



State of California - Natural Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
350 Harbor Blvd.  
Belmont, CA 94002  
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov>

**EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor**  
**CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director**



March 1, 2012

**Re: Notice of availability of a draft environmental impact report regarding proposed marine protected areas in the northern California coast pursuant to the Marine Life Protection Act**

To Interested Parties:

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is making available a draft environmental impact report (Draft EIR) for public review. The Draft EIR was prepared by the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) on behalf of the Commission for the northern California coast component of a statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs) as required by the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) (MLPA, Stats. 1999 Ch. 1015). The Draft EIR addresses the potential environmental effects that could result from the Commission's adoption of regulations for implementation of the Proposed Project. The Commission hereby invites comments on the adequacy and completeness of the environmental analyses in the Draft EIR.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The Proposed Project is located in state waters (0-3 nautical miles from mainland shore and offshore rocks) along the northern California coast, from Alder Creek, near Point Arena, in Mendocino County to the California/Oregon border in Del Norte County. The straight-line distance between these two points is approximately 225 miles, but the actual length of the shoreline is much longer (about 517 miles).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** The Proposed Project, as analyzed in this Draft EIR, consists of evaluation of proposed MPAs within the MLPA North Coast Study Region. This study region was the fourth regional MPA design process to be developed under the MLPA Initiative. Currently, there are five existing MPAs located within the study region. The Proposed Project includes modifications to the Commission's regulations governing MPAs in the study region by changing, adding to, or reducing existing MPAs and/or proposing new areas for designation, and incorporation of tribal take. The objectives are to help protect, maintain, restore, enhance, and manage living marine resources by developing this portion of the MLPA-required network of MPAs. Take of finfish, marine plants and/or invertebrates would be prohibited or restricted in several areas by regulations established by the Commission and implemented by the Department.

The Draft EIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and two project alternatives: the No Project Alternative (continuation of the existing MPAs and regulations); and the Blue Ribbon Task Force Enhanced Compliance Alternative (which incorporates tribal take into several MPAs and increases in the level of protection in several offshore areas).

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §415087, given the size of the Proposed Project area, it is possible that hazardous waste sites or listed toxic sites listed by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (Cal-EPA) may be present in the area. However, the analysis of Proposed Project indicated that the specific locations for proposed MPAs do not overlap with listed sites and did not identify any potentially significant impacts that would require mitigation to reduce effects to a less-than-significant level, or that would be significant and unavoidable. Rather, no

adverse impacts and/or less than significant impacts were identified for all resource topics, including under the Proposed Project alternatives.

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:** The Draft EIR and supporting documents are available for download from the Commission's website at <http://www.fgc.ca.gov>, or the Department's website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>.

Printed copies of the Draft EIR and supporting documents are available to review during regular business hours at the Department's Marine Region offices in Fort Bragg and Eureka (listed below). Copies are also available to review at county libraries in Smith River, Crescent City, Trinidad, Eureka, Hoopa, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Ukiah, Willits, Covelo, Fort Bragg, Point Arena, and Sacramento (listed below). Printed copies are available upon request at cost plus postage by phoning (510) 986-1850 or emailing [MLPAcomments@HorizonWater.com](mailto:MLPAcomments@HorizonWater.com).

**PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:** The Draft EIR is available for a 45-day public review and comment period, which begins on March 1, 2012 and ends at 5 p.m. on April 16, 2012. **Please send comments on the Draft EIR at the earliest possible date, but postmarked no later than 5 p.m. on April 16, 2012 in order for your comments to be considered.**

Comments may be mailed to the following address: MLPA North Coast CEQA Comments, California Department of Fish and Game c/o Horizon Water and Environment, P.O. Box 2727, Oakland, CA 94602.

Written comments may also be submitted by email to: [MLPAcomments@HorizonWater.com](mailto:MLPAcomments@HorizonWater.com). Emailed comments should include your name, address, and daytime telephone number so a representative of the Department can contact you if clarifications regarding your comments are required.

All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official public record. A Final EIR will be prepared which will include responses to comments received during the public review period.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:** All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public hearings to present written and/or verbal comments on the Draft EIR. Three public hearings will be held at the following locations and times:

- **Fort Bragg:** Tuesday, March 20, 2012 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Fort Bragg Town Hall (363 N. Main Street, Fort Bragg, CA 95437);
- **Crescent City:** Wednesday, March 21, 2012 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Del Norte County Board Chamber Building (981 H Street, Crescent City, CA 95531); and
- **Eureka:** Wednesday, April 11, 2012 at the Red Lion Hotel (1929 Fourth Street, Eureka, CA 95501). Note that this is a Commission meeting, at which public comments on the proposed MLPA regulations and the Draft EIR will be received.

Sincerely,



Becky Ota  
Habitat Conservation Program, Marine Region

**Locations where Draft EIR copies can be reviewed:**

- California Department of Fish and Game, 619 Second Street, Eureka, CA 95501
- California Department of Fish and Game, 32330 N. Harbor Drive, Fort Bragg, CA 95437
- Del Norte County Library, Crescent City Branch, 190 Price Mall, Crescent City, CA 95531
- Del Norte County Library, Smith River Branch, 241 First Street, Smith River, CA 95567
- Humboldt County Eureka Branch Library, 1313 Third Street, Eureka, CA 95501
- Humboldt County Trinidad Branch Library, 463 Trinity Street, Trinidad, CA 95570
- Humboldt County Hoopa Branch Library, 10 S. Loop Road, Hoopa, CA 95546
- Humboldt County Ferndale Branch Library, 807 Main Street, Ferndale, CA 95536
- Humboldt County Fortuna Branch Library, 753 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Fortuna, CA 95540
- Humboldt County Rio Dell Library, 715 Wildwood Avenue, Rio Dell, CA 95562
- Mendocino County Ukiah Branch Library, 105 N. Main Street, Ukiah, CA 95482
- Mendocino County Willits Branch Library, 390 E. Commercial Street, Willits, CA 95490
- Mendocino County Round Valley Library, 23925 Howard Street, Covelo, CA 95428
- Mendocino County Fort Bragg Library, 499 East Laurel Street, Fort Bragg, CA 95437
- Mendocino County Coast Community Branch Library, 225 Main Street, Point Arena, CA 95468
- Sacramento County Public Library, 828 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814