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Monterey Bay NMS

Sanctuary Advisory Council
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam Street
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December 16, 2010

To Whom it May Concern,

At its meeting on October 21, 2010 the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council voted to draft a letter of support to assist the Marine Interests Group of San Luis Obispo County in their efforts to secure funding to continue the group's work. This community stakeholder group has played an important role in creating innovative collaborative partnerships that combine research, fishing, environmental and educational interests. The Sanctuary Advisory Council supports their continued efforts and encourages and invites the local community members to support the Marine Interest Group.

Sincerely,

Chris Harrold
Sanctuary Advisory Council Chair

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

MARINE INTERESTS GROUP BACKGROUND INFORMATION
For more information, see the website http://www.mbnep.org/mig/

The Marine Interests Group of San Luis Obispo County began as a response to a proposed selenium wastewater dumping into Estero Bay by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The stakeholder group was formed by then San Luis Obispo County Supervisor Shirley Bianchi to explore possible options to protect the county coastal waters from such toxic discharges. One of the options discussed was an extension of federal sanctuary protection to protect the coast. Unanimous agreement was not achieved within the group for sanctuary expansion. The group decided as a body to continue to meet to discuss and promote issues facing the coastal communities and marine environment.

The mission of the MIG is threefold -1) to promote understanding of the marine resources off the coast of San Luis Obispo County and the needs and interests of the stakeholders involved with their use and enjoyment; 2) Openly examine potential ways to sustain and enhance the resources; and 3) Recommend desirable courses of action as appropriate to support the resources and their sustainable use.

Some of the actions that the MIG has taken include:
a. Support for the Central Coast Trawl Impact and Recovery Study at many points in the developing project
b. Support for the collaborative fisheries research and evaluation of regional management through SLOSEA (San Luis Obispo Science and Ecosystem Alliance - http://www.slosea.org/
c. Call for further research and urgent action on Estuary Pollution - specifically nonylphenol in the Morro Bay Estuary
d. Support for Community Fishing Associations
e. Call for state legislators and SLO Integrated Management Authority to eliminate plastic waste fouling the marine environment
f. Presentation by leading scientists and experts on harmful algal blooms, state of the Morro Bay estuary, wave energy projects, countywide sewage spills; at-risk species in the rocky intertidal
g. Promotion of local school environmental project to encourage environmentally acceptable food packing to replace styrofoam in local businesses

The MIG is now seeking funding to continue this broad-based community roundtable for marine issues facing San Luis Obispo County that has resulted in innovative and effective partnerships in research, fishing, environmental and education areas garnering national attention. (The group's work is highlighted in "Ecosystem-based Management for the Oceans" by Karen McLeod and Heather Leslie.)