

Heal the Bay

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Santa Monica CA 90401

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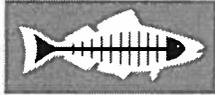
July 11, 2008

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative  
c/o California Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Attention: Melissa Miller-Henson  
Email: [MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov](mailto:MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov)

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

I am writing to submit my name as a nominee for the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG). I have been impressed with the evolution of the RSG process in the Central and North Central Coast regions and am excited about the possibility of participating on the RSG in the South Coast region. I believe my ability to work well with others, background in marine science, knowledge of the southern California coast, and relationships throughout the region will benefit the MLPA implementation process. I have a bachelor's degree in marine biology and master's degree from University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) in marine and coastal resources management, both of which have given me a solid scientific understanding of the ocean and its living resources. However, I am not only a scientist, but also someone whose life is tied to the ocean in many ways; I live coastally in Malibu, am an avid surfer, diver, and sailor, and used to compete as an outrigger paddler while living in Santa Barbara. My knowledge of the southern California coast is broad. I lived and studied in Santa Barbara for several years; I have worked intensively along the coast from Ventura down to Orange County with Heal the Bay; I have family in Orange County; I worked on Catalina Island for two years; and I often travel to San Diego for the great surfing. I believe that the MLPA process is necessary to bring all southern California ocean user-groups together to coordinate a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) to preserve our coast for all user-groups and for future generations.

I currently direct the Coastal Resources Department at Heal the Bay, and have worked with the organization for three years. We are a non-profit environmental organization with over 14,500 members and volunteers dedicated to making southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including the Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean through research, education, community action and advocacy. Heal the Bay has a successful track record of over 22 years working on coastal and marine policy, particularly water quality issues related to sewage, stormwater, contaminated sediments and the impacts of water quality on marine organisms. We work in partnerships with many other organizations in southern California including the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and the Southern California Coastal Water Resource Project. Heal the Bay also coordinates on statewide projects with the State Water Resource Control Board; county Health Departments up and down the coast for our statewide weekly Beach Report Card; and the California Ocean Science Trust (including the Marine Protected Area Monitoring



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Enterprise) for which our president, Mark Gold, is vice-chair. Heal the Bay prides itself on taking a science-based, solution-oriented approach.

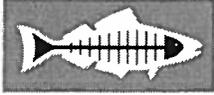
At Heal the Bay, I work throughout southern California with diverse groups of stakeholders on issues including coastal power plants, wetland and riparian habitat restoration, water quality, marine debris, and coastal protection. For example, I currently sit as the sole environmental representative on a panel convened by the State Water Resources Control Board to evaluate the scientific issues surrounding the development of a statewide policy for the use of once-through-cooling technology by coastal power plants. Additionally, I have strong working relationships with recreational and commercial fishing groups through our collective work on water quality and marine debris. I also work closely with other local non-profits and educational institutions, including local aquaria.

Much of Heal the Bay's education and outreach is focused on inland areas, and we work closely with various Asian, Latino, faith-based and other community groups. We also work with local subsistence anglers through our long standing pier angler outreach program. Over the past five years, we have educated nearly 70,000 pier anglers in Los Angeles and Orange Counties about safe seafood and the risks of consuming contaminated fish; this outreach is conducted in a variety of languages, including but not limited to Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese, and Khmer. We contract to the United States Environmental Protection Agency on this project as part of the Palos Verdes shelf Superfund remediation efforts. We are excited to expand this program in the near future to educate anglers about MPAs and the MLPA process.

I also have experience working in stakeholder processes directly related to MPAs. Through my master's work at UCSB, I developed a collaborative monitoring program for spiny lobster at the Channel Islands MPAs. I worked closely with local Santa Barbara lobster trappers, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and researchers at UCSB on the project. Through this project, I developed familiarity with DFG logbook structure, fishing regulations and geographic information systems. While studying at UCSB, I also partnered with researchers at the University of Southern California Wrigley Institute who were studying Catalina Island's local MPAs.

Additionally, I spent nearly two years living on Catalina Island, where I worked as an educator at the Catalina Island Marine Institute. Specifically, I led marine science focused snorkel, kayak and boat trips and taught experiential marine science in our facility laboratories. Through this work I became very familiar with the marine habitats surrounding Catalina Island, and developed strong relationships with many local groups on the island.

Participating in the MLPA implementation process in the South Coast Region is an organizational priority for Heal the Bay, as well as a strong interest for me personally. As a full time employee with Heal the Bay, I have the time and resources necessary and support from staff within the organization to ensure my active participation if I am selected to serve on the RSG. In addition to our interest in RSG participation, Heal the Bay plans to conduct extensive MLPA-



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related outreach activities through our educational programs and in partnership with other environmental non-profit organizations in the South Coast study region.

Through my professional experience and involvement in ocean-related recreational activities, I am well connected with diverse inland and coastal constituents in the Los Angeles region and throughout southern California. I believe my ability to represent a broad constituency—including inland community groups, small local aquaria, other environmental non-profits, and non-consumptive recreational users—will be a great benefit to the MLPA process as a whole and help balance local and regional needs for MPAs in the south coast region. I am well positioned for the RSG because of my experience and excitement about collaborative processes and my ability to work constructively and respectfully with other groups. I appreciate the opportunity to submit my name for the South Coast RSG. Please contact me with any questions about my nomination. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Abramson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Abramson



July 18, 2008

Via email: [MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov](mailto:MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov)

**Re: Support for nominees to RSG**

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

The Natural Resources Defense Council would like to offer our support for a number of nominees to the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG). NRDC is a non-profit conservation group with a long history of advocacy for healthy coast and ocean systems and sustainable fisheries. With over 230,000 California members and activists (1.2 million nationwide), we support an inclusive, transparent process for implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act.

The RSG is an integral part of this process. We applaud your goal of including members who can work collaboratively and communicate with and represent a broad array of interests. The composition should also reflect the fact that a large majority of southern Californians support creation of more marine protected areas, including marine reserves (Public Policy Institute of California, Edge Research).

Whether they come from the conservation community or the business world, each of the RSG candidates listed below brings to the process unique skills, firsthand knowledge of the region's coast and oceans, and rich communication networks as well as a commitment to collaboration and the ability to listen. We support their candidacies because we think they will make a valuable contribution to a collective process of fact finding and developing MPA network recommendations.

**Sarah Abramson**, *Coastal Resources Director for Heal the Bay*, has a Masters degree in Coastal Marine Resources Management from the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management. She has garnered local knowledge from SCUBA diving in the region and from her stint as a naturalist at Catalina Island Marine Institute. Her work helping local lobster trappers develop a collaborative monitoring program for spiny lobster at the Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas demonstrates her strong collaborative skills and her ability to apply her scientific knowledge to practical challenges.

**Kate Hanley**, *Director of Operations and Marine Conservation Director, San Diego Coastkeeper*, has a background in marine biology, local knowledge of the San Diego coast and ocean, a regional perspective and a can-do attitude. She has extensive communication networks and outstanding skills in areas of particular value for the MLPA process: in coordination and collaboration (e.g. her work to implement areas of special biological significance) and in community outreach and education (e.g. for the La Jolla Shores Coastal Watershed Management Plan).

**Michael Sheehy**, *Marine Conservation Coordinator, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper*, has extensive experience communicating marine science and conservation issues to the public and has demonstrated success in cross-sector collaboration and relationship building through his consulting for non-profit and business interests. Mr. Sheehy brings together extensive regional knowledge of the Santa Barbara Channel marine ecosystem and scientific expertise in marine ecology. He has a master's degree in Marine Ecology from UCSB and over eight years experience as a Research Associate and as a Project Manager with the Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans, at UCSB.

**Tom Ford**, *Executive Director, Santa Monica Baykeeper*. Mr. Ford's education and work experience spans the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and ranges from fishing to habitat restoration and education, giving him a broad perspective that can benefit the MLPA process. Educated as a biologist and marine ecologist at the University of Rhode Island and UCLA, he has worked as a commercial shell fisherman in Rhode Island, as a biological observer aboard dredges and shrimp boats, and as director of the Santa Monica Baykeeper Kelp Restoration Project. He also serves as a Vice Chair of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, and has an extensive network of contacts in the region.

**Marcela Gutierrez**, *WildCoast*, is a native of the Border Region and resident of the South San Diego Area. She has an undergraduate degree in Business Management, leadership expertise initiating and maintaining strategic business partnerships, and experience working for a seafood distributor. She is 100% bilingual in Spanish and will bring to the RSG strong problem solving skills and business and Latin communication networks

**Greg Helms**, *Ocean Conservancy*, has lived in the region for over two decades and has worked professionally on marine policy issues for fifteen years. Before OC, he served as community affairs director for Environmental Defense Center, a group that works closely with commercial fishing groups. In addition to following scientific studies of the region's ocean, he has a deep well of direct knowledge from sailing, surfing and SCUBA diving. He learned a great deal from participation in the Channel Islands MPA designation process and the ongoing monitoring program for that network.

We have not attempted to be comprehensive, but rather to focus on a few individuals with whom we have direct experience, and who will bring diverse and valuable skills to the RSG process. We appreciate the opportunity to offer our views to the selection process.

Sincerely,

Karen Garrison

Co-Director, NRDC Ocean Program