

Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
P O Box 1309, Carmel Valley, CA 93924 (831) 659-2838

March 15, 2002

Stephanie Harlan, Chair
Members of the Sanctuary Advisory Council
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam Street
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Chairperson Harlan and Councilmembers:

After hearing Sanctuary Program Director Dan Basta's remarks at the February 25th SAC meeting, it seems quite possible that the SAC will not have a public hearing on Sanctuary Plan issues prior to it actually making its priority decisions. This situation causes Alliance membership great concern, as we had already perceived that it was going to be very difficult for the SAC to make an informed decision regarding fishery issues, including marine reserves, which were likely to come up during the Plan Review. Coming to an informed decision goes to the heart of the Alliance's effort to work cooperatively with the Sanctuary Program and to bring forth specific recommendations regarding marine reserves - recommendations which had been thoroughly studied, are supported by the fishing community, and which the SAC could have confidence in.

The Alliance will continue with its cooperative study effort with the Sanctuary and conservation and science representatives. We also feel an urgency now to provide the SAC with our recommendations regarding the issues that affect us before the SAC submits them in priority form to the Sanctuary staff on March 22nd. The Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries has already submitted a lengthy comment letter to the Sanctuary Program regarding a variety of Plan Review issues. Hopefully, our letter of January 4, 2002 has been provided to the SAC.

The Alliance recommendation regarding fishing as it pertains to the Plan Review is as follows:

"Clarify that DFG (including the California Fish & Game Commission) and the NMFS (including the Pacific Fisheries Management Council) are the agencies responsible for fishing regulation, and ensure that any zones or regulations proposed by the Sanctuary that affect fishing occur only out of a cooperative dialog with the fishing and/or aquaculture communities, and are supported by them. Recognize in writing that Sanctuary policies affecting fishing may integrate with management tools promulgated by the State and Federal governments, but are not intended to augment or supercede them."

We ask that individual SAC members bring this forward as a priority issue.

Section 13 of the condensed Sanctuary issues deals with fishing. None of the sub-issues fully contains the Alliance's recommendation found above. Sections 13.1, 13.2, and 13.3 do capture some of our recommendations. We are surprised and disappointed that this recommendation was not fully expressed in the "Summary of Sub-Issues." The SAC's Business and Tourism Working Group, the City's of Monterey and Morro Bay, the San Mateo and Moss Landing Harbor District's, the Santa Cruz Port District, the Bay Planning Coalition, the California Association of Harbor Masters and Port Captains, the California Marine Affairs and Navigation Conference (C-MANC), the California Boating Safety Officers Association, and over 1300 direct stakeholders who signed a petition, all support the

Alliance's recommendation. We can only conclude that omitting this recommendation was an oversight, although an important one, on the part of the Sanctuary staff.

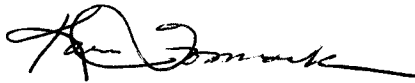
There are also some Sanctuary sub-issues that express the idea that the Sanctuary Program might assume a leadership role in pursuing fishing regulations or no fishing zones, in Federal waters. These ideas are specifically NOT supported by the fishing community. Regarding marine reserves, the Alliance strongly feels that the merits of marine reserves should be evaluated by the appropriate fishery management entities, specifically State Department of Fish & Game and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. We observe that there is absolutely no support for the Sanctuary Program to assume a leadership role in this process, among both commercial and recreational fishers. The Sanctuary Program certainly has a place at the table in discussing this issue, as a stakeholder, but the Sanctuary Program is not neutral on this important topic, and therefore should not be in a leadership role. The above-named agencies do have the scientific expertise and the public decision-making process in place to assure a thorough consideration of this important topic. It would be appropriate for the SAC or individual SAC members to recommend that the appropriate agencies fully consider the usefulness of marine reserves in fishery management. If SAC members want marine reserves to be given a fair consideration, that is the best course of action.

To close, we hope that the members of the Sanctuary Advisory Council are fully aware of how hard we have been working to ensure a supportive and mutually respectful relationship between the Sanctuary Program and our industry, and how we have been working to not have the Sanctuary Program break the promise made to us, and therefore embitter fishers for years to come. We have so much in common that could be worked on cooperatively, and feel strongly that a natural partnership can exist. We draw the SAC's attention to the successes of the Sanctuary's agricultural outreach program. We submit that it is successful due to great degree in its non-regulatory status, which required the building of trust and cooperation with the farmers, for it to accomplish its goals. The fishing community would like to be treated in the same manner. Please keep in mind the successes of the Sanctuary's relationship to agriculture, and let's try to duplicate that.

Sincerely,



Mike Ricketts
Co-Chair, ACSF



Kathy Fosmark
Co-Chair, ACSF

Supporting Associations & Organizations

Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Association
Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association
Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Association
Monterey Commercial Fishermen's Association
Fishermen's Association of Moss Landing
Santa Cruz Commercial Fishermen's Association
Half Moon Bay Fishermen's Marketing Association
Fishermen's Alliance
Western Fish Boat Owners Association
Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association
Federation of Independent Seafood Harvesters
Golden Gate Fishermen's Association
Port San Luis Harbor District
City of Morro Bay Harbor
City of Monterey Harbor
Moss Landing Harbor District

Santa Cruz Port District
Pillar Pt. Harbor, San Mateo County Harbor District