CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HAZARD ASSESSMENT

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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Meghan Hertel, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

FROM: Kristina Thayer, Ph.D. *Kristina Thayer*
Director

DATE: November 16, 2026

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTION ON THE RECREATIONAL TAKE OF NORTHERN ANCHOVY IN PORTIONS OF SAN MATEO, SANTA CRUZ, AND MONTEREY COUNTIES

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined that consumption of Northern anchovy taken from all waters of the greater Monterey Bay area from Pigeon Point (37º 11.00' N. Lat.) to Point Lobos (36º 31.46' N. Lat.) (San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties) no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA and CDPH therefore recommend removing the bait use only restriction for Northern anchovy from this area.

This recommendation is based on levels of domoic acid below the federal action level in the viscera and whole bodies of Northern anchovy collected from this area and analyzed by CDPH laboratories. A table presenting the results of domoic acid sampling and analysis from the impacted area is shown below.

Domoic acid poisoning in humans may occur within minutes to hours after consumption of affected seafood, and can result in signs and symptoms ranging from vomiting and diarrhea to permanent loss of short-term memory (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning), coma, or death. Current federal action levels for domoic acid are ≥ 20 parts per million (ppm) for all fish and shellfish, except for > 30 ppm in the viscera of Dungeness crab.

CDPH and OEHHA continue to strongly recommend that consumers avoid eating the viscera (internal organs, also known as "guts") because they usually contain higher levels of domoic acid than the fillet meat.

If you have questions, please contact me at Kris.Thayer@oehha.ca.gov or Dr. Wes Smith at Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov.

Kristina Thayer

Northern Anchovy Sampling Results from Monterey Bay

PORT; COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE	COMPOSITE SAMPLE SIZE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) *
Monterey; Block 509	8/28/26	Viscera	12	1200
		Whole Body	13	190
Monterey; Block 516	9/29/26	Viscera	19	14
		Whole Body	18	3.2
Monterey; Block 517	10/6/26	Viscera	27	47
		Whole Body	26	12
Monterey; Block 516	10/13/26	Viscera	12	4.8
		Whole Body	12	ND

*The action level for all tissue types in this species is ≥ 20 ppm. ND = non-detect.

cc: June Weintraub, Sc.D.
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