

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

Suggestions for Effective Public Comment

Public participation is one of the cornerstones of the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative and is greatly valued. One method for participating in the process is by making comments at public meetings. A short list of recommendations has been prepared to help maximize the effectiveness of public comments:

1. Generally comments must be made within a one to three minute time period. The length of time allocated to each speaker is at the discretion of the meeting convener and depends on several factors, including the number of individuals wishing to speak on a particular topic.
2. Speakers should identify themselves by name, indicate their main interest or connection to the ocean (if desired), and succinctly summarize their main message with as much specificity as possible. It is most effective to keep your verbal message to no more than three main points and then provide details about those points, or additional information, in a written document.
3. Comments should focus on topics under the purview of the Marine Life Protection Act and that are under consideration by the MLPA group you are addressing:
 - a. Policy comments and overarching planning issues for the blue ribbon task force.
 - b. Science comments for the science advisory team.
 - c. Comments on marine protected area (MPA) design and placement for the regional stakeholder group.
4. When preparing comments, it is very helpful to consider the key points you wish to have the group members bear in mind as they do their work or make decisions.
5. Multiple speakers with a shared message or from the same organization are encouraged and will be requested to combine their speaking points.
6. Questions or comments can be submitted in writing via email (MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov) or standard mail (MLPA Initiative, c/o California Natural Resources Agency, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814) and are distributed to the MLPA Initiative groups and posted on the MLPA website.
7. There will be an opportunity for public comment at each public meeting; for two-day meetings, comment may only be taken on one of the two days. Meeting agendas will denote when public comment is expected to occur, though please note that these times are only an approximation. Work sessions are not public meetings and do not have a public comment period.
8. Speakers are welcome to distribute written material to the groups. If materials are submitted at least three business days in advance of a meeting, they will be copied by MLPA staff and provided to the group members; if materials are received less than three business days in advance of a meeting, you must provide a sufficient number of copies for distribution, otherwise staff will copy and distribute the information after the meeting. Other media presentations, such as slides and videos, are only permitted by prior arrangement and may be limited depending on time availability. An alternate space in the venue may be provided for displaying the speaker's additional media information or written materials, as needed.