STATE OF CALIFORNIA
resources
AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor
MIKE CHRISMAN, Secretary

January 29, 2009

Gordon Robertson, Vice President
American Sportfishing Association

Bob Franko, Chairman
Coastside Fishing Club

Jim Klark, Government Affairs
Southern California Marine Association

Bob Fletcher, President
Sportfishing Association of California

Dear Gordon, Bob, Jim and Bob,

Thank you for your January 14, 2009, letter to Governor Schwarzenegger regarding implementation of the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). The Governor has asked me to respond on his behalf. Specifically, you raised concerns about the availability of funds necessary to implement the MLPA going forward and the cost of implementing marine protected areas (MPAs) during the state's fiscal crisis. Be assured that the current MLPA process is appropriately funded and will continue, as you agree in your letter that it should.

The most recent budget the Governor sent to the Legislature, and in fact every budget he has sent to the Legislature since taking office, has included funding for the MLPA process. As you know, the Schwarzenegger Administration has been tireless in our commitment to protect California's oceans and coasts. While the Pooled Money Investment Board has suspended bond funding for certain MLPA-related research and monitoring activities, bond funds will become available again once the Legislature is able to pass a budget that the Governor can sign. In at least one case, alternative funding has already been solicited and approved to continue the work; we have advised all projects impacted by the bond freeze to take similar actions to ensure minimal disruption. The public-private partnership, established to ensure the success of MLPA Initiative, has continued to assist California in identifying other sources of funding for these important projects.

The MLPA planning process is currently unaffected by the state's fiscal issues and our public-private partnership is strong, enabling us to continue the good work of redesigning and implementing California's system of marine protected areas.

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I share your concerns regarding enforcement, public outreach and education, and scientific research and monitoring. The truth is that having complete funding to alone manage all of California's natural resources is an insurmountable task. This is why public-private partnerships, like the MLPA Initiative, are so important, not only for planning purposes, but also for long-term management.

California already has numerous partners engaged in the long-term management of our natural resources, whether it is enforcement and outreach or research and on-site management, and those essential relationships will continue to be the foundation of our management strategy. In ocean resource management, we will continue to work with our government and not-for-profit partners, such as the National Marine Sanctuary Program, National Marine Protected Areas Center, and Marine Conservation Biology Institute, to help ensure long-term stewardship for current and future generations.

Currently there are more than 60 MPAs along California's coast that were established outside of the current MLPA Initiative and without any coherent plan or with a basis in sound scientific guidelines. Many of these MPAs even lack clearly defined purposes. As a result, the existing array of MPAs falls far short of its potential to protect and conserve living marine resources. Modifying the existing collection of MPAs to ensure that they are designed in accordance with sound science and clear, ecosystem-based goals and guidelines allows us to take greater advantage of the multiple benefits that can be derived from a system of marine protected areas.

We appreciate that fisheries management in California has improved in recent years and that some of those management activities may help meet the goals of the MLPA. In fact, the MLPA expressly states that MPAs and fisheries management are complementary. California's primary state fisheries management statute, the Marine Life Management Act, acknowledges that conservation and management programs (such as that being developed under the MLPA) help ensure conservation and facilitate long-term protection of fishery resources.

Although MPAs and fisheries management are complementary, they are not equivalent. The purpose of habitat protection in the MLMA is to advance the "primary fishery management goal" of sustainability and so may only provide limited protection of a particular habitat. Conversely, although the MLPA considers fishery habitat, it also encompasses broader, ecosystem-based objectives that are not limited to *only*

Managing fisheries; the MLPA is intended to improve our system of MPAs in order to protect marine life, habitat and ecosystems. In short, some goals of the MLPA simply cannot be achieved with traditional fisheries management.

Thank you again for your attention to the MLPA process and for expressing your concerns that we all share and will continue to address. On behalf of Governor Schwarzenegger, thank you too for your continued support of the MLPA process. It is only by working together that we will ensure the healthy future of California's ocean and coast.

Sincerely,

Mike Chrisman

Mike Chrisman
Secretary for Natural Resources

cc: Vickie Bradshaw, Cabinet Secretary
David Crane, Senior Advisor to Governor Schwarzenegger
Donald Koch, Director, California Department of Fish and Game
Members, California Fish and Game Commission
John Carlson, Executive Director, California Fish and Game Commission
Members, MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
Ken Wiseman, Executive Director, MLPA Initiative
Members, California State Senate
Members, California State Assembly