

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. CEQA Compliance

Section 15132 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that a final environmental impact report (FEIR) consist of the following elements.

- Draft environmental impact report (DEIR) or a revision of the DEIR.
- Comments and recommendations received on the DEIR, either verbatim or in summary.
- List of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the DEIR.
- Responses of the lead agency to significant environmental concerns raised in the review and consultation process.
- Any other information added by the lead agency.

This FEIR for the North Central Coast Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) Project (Proposed Project, or project) of the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative has been prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. The DEIR together with the responses to comments on the DEIR constitute the FEIR for the Proposed Project. The FEIR is an informational document prepared by the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) on behalf of the lead agency, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) that must be considered by decision-makers before approving or denying the Proposed Project.

1.2. Format and Organization of Final Environmental Impact Report

This FEIR comprises three chapters containing the information required by CEQA Guidelines, as outlined above. Chapter 1 describes the DEIR public review process and provides a list of organizations, public agencies, and members of the public that commented on the DEIR, as well as a list of persons involved in the preparation of responses to comments, and a summary table of impacts and mitigation measures. Chapter 2 contains comment letters received on the DEIR and the Commission's responses to those comments. Chapter 3 presents changes made to the DEIR in response to comments. Changes to the DEIR are presented in errata format in Chapter 3 and are also referenced in the Chapter 2 responses.

When certified by the Commission, the FEIR will consist of the following components, as required by CEQA.

- The DEIR, published on March 20, 2009.
- The FEIR, consisting of
 - all comments received on the DEIR either orally or in writing,
 - responses to those comments; and
 - any changes or revisions to the DEIR.

1.3. Public Review of Draft Environmental Impact Report

Upon completion of the DEIR, the Commission filed a notice of completion with the State Clearinghouse and issued a notice of availability (NOA) consistent with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15085 and 15087. The NOA provided notice of the public comment period that began on March 20, 2009, and ended on May 4, 2009. The DEIR was submitted to the State Clearinghouse for circulation to responsible and trustee agencies. In addition, the Department distributed 83 copies of the NOA to state, regional, and local agencies, as well as individuals. The DEIR also was made available to the public via the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative website. The Commission, the Department, and their consultants have responded to all comments on the DEIR received during the public comment period.

Copies of the DEIR are on file at the following locations.

- California Department of Fish and Game
1416 9th Street, Rm 1341-B
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Other Department Marine Region offices
- Various public libraries

Call 707-875-4277 for a full list of locations.

1.4. Revisions to Draft Environmental Impact Report

In response to comments received on the DEIR, the Commission deleted, added, and/or revised text, tables, and figures. The changes do not result in any new significant environmental impacts or substantially increase the severity of an environmental impact. Therefore, pursuant to Section 15088.5 of CEQA Guidelines, the Commission is not required to recirculate the DEIR prior to certification.

1.5. Comments Received on Draft Environmental Impact Report

The following public agencies, organizations, and individuals submitted comments on the DEIR.

Public Agencies

- California State Lands Commission
- Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuary
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Mineral Management Services
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Organizations

- Ocean Conservancy, Natural Resource Defense Council, Defenders of Wildlife (Joint Comment Letter)
- Marine Conservation Biology Institute, California Coastkeeper Alliance, Heal the Bay, Audubon California, The Otter Project, Russian Riverkeeper, National Conservation Association, Golden Gate Audubon Society, Earth Care, San Diego Coastkeeper (Joint Comment Letter)
- Environmental Action Committee
- Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP
- Partnership for Sustainable Oceans
- Recreational Fishing Alliance

Individuals

- Allan Jacobs
- Curt Billings
- Chris Cervellone
- Chris Grossman
- Ralph Kanz

1.6. Preparation of Final Environmental Impact Report

The FEIR was prepared by the Commission, the Department and the consultants listed below. All work reflects the Commission's independent judgment and analysis.

1.6.1. Lead Agency

1.6.1.1. California Fish and Game Commission

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1.6.1.2. California Department of Fish and Game

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1.6.2. Final EIR Authors

1.6.2.1. ICF Jones & Stokes

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Project Management Team

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