

**SOUTH COAST MARINE PROTECTED AREAS PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

**SECTION 4.0
DISCIPLINES EXCLUDED FROM DETAILED
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

The California Department of Fish and Game (Department) has conducted a preliminary review of known information on potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of implementing the proposed Integrated Preferred Alternative (IPA) or alternatives. Some impacts have been deemed not likely to occur or are expected to be insignificant, and review of such environmental impact topics has been dismissed from consideration in this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This section describes the topics that have been dismissed from consideration, along with the basis for their dismissal.

4.1 AESTHETICS

California has declared that the Pacific Ocean and its rich marine living resources are of great environmental, economic, *aesthetic*, recreational, educational, scientific, nutritional, social, and historic importance to the people of California. (California Fish and Game Code §2851, *emphasis added*). It is the policy of the state to ensure the conservation, sustainable use, and, where feasible, restoration of California's marine living resources for the benefit of all the citizens of the state. The proposed Project IPA and alternatives are in part specifically designed and expected to improve the environmental, economic, *aesthetic*, recreational, educational, scientific, nutritional, social, and historic resources of the state. Coastal Southern California contains highly scenic areas and a dense population that results in a large viewing audience at many coastal and marine locations within the south coast study region (SCSR). Approximately 2.5 million people participated in wildlife viewing, and more than 4 million people took photos at the beaches throughout the state in 1999 (Department 2009). Whale watching and wildlife viewing are also very popular in the SCSR due to the number of marine mammals that reside in and pass through the SCSR (Department 2009).

The proposed Project IPA and alternatives involve the promulgation of regulations defining areas where fishing and other uses may be restricted in order to provide protection to living marine resources. No activity that may negatively impact aesthetic resources – such as construction, demolition, grading, or other related activity – is being proposed or is likely to occur as a result of the proposed Project IPA or alternatives. The proposed Project IPA and alternatives are also not expected to result in the creation of new sources of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views.

Most permanent visible changes that could be attributed to the proposed Project IPA or alternatives are expected to occur mainly beneath the sea surface. For example, as a result of the proposed Project, we expect to see an increase in the expanse of kelp beds and their associated fauna. The reestablishment of natural biological communities within MPAs, including reestablishment of kelp beds, is one of the goals of the Marine Life Protection Act.

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This reestablishment of marine biological communities is expected to produce positive impacts to scenic vistas and improve wildlife viewing opportunities of animals. The increase in marine plants and animals in the water may result in greater amounts of detritus washing ashore. However this impact is not expected to be significant because the proposed Project IPA and alternatives would not prohibit local jurisdictions from cleaning detritus – such as kelp wrack or other storm debris – from beach areas above the mean high tide line. Additionally, because kelp wrack and driftwood are common and naturally occurring components of a coastal visual setting, modest changes in the volume of these elements would not constitute a substantial change in the visual character of the affected beaches. In summary, no significant adverse aesthetic impacts are anticipated to result from the proposed Project IPA or alternatives.

4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

The site of action of the proposed Project IPA and alternatives is solely within state waters adjacent to the Southern California coastline and islands. Conventional, land-based agriculture such as raising of livestock or land-based farming, would not be affected by the proposed Project IPA or alternatives. No conflicts with agricultural zoning or conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses would occur. No forest resources occur within the SCSR's marine environment. The proposed Project IPA and alternatives would therefore not impact agricultural resources or forests, and impacts to agricultural resources are not discussed in this Draft EIR.

The potential effects to aquaculture and kelp harvesting from the proposed Project IPA and alternatives are discussed in Section 5.0 of this Draft EIR (Consumptive Uses).

4.3 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The SCSR includes unique geologic features such as rocky intertidal zones, beaches of varying grain sizes (gravel to fine-grained), rocky reefs, and underwater pinnacles. These features are the result of active tectonic processes, erosion, and wave and biological action in the surrounding area. These features provide a substrate for marine life and public viewing enjoyment. The proposed Project IPA and alternatives do not propose any actions or changes in regulation that would impact these resources or processes. Additionally, the proposed Project and alternatives would not expose people or structures to adverse effects and geologic processes. Therefore, the proposed Project IPA and alternatives would have no effect on geology or soils, and impacts to these resources are not discussed in this Draft EIR.

4.4 NOISE

The proposed Project IPA and alternatives regulate fishing and other activities, some of which produce noise. The proposed Project IPA and alternatives may result in vessels having to travel farther to reach open fishing grounds and this additional travel time may increase

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the noise duration from commercial and recreational fishing vessels. However, noise emissions from commercial and recreational fishing vessels have not been identified as a significant problem to coastal residents or beach goers. This is likely due to the high level of attenuation of noise level on the ocean, and lack of sensitivity by beachgoers and coastal residents to the noise levels generated by boat operation. Neither the proposed Project IPA nor alternatives are expected to result in the generation of excessive noise or would expose persons in the project vicinity to a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels or a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise. As such, the proposed Project IPA and alternatives are not expected to directly or indirectly generate significant noise-related impacts, and an analysis of noise impacts has been dismissed from discussion in this Draft EIR.

4.5 POPULATION AND HOUSING

The proposed Project IPA and alternatives consist of changes in allowable fishing and other uses within defined water along a portion of the California coast. Though these changes may result in economic impacts to commercial fishing interests and ocean-dependent fishing businesses, these impacts have been evaluated and minimized during the design of the proposed Project IPA and alternatives. The proposed Project IPA and alternatives are not likely to induce substantial population growth in the project area or cause a substantial change to the availability of housing in the project area and elsewhere. No substantial adverse impacts to population and housing are expected from the proposed Project IPA or alternatives, and analysis of such impacts has been dismissed from this Draft EIR. An evaluation of potential growth inducement from the Project is presented in Section 11.3 of this Draft EIR.