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April 11, 2007

Melissa Miller-Henson
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street Suite 1311
Sacramento CA 95814

Dear Melissa,

I would like to be considered to serve on the MLPA's North Central Coast Region Stakeholder Group. The strengths of my application are based on my long-term and frequent experiences on a fairly broad reach of the North Central waters. I fish and dive approximately 80 days a year, pursuing a broad range of fishes and invertebrates and spend another 20 or so days on the water doing volunteer work and research for non-profits and agencies. I have spent more than four decades on the shoreline and on boats--mostly around the Point Reyes peninsula--and am very familiar with the rough triangle from Salt Point to San Pedro Point to the Farallones Islands/Cordell Banks. Within this area I have a solid lay-understanding of most of the marine organisms, including marine mammals, near-shore and pelagic seabirds, and both sport and non-sport fish species.

Currently a recreational or subsistence angler, I did commercially fish for crab and rockfish out of Drakes Bay in the late 80's and 90's. I have logged thousands of hours at the Farallon Islands, in the Gulf of the Farallones Drakes Bay, Bodega Bay, Tomales Bay and the waters in between. I am very well versed in the current "protected areas" in the sub-region and understand their inherent strengths and weaknesses. I am self-employed and if selected for the stakeholder group can dedicate sufficient time to fully participate in the process.

I attempted to engage in the original MLPA effort a few years ago, but found the process very disheartening due to its lack of organization, responsiveness to stakeholder input, and transparency. Of the current effort, I have only attended the introductory session in San Rafael in mid-March. I took part in the informal West Marin discussion group (hosted by the Point Reyes National Seashore and the EAC) to vet the positions of various stakeholders focused on the West Marin coastline. I have been invited to various fisheries working groups gathered by the Cordell Banks and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries and over the years have attended or participated in enough state and federal hearings, subcommittees, and assorted forums to have a reasonable familiarity with--as well as tempered expectations of--marine resource management.

I have almost always been an independent activist. Occasional affiliations with groups active in marine issues include a term on the board of directors for United Anglers in the late 80's, the organizer and principle of the Tomales Bay volunteer California halibut tagging program in the 90's, participating membership in the Tomales Bay Watershed Council, and a founding board member of the non-profit TBWC Foundation. I am not a joiner by nature and do not pretend to be representational of any specific group. If appointed to this stakeholder group, my voice would be that of the unorganized, independent sportfisher/conservationist.

Sincerely,

Tom Baty