

## **Open letter to the California Fish and Game Commission**

June 17, 2016

California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> St., 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commissioners:

During the entire difficult process of adopting the preferred set of closures in Southern California under the Marine Life Protection Act, members of the commercial and recreational fishing public repeatedly pressed for good and timely scientific studies of these proposed closures. We felt that it would only be with documentation of the benefits, reviewed on a regular basis as written in the 2008 MLPA Master Plan, that would demonstrate to the citizens of California and beyond that the loss of these valuable fishing grounds was justified.

During those trying times for sport and commercial fishing representatives on the Stakeholders Group, the members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force and the Fish and Game Commission assured the stakeholders that periodic reviews (5 years after establishing a MPA) of the efficacy of the closures would take place on into the future, and document any changes taking place. This was a commitment demanded by the recreational fishing community and stakeholders.

Furthermore, it was stated explicitly that if MPAs effectively restored fishing populations, recreational fishing would be permitted once again. If the state had no intention of restoring fishing, as stated at the April 13, 2016 commission hearing, there would have been no need to include recreational anglers on stakeholder groups in the first place. Rather, stakeholders were assured that environmental mitigation was required to protect the ocean's natural resources, and their participation aimed to balance the interests of responsible environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation.

Clearly the California Fish and Game Commission of today has developed a revisionist view of history, and many of the fishing stakeholders sadly guessed at that time that those earlier assurances might fade with the years, and that reality has come to pass.

As recreational fishing stakeholders, we challenge the Fish and Game Commission to review the tapes and honor the commitment made during the MLPA process. The loss of our historic fishing grounds has been a real blow to us under any circumstances, but would be easier to bear if we had scientific evidence of the benefits these MPAs were providing to the fishery resources of the Southern California Bight. We are standing by, so please do the right thing!

**The undersigned recreational anglers served on the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force Stakeholder Group.**

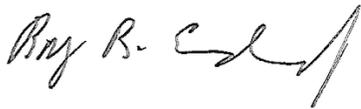
Respectfully submitted by:



John Ballotti



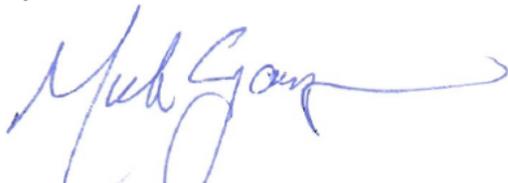
Paul Lebowitz



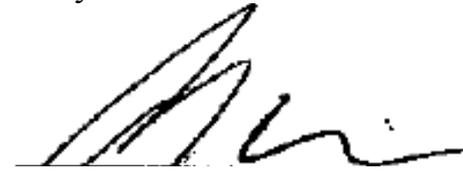
Buck Evringham



Terry Maas



Mike Gauger



Merit McCrea

Tommy Gomes



Wendy Tochihara



Joel Greenberg



Bob Fletcher