



State of California -The Natural Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9  
Santa Barbara, CA 93109  
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov>

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



April 10, 2012

**Re: Notice of Availability of a Draft Initial Study and Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration for the California Department of Fish and Game Ocean Resources Enhancement and Hatchery Program (OREHP)**

To: Interested Parties

The California Department of Fish and Game (Department) has determined that there are no significant adverse environmental impacts from the continued operation of the Ocean Resources Enhancement and Hatchery Program (OREHP). This analysis was conducted pursuant to, and in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); therefore, as the lead agency under CEQA the Department is proposing to adopt a negative declaration.

The proposed project being reviewed in the initial study for the negative declaration is the OREHP. The Department has managed the OREHP since 1983. The California Legislature established the OREHP (Fish and Game Code Section 6590 et. seq.) to conduct a program of basic and applied research into the artificial propagation, rearing and stocking of important marine finfish species occurring in ocean waters off southern California. Over the years, the Legislature has amended the intent language of the program with current legislation calling for a focus on determining if hatchery released fish can artificially enhance certain stocks of desirable species through increased hatchery production of fish and increased monitoring of fisheries to assess the hatchery contribution. The ultimate goal of the legislation is to enhance populations of marine finfish species important to California for their sport and commercial fishing value. White seabass has been chosen as the primary species on which to focus research.

The Department administers the OREHP, with the assistance of the 10-member Ocean Resources Enhancement Advisory Panel (OREAP). The Department's main contractor is Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI). HSWRI operates the marine fish hatchery that raises white seabass. As part of their OREHP contractual obligations, HSWRI has developed the culture protocols required for the program, as well as the assessment techniques that will help evaluate the impact of the hatchery-reared fish on the recreational and commercial fisheries. A Department Fish Pathologist works in conjunction with HSWRI staff to investigate and manage disease issues within the OREHP.

In addition to HSWRI, the OREHP receives considerable support from volunteers who own and operate the growout pens in southern California. These growout pens

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provide a cost-effective way to increase post-release survival by raising larger white seabass prior to release.

To fund the program, legislation requires the purchase of an Ocean Enhancement Stamp by all recreational anglers and commercial passenger fishing vessels fishing south of Point Arguello, Santa Barbara County. Commercial fishermen are also required to purchase an Ocean Enhancement Stamp if they fish for white seabass south of Point Arguello. Since the late 1980s, the OREHP funding has been augmented by federal Sport Fish Restoration Act (SFRA) funds.

An initial study has been prepared and has been attached to the negative declaration, both of which can be found at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/abmp/negativedeclaration.asp>.

Copies of the Negative Declaration and supporting documentation are available for public review at the following Department offices and local libraries:

- California Department of Fish and Game  
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9  
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
- California Department of Fish and Game  
4665 Lampson Avenue, Suite C  
Los Alamitos, CA 90720
- California Department of Fish and Game  
3883 Ruffin Road  
San Diego, CA 92123
- Santa Barbara Central Library  
(805)564-5623
- EP Foster Library (Ventura County)  
(805)648-2716
- Lloyd Taber – Marina del Rey Library (Los Angeles County)  
(310)821-3415
- Avalon Library (Los Angeles County - Catalina Island)  
(310)510-1050
- OC Public Library  
(714)566-3012
- El Cajon Library (San Diego County)  
(619)588-3718

Please call Ms. Valerie Taylor, Environmental Scientist, in advance to make arrangements to review this material or to request an electronic copy of the document on compact disc at (562)342-7170. You may also contact Ms. Kathryn Johnson, Environmental Scientist, at (562)342-7188.

The initial study conducted by the Department evaluated the potential of the proposed project to generate adverse environmental impacts to: geology/soils; hydrology/water quality; transportation/traffic; air quality; biological resources; cultural resources; noise; land use; public services; recreation; aesthetic, population/housing; hazards/hazardous materials; mandatory findings of significance; aquaculture, kelp harvest, and commercial fishing resource availability; greenhouse gas emissions; mineral resources; and utilities and service systems. The initial study conducted by the Department did not identify any potentially significant impacts which may result from continuing the OREHP. In addition, none of the OREHP facilities, which include a fish hatchery located in Carlsbad as well as growout pens located in: Santa Barbara, Oxnard, Marina del Rey, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Dana Point, Carlsbad, San Diego, and Santa Catalina Island, are currently located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. As a result, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or environment. The Department has not identified any impacts that would be considered significant under CEQA; however, all impacts identified, whether subject to CEQA mitigation requirements or not, were evaluated and where feasible, operational policies or procedures were instituted to minimize these impacts consistent with the Department's duty as Trustee for the State's natural resources. These actions should not be construed as an admission by the Department that such impacts are considered significant under CEQA.

At this time the Department is requesting Responsible Agency's, Trustee Agency's, and the public's review of the proposed project, initial study, and intent to adopt a negative declaration for the OREHP.

**Please send your response to this noticed Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days from the date of this notice in order for your comments to be considered.**

All comments must include the commentor's name, address, and daytime telephone number. Comments may be submitted by mail to:

OREHP CEQA  
Department of Fish and Game  
4665 Lampson Ave., Suite C  
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

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Comments may also be submitted via e-mail (in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format only) to vtaylor@dfg.ca.gov. E-mailed comments must include "OREHP CEQA Comments" in the subject line.

All comments must be received no later than 5 p.m. on May 9, 2012.

For further information, please contact Ms. Valerie Taylor at (562) 342-7170, or by email at vtaylor@dfg.ca.gov. You may also contact Ms. Kathryn Johnson at (562)342-7188, or by email at kmjohnson@dfg.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Marija Vojkovich  
Regional Manager

cc: Tom Barnes, Program Manager  
Department of Fish and Game  
3883 Ruffin Road  
San Diego, CA 92123

Kathryn Johnson, Environmental Scientist  
Department of Fish and Game  
4665 Lampson Avenue, Suite C  
Los Alamitos, CA 90720