

**EDITORIAL »**

## *Fishing license fee raid abandoned*

In response to objections raised by the California Sport-fishing League, and a massive outpouring of objections from California sportsmen and women, the Ocean Protection Council has abandoned its plan to raid California fishing and hunting licensing funds to manage Marine Protected Areas, created by the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA).

This reversal shows that California's fishing community has a voice in influencing the outcome of public policy.

Not only was the proposed raid illegal, but it was a violation of the public's trust. Fish license funds are intended to support programs that protect and enhance recreational fishing opportunities, not programs that deny anglers access to California's coastline.

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) closed vast areas of the best fishing areas off the California coast to access or fishing by not only commercial fishing boats, which could be understandable in some cases, but also for those who are out in their boat for a family fishing day.

The fact is, pleasure fishing conducted under the laws and regulations of the state have never been known to have a detrimental impact on any fish species. When and if they do, the laws are changed before any damage can be done to the resource. Unfortunately, the MLPA made permanent closures within the ocean based on no comprehensive studies whatsoever. In fact, those who supported the closures ignored multiple scientific studies and comments by experts that refuted the need for closures.

It's important for this issue, and everything else pertaining to fishing and hunting in California, that you, as those who partake in the outdoor sports in California, monitor the California Fish and Game Commission and their schedules and speak up!

Rest assured that those who advocate protection of all animals and fish attend all the F & G meetings, and are outspoken in their goal of stopping both fishing and hunting in California. And unfortunately, some of the F & G Commissioners are not only listening, but associating with these anti-advocates. Only through speaking up on these issue will we be able to continue to enjoy hunting and fishing in California.