

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311 Sacramento, CA 95814 916.654.1885

March 18, 2010

Statement from MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Chair Cindy Gustafson on Implementation of California's Marine Life Protection Act

Misinformation was generated during the March 3 California Fish and Game Commission meeting and through the media regarding public service that I as well as former and current colleagues have committed to protecting California's environmental legacy.

I served on the California Fish and Game Commission for four years and currently serve as chair of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force. In these roles I have worked closely with the public leaders who have devoted their personal time to help implement the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). These public policy experts have done a remarkable job to help California establish the nation's first science-based network of marine protected areas.

I take personal offense to the allegations that members of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force lied to the commission about business partnerships. Bill Anderson and Greg Schem have never been business partners and neither of them has ever invested in one another's projects. Further, their ownership interests in marina properties have been fully disclosed and no conflicts of interest exist. False statements are being used in an attempt to derail implementation of the MLPA and undermine the significant work of our stakeholders and dedicated members of the public who have maintained their commitment to an open and inclusive public process.

Unlike what some interest groups have alleged, I never questioned the science used in the MLPA Initiative. My resignation from the commission was based solely upon my new position as general manager of the Tahoe City Public Utility District, which was incompatible with my public service role on the commission.

Commission President Jim Kellogg, while not always supportive of the MLPA process, personally told me that he stands by the hard work and dedication from all those who participate in the public process and condemns any unsubstantiated claims of misconduct by members of the MLPA task force members as well as fellow commissioners.

The role of the commissioners and MLPA task force is to remain unbiased, to ensure that the law is implemented in a way that balances the need for ocean protection while to the extent possible minimizing the potential negative socioeconomic impacts that may result. Finding this happy medium between diverse interests is no easy task, and yet, the MLPA task force members recently guided a regional stakeholder group in southern California to create a "livable compromise" based upon the best science available that balances the protection and use of our ocean resources.

Seeking this compromise is what should continue to guide good public policy to protect California's ocean legacy.

*Cindy Gustafson
General Manager, Tahoe City Public Utility District
Chair, MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force*