

Notice of Preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report For the Coastal Marine Aquaculture Projects

To: Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Coastal Marine Aquaculture Program SCH# 20007022103

Lead Agency: California Fish and Game Commission

Attn: Becky Ota
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The California Department of Fish and Game (Department), on behalf of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), will be preparing a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Coastal Marine Aquaculture Program (Program). The Program will consist of updated Department regulations regarding coastal marine aquaculture, and the PEIR is being prepared per the requirements of Senate Bill 201 (discussed further below). The PEIR will identify and programmatically evaluate potential environmental impacts of construction and operation of marine aquaculture facilities, as well as discuss thresholds of significance and mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. The impacts and mitigation measures identified in the PEIR will provide a scientific basis for identifying necessary updates to the Department's existing regulatory program.

The Commission will serve as the lead agency in the preparation of the PEIR for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The purpose of a PEIR is to develop and evaluate the Program, and to inform decision makers and the general public about the potential environmental effects of existing and future marine aquaculture projects which would be considered under the Program. The PEIR would programmatically evaluate the various types of marine aquaculture facilities which currently exist or would be anticipated in the future, and that would have generally similar types of environmental effects which could be mitigated in similar ways. The PEIR process is intended to provide public agencies with the environmental information required to evaluate the proposed Program; to identify methods for reducing adverse environmental impacts; and to ensure that a range of alternatives is considered prior to the approval of the Program. The Commission wishes to notify the public of this Program as early as possible in order to initiate an open forum for discussion and public participation in the planning process. The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to solicit comments about the Program, including possible program alternatives, and the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the PEIR, in accordance with CEQA.

The Department will be conducting three public scoping meetings during the week of March 5, 2007, at various locations throughout the state, as follows:

Monday, March 5
Santa Monica Main Public Library
Martin Luther King Jr. Auditorium
601 Santa Monica Blvd
Santa Monica, CA
6:30-8:30pm

Thursday, March 8
Wharfinger Building/Eureka Public Marina
Great Room
1 Marina Way at Waterfront Drive
Eureka, CA
6-8pm

Tuesday, March 6
Monterey Beach Resort
Bayview Room
2600 Sand Dunes Drive
Monterey, CA
6-8pm

The scoping meetings will present an opportunity for the Department to introduce the Program to the public and to solicit comments from the public and agencies during the early stages of Program development. Comments received at the public scoping meeting will be considered in the PEIR analysis.

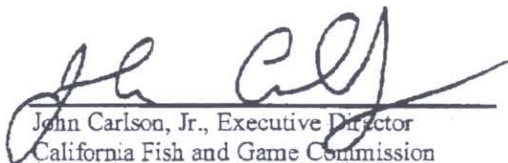
The scoping period for the Program will commence on **February 23, 2007 and will conclude on March 26, 2007**. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, comments must be sent at the earliest possible date but *no later than 30 days* after receipt of this notice and official commencement of the CEQA scoping period. Please send comments to Becky Ota at the address shown above by March 20, 2007.

Program Title: Coastal Marine Aquaculture Program

Program Location: State Tidelands and Submerged Lands (mean high tide line to 3 nautical miles offshore), and adjacent California Coastline, California

Program Description: Regulations guiding marine aquaculture projects (see attached *Program Description Summary*)

Date: February 23, 2007


John Carlson, Jr., Executive Director
California Fish and Game Commission