



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



May 25, 2012

Re: Final environmental impact report regarding proposed marine protected areas in the northern California coast pursuant to the Marine Life Protection Act (SCH#2011092029)

To Interested Parties:

The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is making available a final environmental impact report (Final EIR). The Final 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).

In accordance with the MLPA, the Commission is considering establishing regulations for a proposed network of MPAs situated in state waters off the northern coast of California, between Alder Creek (near Point Arena in Mendocino County) and the California/Oregon border (Proposed Project). This proposal consists of modifications to the Commission's existing regulations governing MPAs off the northern California coast. The Proposed Project was evaluated in a draft environmental impact report (DEIR) in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, and was circulated for a 45-day public review period.

CEQA requires the lead agency to prepare a Final EIR, addressing all substantive comments received on the DEIR before approving a project. The Final EIR must include a list of all individuals, organizations, and agencies that provided comments on the DEIR, and must contain copies of all comments received during the public review period along with the lead agency's responses.

The Final EIR will be distributed to public agencies that provided comments 10 days prior to certifying the Final EIR. At the close of the 10-day public agency review period, the Commission will review the EIR, consider Department staff recommendations and public testimony, and decide whether to certify the EIR and approve or deny the Proposed Project.

Upon certification of the EIR and approval of the Proposed Project, the Commission will file a Notice of Determination with the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and at the office of the County Clerk in Del Norte, Humboldt, and Mendocino counties (14 CCR 15093[c]).

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 the EIR, consists of proposed MPAs within the MLPA North Coast Study Region. This study region was the fourth regional MPA design process to be developed off the California coast under the MLPA Initiative. The objectives of the Proposed Project are to help protect,

maintain, restore, enhance, and manage living marine resources by developing the north coast portion of the MPA-required network of MPAs.

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 proposing new areas for designation. Take of finfish, marine plants and/or marine invertebrates would be prohibited or restricted in several areas by regulations established by the Commission and implemented by the Department. Proposed regulations incorporate specific allowances of tribal take. Further information on the Proposed Project is provided in the DEIR, which is available for review at the Department's website at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>.

The public scoping period for the EIR began in September 2011. There were four public meetings held in October 2011. Ten oral comments were received at the public meetings and 18 written comments were received during the public scoping period. Three public meetings were held during the 45-day public review period of the DEIR in March 2012. Approximately 50 individuals provided oral comments on the proposed regulations and DEIR during these meetings. In addition, 58 individuals and/or groups submitted written comments during the public review period. Meeting attendees and comment submittals included private citizens and representatives from governmental, tribal, and non-governmental organizations.

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

Printed copies of the 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, Mendocino, Rio Dell, Ukiah, Willits, Covelo, Fort Bragg, Point Arena, and Sacramento (listed below). Printed or electronic copies are available upon request at cost plus postage by phoning (510) 986-1850 or emailing MLPAcomments@HorizonWater.com.

PUBLIC AGENCY REVIEW PERIOD: The Final EIR is available for a 10 day review period, which begins on May 26, 2012 and ends at 5 p.m. on June 5, 2012.

No further comments are requested at this time; however, the Commission will accept verbal testimony at the certification hearing.

CERTIFICATION HEARING: The EIR certification hearing will be held on Wednesday, June 6, 2012 at the Red Lion Hotel located at 1929 Fourth Street in Eureka, California 95501.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Becky Ota".

Becky Ota
Habitat Conservation Program, Marine Region

Locations where 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 14th 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
- Mendocino Community Library, 10591 Williams Street, Mendocino, CA 95460
- Sacramento County Public Library, 828 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814