

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) as lead agency, with assistance from the California Department of Fish and Game (Department), has prepared this Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) to provide other responsible agencies and the public with information about the potential environmental effects of proposed regulations off the coast of California. This FEIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] title 14, Section 15000 et seq.).

1.1 FEIR Context

In accordance with the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), the Commission is considering establishing regulations for a proposed network of marine protected areas (MPAs) situated in state waters off the northern coast of California, between Alder Creek (near Point Arena) 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 FEIR, addressing all substantive comments received on the DEIR before approving a project. The FEIR 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 FEIR will be distributed to public agencies that provided comments 10 days prior to certifying the FEIR. At the close of the 10-day public agency review period, the Commission will review the FEIR, consider Department staff recommendations and public testimony, and decide whether to certify the FEIR and approve or deny the Proposed Project.

Upon certification of the FEIR 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 offices of the County Clerk in Del Norte, Humboldt, and Mendocino counties (14 CCR 15093[c]).

1.2 Comments on the DEIR

The DEIR was submitted to the OPR State CEQA Clearinghouse for distribution to state agencies and was available to agencies and the public for review and comment for 45 days between March 1 and April 16, 2012. Three public hearings were conducted during the public review period to receive oral and written comments. In addition to oral comments received at the public meetings, comment letters were received from state agencies and

commissions; regional/local agencies, municipalities, and districts; organizations; and individuals. Chapters 2 and 3 of this FEIR provide detailed summaries of the public participation process and comments received.

1.3 Organization and Contents of the FEIR

The FEIR contains the following components:

Chapter 1, *Introduction*. This chapter presents the FEIR context, summarizes the public review period for the DEIR, and describes the organization and contents of the FEIR.

Chapter 2, *Summary of Public Participation*. This chapter summarizes the environmental and public review process, pursuant to CEQA.

Chapter 3, *Responses to Comments*. This chapter lists and gives identifiers to agencies, organizations, and members of the public who commented on the DEIR during the public review process. Also included are complete reproductions of the comments received, including meeting transcripts. The chapter includes responses to all comments received. Individual comments within each letter, email, and verbal statements are numbered sequentially.

Chapter 4, *Changes and Corrections to the DEIR*. This chapter identifies text changes to the DEIR in response to the public review and comment process. Changes to the DEIR initiated by the Department or Commission to correct other errors in the document are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5, *Report Preparation*. This chapter provides the names of the FEIR authors and consultants.

Chapter 6, *References*. This chapter provides a list of printed references and persons consulted during the preparation of this FEIR.

Appendix A presents the Notice of Availability, distribution lists, and newspaper ads for the DEIR.

Appendix B presents the public meeting materials and handouts, including the posters, and comment and speaker forms, used at the public meetings on the DEIR.

Appendix C presents the DEIR public meeting presentation.

Appendix D presents the DEIR public meeting sign-in sheets from the three public meetings.