman	Pamela Hamilton
Ale Paganini	Susan Brisby
Lian Lenihan	Juliana Cohen
Annabel Degenholtz	Jacob Alan Huie
Ashley Anthony	Kim Culbert
Nicole Lynch	Fallon Hopper

Servio Aviles

David Hahn

James Williams

Marita Mirzatuny

Niechele Gambill

Pamela Hamilton

Devyn Davis

Lisa Hoffman

Elizabeth Didlake

Kendra Perez

Joyce Buck

Sarah Tolle

Valeria Yu

Jon Mullin

Sumn Muth

Marilee Rivas

Krystal Diaz

Benjamin Belcher

Brett Dier

Sophia Carey

Arabella Carrasco

Maddie Tedeschi

Gail Prather

Kerryl Kelling

Lori McDonald

Kimberlee Walters

Ava Curtis

Ava Curtis

Leanne Hawken

McKenzie McClure

Baudelio Romero

Bird Lambrinos

Michael Parry

Chris Clayborne

Robin McNulty

Amber Marie Kintz

Jessica Brandimore

Amy A Walker-Blue

Lauren Finkelstein

Hillary Everglade

Claire ODonnell

Ash King

Christina Carroll

Kaitlyn Cummings

Karen Chinn

Val Columbia

Jenny Cowen

Megan Soulakis

Cara Elzie

Barbara Foster

Sophia Walsh

Alessa Carlino

Paulette Elkins

Erin Maude

Tamie Borst

Bria Beal

Theresa Marcotte

Elena C

Kalli Mason

Grace Kufeldt

Mariya Starichenok

Rachel Spector

Noah Ehler

Noah Ehler

Barbara Foster

Zachery Talbot

Gina Perez-Baron

Asphodel Denning

Deborah Wheat

Lindsey Hansen-Bravo

Kathryn Groome

Jesse Mobley

Maysun Verley

Kendra Wagner

Deborah Hodack

Holly Maxham

Nang Moua

Andrea Vargas Bruno

Arne Johanson

Outlook

Comment for Petitions 2023-28MPA-AM2 and 2023-29MPA-AM2

From Tina Calderon [redacted]
Date Wed 09/30/2026 03:55 PM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Fish and Game Commissioners,

Please accept the attached pdf comment letter on behalf of Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples in support for Petitions 2023-28MPA-AM2 and 2023-29MPA-AM2.

Thank you,

Tina Calderon
Director, Ocean Protectors Program &
Indigenous Waters Associate

Building the capacity of Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples to protect sacred lands, waters and cultures
www.sacredplacesinstitute.org

Work hours: 9am - 5pm

September 30, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission
PO Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Via email: Email to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA-AM2 and 2023-29MPA-AM2

Dear President Sklar and Commissioners,

On behalf of Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples, I am expressing our strong support for Petition 2023-28MPA-AM2 to designate the new SMCA near Point Sal for co-management with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and other Chumash tribes and encouraging you to consult with tribes for a beautiful tribal name

and

Petition 2023-29MPA-AM2 to designate the new MPA near Carpinteria, Santa Barbara County (Proposed “Mishopshno SMCA”) for California and Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians co-management.

Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples (SPI) is a California Indigenous-led, community-rooted organization based on the unceded ancestral homelands of the Tongva people, also known as Los Angeles, California. Our mission is to build the capacity of Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples to protect sacred lands, waters, and cultures. Through all our work, we support Native Nations and their ability to re-establish relationships with their ancestral homelands and waters. Our focus is on creating systems that prioritize Indigenous knowledge and protocols, grounded in intergenerational respect, reciprocity, and connection.

These tribally co-sponsored proposals deeply align with our organization’s efforts to protect our sacred salt waters and all life which thrives there while allowing for essential Tribal co-management and stewardship in these sensitive areas of the California coast which is essential and long overdue.

Point Sal is a culturally, ecologically and spiritually significant region that Chumash peoples have been in relationship with since time immemorial. This region has been important to the Chumash for millennia. Abundant kelp forests, Lion Rock and converging productive currents support many species of invertebrates, marine mammals, fish and seabirds. The Point Sal SMCA proposal, co-sponsored by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, calls for a Chumash

collaborative co-management approach to protect these waters and the plant and animal relatives within them.

The Mishopshno SMCA proposal, co-sponsored by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, is named for the historic Chumash village nearby, and located in a place of great importance to Chumash communities past, present and future. Today, the area is still home to a variety of plant and animal species that are culturally significant to Chumash communities and peoples. Petition 2023-29MPA-AM2 aims to protect critical habitat for juvenile white sharks, since the area is shown to be an aggregate zone for them. Additionally, Carpinteria Reef is one of the only sites in the area of persistent kelp, another key attribute the proposal seeks to safeguard. SPI supports Indigenous-led protections for these special habitats.

Additionally, SPI does not support the establishment of a State Marine Cultural Preservation Area as an alternative for the SMCAs requested by the Tribes. We support the Northern Chumash Tribal Council's and the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indian's requests to not proceed with an SMCPA instead of an SMCA. An SMCPA would fail to encompass the cultural resources of these special areas because cultural resources are not just archaeological artifacts. They are living plants, animals, and even the ocean itself. We ask that the Commission takes this critical distinction into consideration as they vote on these Tribal petitions.

Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples urges the Fish and Game Commission to approve petitions 2023-28MPA-AM2 and 2023-29MPA-AM2, to better integrate Indigenous ways of knowing, values and stewardship into California's network of marine protected areas.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tina Calderon
Ocean Protectors Program Director

Outlook

RE OCT 15 item number 32. Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2

From VENTURA COUNTY COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION [redacted]
Date Wed 09/30/2026 09:14 AM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

RE OCTOBER 15 item number 32. Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 (New SMCA Near Point Sal, Tribally Co-Led) Request to designate a new SMCA near Point Sal – using boundaries proposed in November 2025 – that allows recreational take of finfish by hook and line from shore and take during mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base, and to consult with tribes to identify a tribal name for the SMCA.

This is a letter VCCFA would like submitted to the record and evaluated prior to the meeting.

Thank you

Dave Colker

--
Dave Colker,
Executive Director
Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association
[redacted]

Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association

Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association
1237 S. Victoria Ave #284
Oxnard, CA 93035
[redacted]

September 30, 2026

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

RE: Opposition to Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 – Proposed New Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area

Dear President Sklar and Commissioners:

The Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association (VCCFA) previously submitted written opposition to Petition 2023-28MPA concerning the proposed establishment of a new State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) at Point Sal. Following review of the amended petition and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's subsequent technical evaluation, VCCFA continues to oppose establishment of the proposed new MPA.

VCCFA recognizes and respects the cultural significance of the Point Sal region to the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and other California Native American Tribes with ancestral connections to this area. VCCFA supports meaningful Tribal participation, stewardship, and appropriate co-management opportunities in California marine-resource management.

Our opposition is not to Tribal stewardship or Tribal participation. Our concern is the removal of additional fishing access through creation of a new MPA without a sufficiently complete assessment of the ecological need for the proposed MPA and the reasonably foreseeable socioeconomic and spatial-displacement consequences.

CDFW's July 2026 technical evaluation reinforces several of the concerns VCCFA previously raised.

CDFW found that an MPA at Point Sal was considered during the original Marine Life Protection Act planning process but was not selected, in part because of socioeconomic considerations. CDFW further states that those socioeconomic concerns are likely still relevant today and that a detailed socioeconomic analysis has not been conducted.

That finding is particularly important to VCCFA.

CDFW identifies potential adverse impacts from the proposed Point Sal SMCA upon the commercial nearshore groundfish fishery, Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel fleet, and private boat anglers operating from Morro Bay-area ports. CDFW also found that the area is heavily used by private boat anglers. At the same time, CDFW states that a thorough analysis of socioeconomic and fiscal impacts was outside the scope of the petition process.

CDFW also identifies significant questions regarding the ecological justification for the proposal as presently designed. The proposed SMCA would be just over nine square miles and would allow recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore. CDFW concludes that the proposed MPA would have a Moderate-low Level of Protection and would offer minimal additional protection relative to the ecological goals identified by the petitioners. CDFW further finds that the proposed MPA would not enhance MPA Network design as defined by the applicable Science Guidelines and identifies additional information gaps regarding the ecological need for a place-based MPA at Point Sal.

These findings strengthen VCCFA's concern that additional productive fishing territory should not be removed from access without a sufficiently demonstrated need and a sufficiently complete assessment of the consequences.

VCCFA's April 21, 2026 comment emphasized that Point Sal is not an isolated fishing ground. Commercial fishermen operating from Morro Bay, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Channel Islands Harbor, and ports farther south operate across an interconnected network of fishing grounds that changes according to seasons, environmental conditions, target species, regulations, weather, and economic conditions.

When access to one productive portion of that system is removed, fishing effort does not necessarily disappear. Some portion of that activity may relocate into the remaining accessible fishing grounds.

The central question therefore remains:

Where will the displaced fishing effort go?

For Point Sal, likely receiving areas may include other Central Coast fishing grounds, waters around Point Conception and the Santa Barbara Channel, and grounds utilized by fishermen operating from Ventura County and the Northern Channel Islands.

The next question is equally important:

What happens to those remaining open fishing grounds when displaced fishing effort arrives?

VCCFA believes the Commission should have sufficient information to evaluate how much commercial and recreational fishing activity presently occurs within the proposed Point Sal SMCA, how much effort is reasonably expected to be displaced, where that activity is likely to relocate, how much fishing activity already occurs within likely receiving areas, and what ecological, economic, operational, and fisheries-management consequences may result from concentrating additional effort there.

CDFW's evaluation confirms that a detailed socioeconomic analysis has not been conducted. The absence of that analysis does not establish that displacement consequences will be insignificant. It means those consequences have not yet been adequately evaluated.

This issue is particularly important because the original MPA planning process considered Point Sal and did not establish an MPA there, in part because of socioeconomic considerations. Establishing a new MPA at this location now should therefore require careful consideration of the reasons underlying the original design and sufficiently complete information demonstrating why

circumstances justify changing that decision.

VCCFA also notes an important distinction in CDFW's evaluation concerning Tribal co-management. CDFW supports advancing co-management through an alternative, non-regulatory pathway and explains that Tribal co-management agreements can be developed without establishing a new MPA through the Commission's regulatory process.

VCCFA supports that distinction.

Meaningful Tribal stewardship and co-management do not necessarily require removal of additional commercial fishing access. VCCFA supports continued engagement between CDFW, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, other interested Tribes, and appropriate partners to develop co-stewardship and co-management opportunities through mechanisms that do not unnecessarily remove productive fishing grounds from access.

CDFW also identifies potential alternative designations for recognizing the cultural significance of Point Sal. VCCFA believes such alternatives deserve consideration where they can advance Tribal recognition, stewardship, and cultural objectives without unnecessarily creating additional restrictions upon commercial fishing.

The Point Sal proposal also illustrates why cumulative spatial pressures must be considered. Fishermen operating throughout the Central and Southern California coast increasingly navigate MPAs, other regulatory restrictions, competing ocean uses, and additional spatial demands. Removing another productive fishing area can therefore have consequences extending far beyond the approximately nine square miles contained within the proposed boundary.

For these reasons, VCCFA continues to oppose Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 and respectfully requests that the Commission **deny establishment of the proposed new Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area.**

VCCFA supports continued Tribal engagement and exploration of appropriate non-regulatory co-management, co-stewardship, and cultural-recognition alternatives. However, creation of a new MPA should not proceed where CDFW itself identifies unresolved questions regarding ecological need, acknowledges that significant socioeconomic concerns remain relevant, and confirms that a detailed socioeconomic analysis has not been conducted.

VCCFA incorporates and attaches its September 30, 2026 General Written Comment Regarding 2023 Marine Protected Area Petitions. That comment further explains VCCFA's concerns regarding socioeconomic analysis, spatial displacement of fishing effort, impacts upon remaining open fishing grounds, cumulative spatial pressures, Tribal engagement, working-waterfront economic consequences, and the need for a sufficiently complete record before additional fishing access is removed.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Colker
Executive Director

Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association (VCCFA)

Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association
1237 S. Victoria Ave #284
Oxnard, CA 93035
[redacted]

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

September 30, 2026

RE: General Written Comment Regarding 2023 Marine Protected Area Petitions

Dear President Sklar and Commissioners:

The Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association (VCCFA) represents California commercial fishermen and fishing-industry stakeholders associated with Ventura County's three commercial fishing ports and landing harbors: Port Hueneme, Channel Islands Harbor, and Ventura Harbor. VCCFA currently has 85 members and works to support the continued viability of commercial fishing, working waterfronts, local seafood production, and the fishing communities that depend upon them.

VCCFA recognizes the substantial undertaking involved in conducting the first major review and potential modification of California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network following the Decadal Management Review. We particularly appreciate the regional meetings and workshop-style opportunities that were presented throughout this process.

It is precisely because these decisions are consequential that VCCFA believes deficiencies identified during this process should be addressed before final regulatory decisions are made.

VCCFA's Interest in the Statewide MPA Petitions

VCCFA's interest in this process extends beyond MPA petitions located immediately adjacent to Ventura County. Our members are California commercial fishermen who operate within a statewide system of fisheries and fishing grounds. Changes in fishing access in one part of California can have consequences for fishermen and fishing grounds elsewhere.

When productive fishing territory is removed from access, the fishing effort that previously occurred there does not necessarily disappear. Some portion of that effort may relocate to other open fishing grounds, including grounds already utilized by fishermen operating from Ventura County ports. For this reason, an MPA modification occurring elsewhere in California can have consequences extending beyond the immediate geographic area of the proposed closure.

VCCFA therefore has an interest in the evaluation of all 15 petitions, particularly those that would expand MPAs or otherwise reduce fishing access. Our participation is based not only upon the direct effects of petitions within or near our region, but also upon the potential statewide consequences of displaced fishing effort, reduced fishing territory, cumulative restrictions upon access, and the resulting effects upon California's commercial fishing communities and working waterfronts.

A Threshold Concern Before Final Decisions Are Made

VCCFA believes it is important to clearly identify, before final decisions are made, what we consider to be a significant deficiency in the information available for evaluating certain petitions that would expand MPAs and reduce fishing access.

Our concern is not that socioeconomic information is entirely absent from the record. Petitioners, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), stakeholders, fishermen, and members of the public have provided varying amounts of socioeconomic, fisheries, and landings information.

The more fundamental question is whether the record for a particular petition provides a sufficiently complete analysis of the reasonably foreseeable consequences of removing fishing access.

Identifying that fishermen may lose access to a productive fishing ground answers only the first part of that question.

For purposes of evaluating an MPA expansion, VCCFA believes meaningful socioeconomic and spatial-displacement analysis should examine, to the extent reasonably ascertainable:

- commercial fishing activity occurring within the proposed closure;
- fishing effort and landings associated with that area;
- the amount of fishing effort reasonably expected to be displaced;
- where that displaced effort is reasonably expected to relocate;
- fishing effort and landings already occurring within likely receiving areas;
- the additional fishing pressure those receiving areas may experience; and
- the potential ecological, economic, productivity, and sustainability consequences of concentrating additional fishing effort within the remaining open grounds.

The absence of adequate analysis of these questions does not mean those consequences do not exist. It means those consequences have not yet been adequately evaluated.

VCCFA therefore strongly urges the Commission not to approve a petition expanding an MPA or otherwise reducing fishing access where the complete record does not provide sufficiently meaningful socioeconomic and spatial-displacement analysis. Such petitions should be denied or deferred until the reasonably foreseeable consequences have been adequately evaluated and incorporated into the record.

California's Own Adaptive-Management Framework Recognizes These Concerns

VCCFA's concern regarding displacement of fishing effort is not a new concept being introduced at the end of this process.

California's MPA management framework has long recognized the importance of ecological and socioeconomic information, human-use patterns, and fishing activity. The Decadal Management Review incorporated both ecological and socioeconomic information and identified continuing knowledge gaps relevant to adaptive management.

Importantly, California's regional MPA planning history also recognized the consequences of shifting fishing effort. Regional design considerations included the objective of preventing fishing-effort shifts that could result in serial depletion. Similar consideration of fishing-effort shifts appears across California's regional MPA planning history.

The current 2023 MPA petitions arose from the adaptive-management process following the first Decadal Management Review. VCCFA therefore believes it is appropriate to evaluate proposed MPA modifications using the broader perspective contemplated by that adaptive-management framework: not simply what may happen within a newly protected area, but what reasonably foreseeable consequences may occur outside its boundaries.

The Petition Process Did Not Require a Complete Displacement Analysis

The application process itself helps explain why important information may now be missing.

The 2023 MPA petitioners used the Commission's FGC-1 Petition for Regulation Change. The required portion of that form did not expressly require the detailed socioeconomic and spatial-displacement analysis described above. Economic or fiscal impacts appeared within the form's optional-information section.

Additional MPA-specific considerations were made available to prospective petitioners, but petitioners were encouraged rather than required to address that supplemental information.

Consequently, the petition process did not expressly require an applicant seeking to remove fishing access to answer fundamental questions such as: How much fishing activity currently occurs within the proposed closure? How much is reasonably expected to be displaced? Where is that effort likely to go? How much fishing activity already occurs there? What additional pressure could those receiving grounds experience? What are the reasonably foreseeable economic and ecological consequences?

CDFW subsequently conducted substantially more detailed technical evaluations of the petitions, and OPC separately provided analysis and recommendations. VCCFA recognizes the additional information those efforts have contributed to the record.

However, the existence of socioeconomic information does not by itself establish that the complete spatial-displacement question has been answered.

The Commission, as the ultimate regulatory decision-maker, should determine whether the

complete record for each petition provides sufficient information to answer those questions before approving additional restrictions.

The Evidentiary Burden Should Begin With the Petitioner

VCCFA does not believe the principal burden of filling these information gaps should fall upon affected fishermen, fishing organizations, CDFW, OPC, Commission staff, or taxpayers after a petition has already advanced toward regulatory action.

The party requesting a regulatory change that would remove fishing access should bear the principal burden of providing sufficient information to evaluate the reasonably foreseeable consequences of that change.

CDFW and OPC have important analytical and advisory roles, and the Commission remains responsible for evaluating the complete record and making the ultimate regulatory determination. But a petitioner requesting additional restrictions should provide sufficient information for the Commission and affected public to understand the likely consequences of the proposal.

If the petition requirements did not require information necessary for that evaluation, the resulting information gap should not be interpreted as evidence that the consequences are insignificant or nonexistent. It is a limitation of the information-development process that should be corrected before final regulatory action is taken.

Once a significant deficiency in the information necessary to evaluate a proposed regulatory change has been identified, completing the process should not take precedence over correcting that deficiency.

Where material information remains incomplete, the appropriate response is to obtain the missing information. The time reasonably necessary to develop an adequate record should take precedence over completing the present adaptive-management cycle according to a predetermined timetable.

Displacement Can Affect Remaining Open Fishing Grounds

MPA boundaries do not operate in isolation.

When fishing access is removed from productive fishing grounds, the fishing activity that previously occurred there does not necessarily disappear. Some portion of that effort may instead be displaced into other open fishing grounds, including areas already supporting existing commercial and recreational fishing activity. This redistribution can occur wherever affected fishermen are reasonably able to continue operating, and its consequences therefore may extend well beyond the boundaries of the proposed closure.

The ecological footprint of an MPA decision therefore cannot always be measured solely by the boundaries drawn on the map.

The point is not to predict with certainty where every fisherman will go. That is precisely why meaningful displacement analysis is necessary.

The central questions are:

Where will the displaced fishing effort go, how much additional pressure will receiving areas experience, and what are the ecological, economic, and operational consequences of that redistribution?

If productive fishing grounds are removed from access while fishing activity continues, some portion of that effort may become concentrated within a smaller amount of available fishing territory. The Commission should have sufficient information to evaluate how fishing activity and landings may shift, the additional pressure likely receiving grounds may experience, and the potential consequences for the productivity and sustainability of those remaining open areas.

Regulatory Displacement Can Create Secondary Management Consequences

The consequences of displacement may extend beyond the immediate effects upon fishermen.

Concentrating fishing effort into remaining areas may increase pressure upon those areas. If conditions subsequently change, future managers examining those fishing grounds should have a record that allows them to understand the regulatory decisions that may have contributed to changes in the geographic distribution of fishing activity.

Without that information, there is a risk of a regulatory cycle in which fishing grounds are closed, fishing effort shifts into remaining grounds, pressure becomes more concentrated within those grounds, and resulting conditions may later contribute to calls for additional restrictions.

VCCFA believes that possibility should be considered before approving additional closures—not years afterward.

Documenting reasonably foreseeable displacement before a regulatory decision is therefore important not only to today's fishermen, but also to future adaptive management. Managers examining conditions 10 or 20 years from now should be able to understand not only what areas were closed, but where displaced fishing activity was reasonably expected to go.

Economic Consequences Extend Throughout Working Waterfronts

The same distinction applies to economic impacts.

Identifying that a proposed closure may affect commercial fishermen does not, by itself, provide a meaningful assessment of the economic consequences to fishing communities.

Commercial fishing operates as an interconnected economic system. Vessel landings support vessel owners and crews, fish receivers and processors, dock and harbor operations, fuel and marine-service businesses, ice and gear suppliers, vessel maintenance and repair, transportation, seafood markets, restaurants, and employees whose livelihoods depend in varying degrees upon continued fishing activity.

A substantial reduction or redistribution of landings can therefore produce consequences extending beyond the vessels directly affected by a proposed closure.

California fisheries-management guidance recognizes the importance of considering direct effects upon fishermen together with broader effects upon employment, businesses, and fishing communities.

This is particularly important to working waterfronts such as Ventura Harbor. According to the Ventura Port District, between 2009 and 2023 Ventura Harbor averaged approximately 23 percent of California market-squid offloading, and nearly $200 million in market squid was offloaded at Ventura Harbor during that period.

That production does not exist in an economic vacuum.

Meaningful economic analysis of a proposed closure affecting commercially productive fishing grounds should examine, where reasonably ascertainable, the production associated with those grounds; the vessels, fisheries, and ports dependent upon that production; potential changes or redistribution in landings and ex-vessel value; effects upon vessel owners and crews; effects upon receivers, processors, and employment; and reasonably foreseeable downstream effects upon supporting businesses and working-waterfront communities.

It should also consider an important question connecting economic consequences directly to spatial displacement:

Can displaced fishing activity reasonably maintain comparable production from the remaining accessible fishing grounds, and what are the economic and ecological consequences if it cannot?

Commercial fishermen produce food. Decisions reducing access to productive fishing grounds therefore implicate more than fishing opportunity. They can affect domestic seafood production, working-waterfront economies, and the availability of locally landed wild-caught seafood.

Cumulative Spatial Pressures Should Also Be Considered

Commercial fishermen operate within an ocean increasingly subject to competing spatial demands and restrictions, including aquaculture development, energy infrastructure and development, MPAs, and other ocean uses and management measures.

Each individual action may occupy only one portion of the ocean. The cumulative consequence to fishermen, however, can be substantially greater than the effect of any single action considered independently.

For that reason, evaluating an individual MPA expansion solely by the percentage of California waters remaining technically open to fishing can provide an incomplete picture. Not every acre of open ocean represents equivalent fishing opportunity, productivity, accessibility, habitat, seasonality, or economic value.

The more meaningful question is what productive fishing capacity may be affected and whether remaining accessible fishing grounds can reasonably accommodate displaced activity while continuing to support the fishermen, fisheries, and working waterfronts dependent upon that production.

Tribal Engagement, Process Design, and MPA Boundary Decisions

VCCFA recognizes the importance of meaningful engagement with California Native American Tribes and Tribal communities. Tribal knowledge, history, stewardship, and contemporary use are legitimate components of ocean management, and VCCFA supports constructive collaboration and appropriate co-management or cooperative-management frameworks.

Our concern is not Tribal participation itself, but rather ensuring that proposed MPA modifications—regardless of the identity of the petitioner—are evaluated using consistent, transparent, and sufficiently rigorous ecological, socioeconomic, and spatial-displacement standards.

The Decadal Management Review recognizes the importance of increased Tribal engagement, Indigenous knowledge, and meaningful opportunities for collaboration. VCCFA supports those objectives.

Regardless of who submits a petition, VCCFA believes the reasonably foreseeable consequences of the proposed regulatory change should be evaluated using a sufficiently complete record.

Learning From the First Major MPA Modification Process

This process provides California with an opportunity not only to decide the petitions presently before the Commission, but also to improve MPA adaptive-management processes going forward.

VCCFA believes **current and future MPA modification procedures should expressly require meaningful evaluation of:**

- existing commercial and recreational fishing activity within proposed closure areas;
- reasonably foreseeable displacement of that activity;
- likely receiving fishing grounds and existing activity within those areas;
- ecological and productivity consequences of concentrating additional effort;
- socioeconomic impacts upon fishermen, ports, processors, working waterfronts, and fishing communities;
- direct and downstream economic effects, including employment and supporting businesses;
- effects upon domestic and local seafood production;
- cumulative impacts from other spatial restrictions and competing ocean uses;
- relevant historical information concerning existing MPA design; and
- ecological effects occurring both inside proposed protected areas and in areas receiving displaced fishing effort.

California has invested considerable resources in building and monitoring its MPA Network. Decisions modifying that Network should therefore be based upon a record sufficiently complete to evaluate both the anticipated benefits and the reasonably foreseeable consequences of those modifications.

VCCFA respectfully asks the Commission to examine the complete record for each petition and not approve an expansion or additional restriction where meaningful socioeconomic, economic, and spatial-displacement analysis remains materially incomplete.

Where significant information gaps remain, the appropriate response is to obtain the missing information before acting.

The absence of adequate analysis does not mean those consequences do not exist. It means those consequences have not yet been adequately evaluated.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Colker
Executive Director
Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association (VCCFA)

Outlook

Proposed MPAs off of San Luis Obispo County

From Lori French [redacted]
Date Fri 09/25/2026 03:10 PM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>
Cc Shuman, Craig [redacted] Eckerle, Jenn [redacted]

Hello

I'm a commercial fishing wife of forty two years based out of Morro Bay. Over the years, I have experienced changes to the California commercial fishing fleet brought on by more and more regulations first hand. The Morro Bay and Port San Luis commercial fishing fleet are shells of what we were in the 1980's. Of all the fishermen in Morro Bay with sons, including our family, none of our boys have gone into fishing. Many tried and then got off the boats because fishing has become so unstable. Both our sons fished their way through college,as did our nephew. Our oldest was on the boat for about six years until 2019. The changes to the dungeness fishery was the straw that broke the camel's back and he got off the boat, went back to school to get his Masters. From boat to boat, the story is the same, instability is killing California fishing families. My point? The proposed Tribally led Marine Protected Areas are just another layer to put us out of business, except this time these proposed MPA's will have more serious ramifications to actually change the economics of the harbors closest to them.

Fast forward to early May 2026 when we first learned of the proposed MPA's. When something as important as closing off more of the fishing grounds, I'd like to think that the commercial fishermen were consulted. We weren't. It seems that no one in Morro Bay or Port San Luis, including our Mayor and Harbor Director had any knowledge of these proposals. Myself and another fishwife started telling everyone from our fellow fishermen to the Morro Bay City Staff to the Salinan Tribe to the media. This has become another job I really didn't need, but I took on because these proposed MPA's are just flat out wrong, morally and socioeconomically. Taking access to all and giving it to just a few will fan the flames of racism that in this day and age, we just don't need. I do understand the intent to bring in tribal voices into the management of our oceans, but this is not the correct path.

We don't need any more MPA's in our area. We have 29. At this point this is just an ocean grab. There are conflicting studies on the success of the existing MPAs. There have been no socio economic studies of the ports that are affected by the existing MPA's and closing the areas directly off of Morro Bay and Port San Luis will have drastic effects on the commercial fishing fleets. There is enough potential damage to put many of us out of business. You put us out of business then the entire waterfront infrastructure changes. Look at Southern California harbors.

The entire process hasn't seemed to follow the original MPA process. Indeed there has been no outreach to the stakeholders and no transparency. PCFFA has reached out and received no answers to our letters.

I've read several comments that contradict each other from Fish & Game and various councils about the effectiveness of the MPA's offsetting climate change. But by closing the closest fishing grounds, forcing the commercial fleet to travel farther to find new areas to fish, the fleet is using more diesel, thus increasing our carbon footprint and adding to climate change.

My list of reasons not to approve the Proposed Chitqawi, Pt. Buchon and Pt. Sal MPA's:

"Adding a new MPA in this region of the MPA Network would not fill a connectivity or habitat representation gap or provide ecosystem or connectivity benefits when assessed per the SAT Science Guidelines." Dept. F & W recommendation!!!!

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Chitqawi and Pt. Buchon-These two are too close to the harbor entrance. This could seriously hamper the lifesaving dredging that occurs at the harbor entrance. Personally, our family fought for this dredging after my father in law lost his life on November 9th, 1987. Our oldest son was born the morning before. Since 1987, there have been no deaths due to the bar/harbor conditions due to the annual dredging of the harbor mouth. My concerns are where would the spoils be placed and from the maps the proposed Chitqawi would take in half of the harbor entrance. I'm concerned that the spoils removal farther from the harbor would increase the overall costs of the dredging which in turn may lead to the government to decide it's not worth the cost.

The areas of the proposed Chitqawi, Pt. Buchon and Pt. Sal are valuable fishing grounds for commercial and sport fleets. It should be noted that not all boats are required to have VMS, thus information supplied by others in their testimonies may not be correct. In 2026, the cards were once stacked for us and I would say 95% of our income has come from this area. The salmon were in this area and boats from all over came to fish our waters. (It was so great to see after three, very, very, very long closed seasons.)

Chitqawi encompasses a very busy beach in Morro Bay which is under the California State Park system. This is a Tourist beach and adding another layer of regulations will be confusing, some of which might contradict each other.

Potentially closing or adding to the existing closed areas will lead to fishing boats having to go further out of our home, thus leading to increased fossil fuel consumption and extra overhead on our family

businesses that can ill afford additional costs. (Currently the red diesel with no road tax is $8.00 at Morro Bay's only fuel dock. The price in town for diesel with road tax is $8.49 for reference.)

The Chitqawi and Pt. Buchon MPA's do not fall within the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians homeland. This area is homeland to the Salinan tribe and the proposal doesn't take that into consideration. I believe the SYBCI already has fishing rights in other MPA's in Santa Barbara County.

Pt. Sal -This area is already protected under the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and will require not only a CEQA but also a NEPA evaluation. This area is used by Port San Luis and Morro Bay commercial fishermen. It has been stated that not much production has come from this fishing block, but it is still vitally important locally. The decrease in production from this block is a direct result of the changes to the commercial fishing fleet over the years. Block landing numbers do not tell the entire story.

The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife does not have the budget to patrol these additional MPA's. This has been brought up at various meetings.

In closing I would just like to reiterate that bringing the California tribes and their knowledge is important to the big story, but again this is not the way to make up for the wrongs of the past.

Sincerely,
Lori French

F/V Langosta II

Chaos Coordinator
F/V Langosta II, French Avocados, Little Red Egg Co. and Fish Wife Life

Lori Vaccaro French
[redacted]

Outlook

California Central Coast MPAs and fishing opportunities

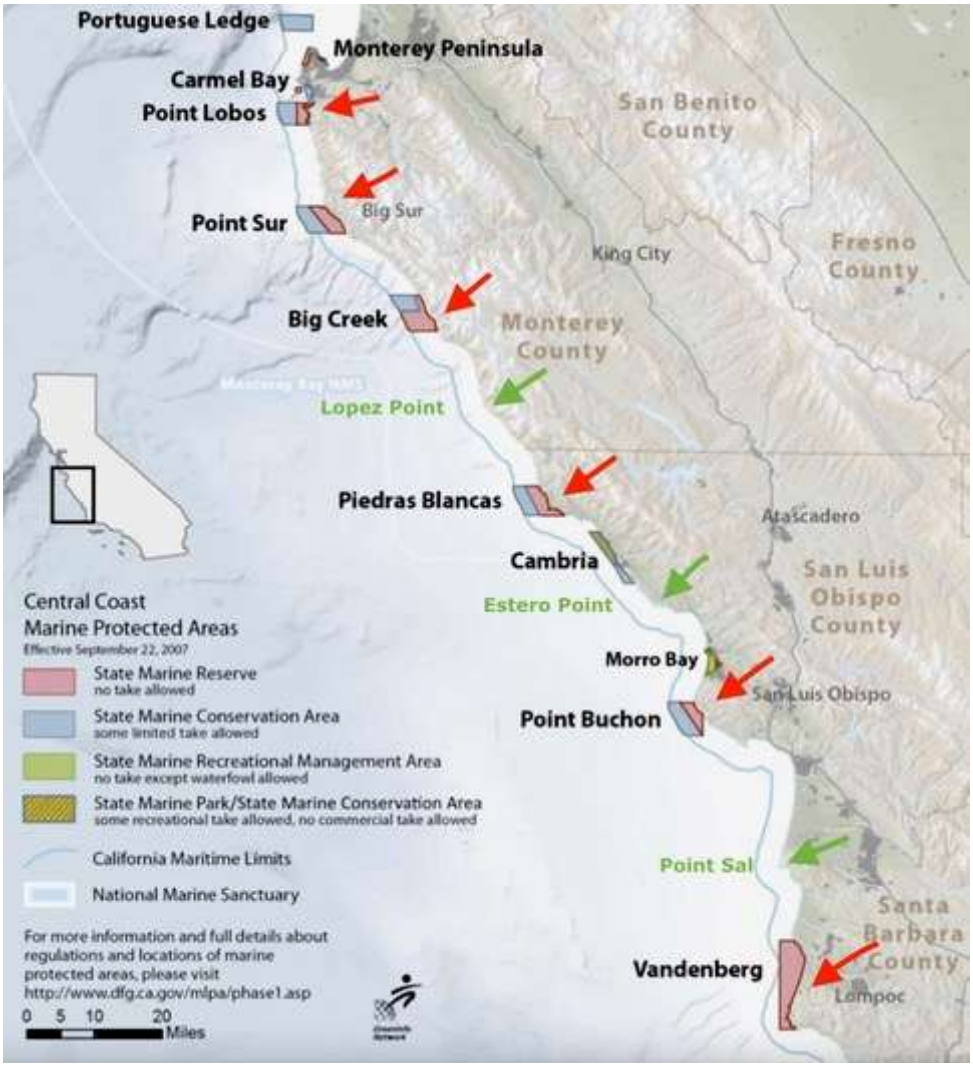
From Tom and Sheri Hafer [redacted]
Date Mon 9/28/2026 9:46 AM
To FGC <fgc@fgc.ca.gov>
Cc Melissa Miller-Henson [redacted]; Craig Shuman [redacted]

Dear Fish and Game Commission,

I have been commercially fishing off the coast of California for over 50 years and am currently fishing out of Morro Bay. I was involved in the first round of the Marine Life Protection Act process to designate a MPA network along the coast. Part of that process was to do a Socio-economic study with the local fishermen. We were promised that this information would be confidential and would not be used against us. We were given 100 pennies and ask to place them along the coast where we fish in proportion to the amount caught in those areas. The study showed that most fish were caught in the largest reefs at the "points" along the coast. That is because the **points are where the largest productive reefs exist** and **in-between is mostly small ribbon reefs and soft bottom/sand**. In the end, out of the 9 major points, 6 were put in MPAs: 67%. Squeezing fishing into small less productive areas sets these areas up for excessive pressure. Studies show that is exactly what has happened with results of a Channel Island study 2021 showing a net zero or less mean total of targeted fish biomass. "Assessing the population-level conservation effects of marine protected areas" DOI: 10.1111/cobi.13782.

If you also **take away Point Sal with the 2023-28 MPA, you will then have removed nearly 80% of all the best fishing opportunities off the Central California Coast.**

The illustration below is a map of the existing Central California MPAs with arrows to the 9 **major "POINTs" along the coast**. The arrows in red are now in MPAs and the green arrows are areas still open to fishing.



This is not management of fisheries. It is irresponsible overreach and excessive burdensome regulation on California fishermen. Issuing of California Commercial fishing licenses has already declined by over 70% since 2001, we are slowly but surely getting regulated out of business. The fishermen are the ones that need protection!

Unfortunately, because of over regulation, California has to import nearly 90% of its fish, much from fish farms and less regulated waters. California should be rich in seafood resource with nearly 3000 miles of coastline when you include all the coastline of the islands. Why is California allowing this valuable resource to be thrown away to the whims of NGOs and tribal wish lists, unsubstantiated fear mongering, and political power plays?

We hope you listen to the Fish and Wildlife staff recommendations to deny all the Central Coast MPA petitions. If the tribes want to rename the existing MPAs and help monitor them - ok. And if you want to label an area "historically culturally significant" - ok but no fishing restrictions added. Commercial fishing is historically culturally significant too!

Thank you for your consideration,

Tom Hafer

Outlook

Petition 2023-28MPA – Please keep boat and kayak fishing access open

From Terri Lajda [redacted]
Date Wed 09/30/2026 09:40 AM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Hello,

I'm writing regarding Petition 2023-28MPA and the proposed changes around Point Sal.

I'm a local Central Coast resident and recreational fisher-woman, and I wanted to share my concern about keeping fishing access available in this area.

I understand the importance of protecting our marine environment and keeping fish populations healthy, but I also hope the Commission will look for ways to do that without unnecessarily taking away recreational boat and kayak fishing access.

For people fishing from kayaks and small boats, there are already a limited number of areas that are practical and safe to access along this part of the coast. Losing more offshore fishing grounds would have a real impact on local anglers and could also put more pressure on the remaining open areas.

I support responsible fishing, reasonable limits, seasons, and conservation measures that are based on science. I just ask that the Commission consider options that protect the resource while still allowing responsible recreational boat and kayak fishing whenever possible.

Please consider the effect Petition 2023-28MPA could have on local recreational anglers and the communities around Point Sal, Avila, and Port San Luis before making a final decision.

Thank you for your time and for considering my comments.

Terri lajda

Outlook

Support for Mishopshno and Pt. Sal SMCA marine protected area proposal

From Carla Pera
Date Fri 09/25/2026 02:54 PM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

I am a California resident writing in strong support of the Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria and the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe.

For over a decade, California's world-leading network of MPAs has helped fish grow larger and more abundant, wildlife populations become healthier, and critical habitats thrive.

The Mishopshno SMCA would honor a sacred Chumash area, bolster ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change, enhance Santa Barbara County's local economies through tourism and ocean recreation, and help stressed fish populations and habitats thrive into the future.

Conserving Point Sal would support Chumash-led marine stewardship and protect a roosting site for vulnerable seabirds, an important breeding site for marine mammals, and a special area that provides a safe haven for fish and invertebrate populations.

I urge you to approve these proposals and protect California's critical marine habitats.

Sincerely,

Carla Pera

Outlook

Comments on MPA Petitions 2023-19MPA & 2023-28MPA

From Nathan Rosser
Date Mon 09/28/2026 04:38 PM
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Fish and Game Commissioners and all interested parties,

My name is Nathan Rosser. **I am a commercial nearshore and deeper nearshore fisherman out of Morro Bay** providing fish to the **domestic** 'live fish' market. I'm 39 years old, married, have 2 children, am the sole provider of my household, have worked in the fishing industry my whole life, am a UCSB graduate, and I also fish for sea urchins and sea cucumbers in Southern California. I am pro-adaptive management and pro-collaboration with fisheries scientists and have a history participating in various fishing organizations. I founded the California Sea Cucumber Divers' Association (a 501(c)3) with a grant from the Resource Legacy Fund, have served as a past chairman of the California Sea Urchin Commission, have worked with CA Sea Grant on multiple projects, and was an interviewee as part of the MPA Decadal review.

I am asking you to oppose MPA petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-19MPA (Point Sal and Morro Bay/Chitqawi). From what I have seen and read, the socioeconomic analysis behind these petitions is woefully inadequate. These petitions would be hugely detrimental to the fisheries I participate in. The existing MPA network provides a more than adequate amount of resource protection as is, if anything, we should be opening areas up and not closing down even more. **Right now there is a nice balance in my fishery in that Morro Bay nearshore fisherman have Piedras Blancas to the north and Port San Luis fisherman have the Point Sal area to the south of their port.** Of course we share these waters but for the most part, each harbor's fishermen focus more on 'their' respective areas and this works out nicely for keeping competition spread evenly. Closing Point Sal would be a massive blow to Port San Luis fishermen and result in heavy spatial displacement and inevitable fishing compaction and increased pressure in the remaining open areas. It would also force fishermen to travel further, burn more fuel, and take on more risk to fish more often in areas further from port. Seems ironic being in CA particularly, where the state as a whole is trying to go 'green/renewable energy' and 'eat local' that we would choose to undermine the very people (fishermen) working to do this. **Most importantly, this petition would be very harmful socioeconomically to Central coast fishermen and these effects have not been studied and analyzed nearly enough to make the decision to close Point Sal.** I would also like to state, having fished Point Sal extensively, it is extremely rich, abundant, and healthy with vast amounts of rockfish. It is very easy to catch fish there. It doesn't need additional protection so that a small special interest group can subsistence fish. There are copious amounts of large, healthy fish to go around down there

and the Chumash do not need a ban on commercial fishing to catch fish there. Anyone who fishes this area knows how incredibly productive the fishery is and how unnecessary additional protection is.

Regarding **the petition to close the closest available reefs to Morro Bay Harbor** via the Chitqawi petition, I would like to emphasize that our existing regulations and framework provide a very good level of protection to the resource there. Closing this area would be a huge blow to both commercial and recreational fishermen. It is often the only place you can fish when the weather is bad (which is often). It is a popular area, and I almost always see very small recreational watercraft (rowboats, kayaks, etc) fishing there. Closing it would shut out a lot of Californians from fishing access and be bad for the local economy as well. It is also where a lot of migratory fish species show up and the fishing can be phenomenal for white seabass and salmon at various times throughout the year. It would really be a sad thing to take the historic heart of the Morro Bay fishing community and effectively close it off for the benefit of very few (the Chumash). **I'm all for the Chumash having tribal rights to fishing access but it should be allowed in *existing* MPAs,** not designating wholly new additional ones solely for their minority group. It reeks of political backroom dealing.

As a father and a fisherman who has done his best to be a 'part of the process' and to work with fisheries scientists and managers, I am really disappointed that I have to continually fight to keep our already limited fishing areas open and the conversation is strictly about how many more MPAs can be enacted and not about the monitoring or opening up of some of our existing ones. It really reinforces how lopsided being on the commercial side of fishing feels when you consistently put your best foot forward and bring honesty and optimism to the table and try to work to enhance your fisheries only to have to plead your case against these draconian, top-down approaches to close massive spatial areas which are touted as the only means of resource conservation. It is disheartening and frankly, insulting, to the supposed 'adaptive management' that California loves to tout. I finally understand while the 'old-time' commercial fishermen feel so jaded and are often so secretive. It feels like the state is bull-dozing over us fishermen, and I do believe that was **not the intention of the original Marine Life Protection Act when it was put into law.**

Thank you for your time.

Nathan Rosser
Law-abiding commercial fisherman [redacted]
Spends $3300+ every year in commercial fishing licenses that goes up 5% annually
Feeds fresh sustainable seafood to Californians
Contributes tens of thousands of dollars to the local economy every year
Operates alone from a 20' panga boat the 'F/V Jolly Rancher' with a small fuel-efficient outboard
Is shutting me and a dozen other guys like me out of Point Sal and Morro Bay 'fisheries management'?
Please, reconsider.

[redacted]

September 23, 2026

Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Ocean Protection Council Recommendations to Strengthen California's Marine Protected Area Network

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of California Interfaith Power & Light and the faith communities we serve, we write in support of the Ocean Protection Council's recommendations to strengthen California's marine protected area network through the state's adaptive management process.

Across our diverse faith traditions, caring for Creation and protecting the vulnerable are moral responsibilities. California Interfaith Power & Light has long recognized that people of faith and conscience can provide values-based leadership on climate change and social justice, helping our communities consider not only what is possible, but what is right. Protecting the ocean — our shared and common home — is one expression of that responsibility.

We appreciate that the Ocean Protection Council has recommended that several petitions for new or expanded marine protected areas move forward. We are particularly encouraged that OPC's petition recommendations are rooted in a precautionary approach — an important principle at a time when climate change, biodiversity loss, and other pressures are rapidly reshaping California's ocean and coast. Acting with precaution reflects a responsibility to protect what we have inherited even when we cannot predict with certainty how these ecosystems will change.

We also strongly support OPC's consideration of whether petitions would help revitalize Tribally led stewardship, and its commitment to advancing cogovernance, co-management, and collaborative stewardship with Tribes through marine protected area adaptive management. This is both a conservation priority and a matter of justice. Indigenous peoples have cared for California's lands and waters since time immemorial, and strengthening opportunities for Tribal leadership and stewardship is an important step toward a more just relationship with both people and place.

The proposed Mishopshno and Point Sal State Marine Conservation Areas are powerful examples of what this approach can look like in practice. Both would add important ecological

protections to California's marine protected area network while elevating Tribal stewardship and maintaining meaningful connections between people and the ocean.

Mishopshno, proposed by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Environmental Defense Center, would protect a remarkable stretch of coast that includes Carpinteria Reef, persistent kelp habitat, wetlands and estuary habitat, and areas used by juvenile white sharks. It would also recognize the deep cultural significance of this place to the Chumash people and create opportunities for greater Tribal participation in environmental stewardship.

Point Sal, proposed by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and Natural Resources Defense Council, provides another compelling example. Protecting this relatively undisturbed and biologically rich coastline would strengthen ecological resilience while advancing Tribal co-stewardship and maintaining opportunities for cultural, subsistence, recreational, educational, and community use. OPC has recommended approval of both the Point Sal and Mishopshno proposals.

These proposals, together with the other protections recommended by OPC, ask us to think beyond the boundaries of individual marine protected areas. They ask what kind of relationship we want Californians to have with the ocean, whose knowledge and stewardship we value, and what kind of inheritance we leave to those who come after us. For faith communities, these are fundamentally moral questions.

We urge the California Fish and Game Commission to adopt the Ocean Protection Council's recommendations for strengthening California's marine protected area network. Doing so would apply a thoughtful, precautionary approach to protecting our ocean, advance opportunities for Tribal stewardship, and help safeguard the extraordinary places and living communities entrusted to our care.

This is an opportunity for California to act not only on what science tells us is prudent, but on what our shared values tell us is right — to care for our common home and protect it for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Susan Stephenson
Executive Director
California Interfaith Power & Light